

Loving Like God Loves

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1 John 4:7-11 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

- I. Love is the most misunderstood and misrepresented word in our language.
 - A. The almost universal concept of love has much more to do with a feeling or emotion than anything else.
 1. It is very sad and disturbing that professing Christians view it in the same way as the unregenerate world.
 2. Since love is the key to understanding God and his redemption, and also the key to living a Christian life and pleasing God, misunderstanding it is the stumblingblock that keeps multitudes from God and bound forever in their sin.
 - B. What the world calls love and what God calls love are two different things indeed.
 - C. What the world calls love is based in emotion and feeling.
 1. It is usually based on selfishness and felt in response to the attention of others to our selfish wants and needs.
 2. In other words, we love those who love us, or pretend to love us, and those who pay attention to us.
 - D. Most people think of love as involuntary; it is just something that "happens."
 1. If that is how love happens then we can "fall" out of love, just as easily as we can "fall" into love.
 2. Love is viewed as some kind of emotional hocus pocus that gains control of a person outside of, or in spite of their will.
 3. You just can't help falling in love.
 - E. When people are "looking for love" (especially young people) they are looking for a feeling and they purposefully open themselves up to it.
 1. They put up their antennas and seek to find that "feeling."
 2. And generally, the first person that is pleasing to the eyes and pays a little attention to them is the one they "fall in love" with.
 - F. True godly love does not require or depend upon emotions and feelings.
- II. One of the great problems with the modern understanding of the Gospel is that the main ingredient - love, is misunderstood and misrepresented.
 - A. It is primarily perceived as a feeling and emotion rather than the agape love of God.
 - B. Since the almost universal concept of love is based in what man thinks and feels instead of what God says it is, the whole message of God is skewed and has become a confusing snare that causes souls to stumble.
 - C. People are convinced that God loves sinners with a love that is based in emotion rather than in mercy and truth.

- D. They are also convinced that they are bound to love sinners with a love based in emotion and feeling rather than a love based on mercy and truth.
- III. There is enmity between good and evil since God pronounced it so in the Garden in Genesis 3:15.
- A. The problem with the common understanding of love is that we come to a dilemma when we are told by Jesus to love our enemies and those that spitefully use us, etc.
 - B. We have a dilemma when we read that we are to hate evil, but we read also that God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son...
 - C. Because of the enmity between good and evil there is no place to be found for the kind of love that is believed in and practiced by most humans.
 - D. The only emotions the good and the evil feel for one another are disgust, contempt, anger, and outright hatred.
 - E. This hard fact brings confusion to those who are told they are to love sinners, God-haters, and evil-doers.
 - 1. Because they do not love them, and they cannot love them with what they understand love to be.
 - F. People find it impossible to reconcile righteousness with what they really feel in their heart toward evil so they lay aside righteousness in order to "love" sinners the only way they know how.
 - G. This is the way the devil plays cards with us.

IV. We must understand love as it really is in God's view and as presented in the Word of God.

A. To understand love properly we must begin with God.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

B. God does not love like the world loves.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

C. There are obviously two different kinds of love described and used in the Bible.

5368. *phileo*, fil-eh'-o; from G5384; to be a friend to (fond of [an individual or an object]), i.e. have affection for (denoting personal attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling; while G25 is wider, embracing espec. the judgment and the deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty and propriety: the two thus stand related very much; the former being chiefly of the heart and the latter of the head); spec. to kiss (as a mark of tenderness):--kiss, love.

Phileo (26 (or 21) times in NT) — personal, emotional love.

a) Most often translated as “kiss”

Mark 14:44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely.

Agapao (142) times in NT) — To love in a social or moral sense. It is love that is commanded, regard or concern for others out of duty because of our own conscience and mercy; benevolence. To exercise good will toward men.

2. 1 Corinthians 13 tells us how that nothing we do counts for anything if we do not have charity and then describes agape love very clearly:

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

3. Notice the denial of self and no mention of emotion and feelings toward others.
- D. The contrast can be most clearly seen in the passage of Scripture where Jesus asks Peter three times, "lovest thou me?"

John 21:15-17 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (agapao) thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love (phileo) thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. {16} He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (agapao) thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love (phileo) thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. {17} He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (phileo) thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest (phileo) thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love (phileo) thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

1. It is like Jesus said to Peter the first two times, "Peter do love me without feelings?"
2. Peter answered every time with phileo – "Lord I love you with all my heart."
3. The last time Jesus asked him He used phileo – "Peter, do you love me with all your heart or just because you know you should?"

V. Bible examples of phileo love:

- A. Phileo love is what parents feel for their children.

Mat 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

- B. The Heavenly Father loves his Son with phileo love.

John 5:20 For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

1. The Father loves us with phileo love because we love (phileo) his Son.

John 16:27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

- C. Judas betrayed the Lord with phileo love

Luke 22:48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

- D. The Jews mistook Jesus' weeping at Lazuras' grave for the phileo love He had for Lazuras.

John 11:36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

1. But the Bible is clear that Jesus loved them with agape love.

John 11:5 Now Jesus loved (agapao) Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

E. Other verses which use the word phileo:

John 15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

John 12:25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

Rev 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

1 Cor 16:22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.

Rev 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

VI. Bible examples of Agape love:

Mat 5:43-45 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Mat 5:46-47 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

Mat 19:19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Mat 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Luke 6:27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

Mark 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

Mark 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

1. So agape is obviously about denying emotions and feelings to do what is pleasing to God while phileo includes feelings and emotions that arise from love - both human love and godly love.
2. We can have phileo without agape, but not agape without phileo.

B. Commands concerning phileo love:

John 12:25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

1 Cor 16:22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.

Rev 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

- VII. There is an order to love, just as there is to everything else about God and all that He has made.
- A. Love can change with time — from phileo to agape.
 - 1. Human love can change and grow under the influence of the grace of God.
 - B. Human love will always have feelings and emotions as its supposed evidence.
 - C. Seek to love as God loves and the feelings will not be as important.
 - 1. The result of not depending upon feelings in order to love will be that you will have feelings better and richer than you thought possible.
 - D. Do not misplace or misuse love.
 - 1. Love that which God loves and hate that which God hates.
 - E. Love appropriately -
 - 1. Love God and keep his commandments.
 - 2. Love the brotherhood. (1 Peter 2:17)
 - 3. Love your wives.
 - 4. Love one another.
 - 5. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

Amos 5:15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.