

WESTERN BAPTIST SEMINARY

THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE

(The Doctrine of love in the New Testament)

St

TO SATISFY THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR PT 783

DR. PAUL L. KAUFMAN, PROFESSOR

BY

REV. JERRY BACK

JULY 1982

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.	1
CHAPTER I A STUDY OF GREEK WORDS	5
<i>Storgē</i>	5
<i>Epithumia</i>	7
<i>Eros</i>	9
<i>Philia</i>	12
<i>Agapē</i>	16
The most important Greek words for an understanding of love in the New Testament	22
CHAPTER II <i>AGAPĒ</i> , <i>PHILIA</i> , AND <i>EROS</i> CORRELATED.	25
The Danger of Artificial Divisions.	26
Emotion, Will, and Intellect in Love.	27
The Value of Love	30
Love and Divine Will.	32
The Foundation for Interpersonal Relationships.	33
Conclusions	43
CHAPTER III PRINCIPLES OF LOVE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.	44
The Love of God	44
God is love	44
Love within the God-head.	47
God's love for the world.	51
God's love for believer's	54
Love for God.	56
Love for God the Father	56
Love for God the Son.	59
Love as a precondition for service.	63
Love Among Men.	70
Love for others	70
Love for the brethren	78
Love in the home.	84

CONCLUSION	92
INDEX OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXTS	95
BIBLIOGRAPHY	97

INTRODUCTION

A young boy about eleven years of age failed to do his chores. When his father found out, he became very angry; and, like so many times in the past, picked up the nearest object he could use to inflict pain. It often was a pitch fork or barn shovel, or perhaps a length of hay wire bunched up so that it made a brutal switch more painful than a cat-o'-nine-tails. On this particular day, as the father lashed out in anger, the boy whimpered, "But, Daddy, I thought you loved me!" To this the father replied, "Love! (expletive deleted) What is that?"

Bill and Martha (not their real names) had been married only a few years. These were hard years because each had come to the marriage with personal problems, and it seemed that marriage only added to them. Their constant arguing increased both in frequency and intensity until it seemed as if their marriage would be torn apart. It was suggested that they travel to the next town to seek the help of a professional marriage counselor.

At the appointed time the couple sat discussing their problem with the counselor. To the wife it seemed as if the problem could be solved simply by defining the term "love." She asked the counselor, "What is love?" The counselor rocked back in his chair, assumed a thoughtful posture and replied, "What is love? What is love?" Over and over he pondered the question, "What is love?" but offered no explanation.

The miles back home seemed to be multiplied by the frustration factor acutely felt by this discouraged and disillusioned couple. She thought if a professional marriage counselor could not give a simple definition to love,

how could she and her husband ever hope to experience it? Upon arrival back home the young wife promptly packed her belongings and moved out.

Both of these examples illustrate the broad spectrum of frustration in our generation with regard to love. Many find that not only can they not express it, they cannot even define it. Books and articles on the subject seem to bring only confusion. The amount of material available is endless, as are the different viewpoints. If one approaches the subject by seeking to define love in the English language, the task is next to impossible because of a multitude of different meanings. One abridged dictionary alone gives nine different meanings for the noun and six for the verb.¹

The difficulty is increased because every writer and authority on the subject presents love from a different point of view and draws different conclusions about its meaning. DuBose² has provided a great service in his dissertation by attempting to classify the many different approaches to this subject. He reviewed the subject from three perspectives: General Sociological and Social-Psychological Descriptions, Concepts of Love from Psychology and Psychiatry, and Love in the Judeo-Christian Heritage. However, within these broad categories he reported many different opinions with little agreement.

Rollo May, a psychoanalytic therapist, predicts that his findings based on observation will be challenged by his experimental psychologist colleagues.³

¹Webster's New World Dictionary, sec. coll. ed. (1970), s.v. "love."

²David Singleton DuBose, Toward a Researchable Perspective on Love: The Association of Romantic Love Attitude with Self-acceptance and Selected Background Factors Among Students in Marriage and Family Classes. (PhD dissertation, Florida State University: University Microfilms, 72-13,503, 1971).

³Rollo May, Love and Will (Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1969), p. 18.

Vernon Grounds⁴ points out that theologian and psychotherapist must disagree because they are coming to the subject with basically different presuppositions. Each describes the human condition and need differently.

It is the premise of this paper that the starting point for a study on love should not be that of human authors whether they be psychologists, therapists, ethicists, or theologians. The best starting point is the Bible for it alone contains an objective, authoritative and absolute standard on which to build a philosophy of life. But even using the Bible as a starting point presents a monumental task just in elucidating the many uses of the words for love. Regarding the New Testament references to love, Leon Morris writes:

There are some places where the readings in the MSS differ, so that there are slight divergences in the statistics given by different authorities. But *agapē* seems to be used 116 times and *philia*, once. Of related words, the verb *agapaō* is found 143 times and *phileō* 25 times; the adjectives *agapētos* 61 times and *philos*, 29 times. The total for the *agapaō* words is thus 320 and for the *phileō* words, 55.⁵

Because of the time and space limitations of this paper, we will not be able to examine in detail every occurrence of the words. Instead, we will begin with a basic lexical meaning of the words, seek to correlate the words, and then develop an understanding of the concept of love by examining representative passages. The goal is to arrive at a working knowledge of the subject from a Biblical perspective so that practical principles for daily living can be derived.

A word is in order concerning some of the more recent Christian authors. Popular writers such as Walter Trobisch, Masumi Toyotome, and C.S. Lewis⁶

⁴Vernon Grounds, "Therapist and Theologian Look at Love," Christianity Today 15 (July 2, 1971):20, pp. 14-16.

⁵Leon Morris, Testaments of Love, A Study of Love in the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981), p. 125.

⁶Walter Trobisch, Love is a Feeling to be Learned (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1971); Masumi Toyotome, Three Kinds of Love (Downers Grove, IL, 1961); C.S. Lewis, The Four Loves (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1960).

provide valuable assistance in explaining what is meant by love in the culture of today. But care must be exercised to avoid confusing their popular approaches with an expository approach to the Biblical data. While they shed light on the problems of today, their writings are of limited value when seeking to understand the authoritative teaching of the Bible because they do not base their study on Biblical exegesis.

Reference will be made to these authors throughout this study for the purpose of illustrating certain points. However, it must be kept in mind that their works are popular rather than exegetical.

CHAPTER I

A STUDY OF GREEK WORDS

In this chapter our purpose is to discover a Biblical definition of love. Since the New Testament was written in Greek, we need a working knowledge of the words employed in the Greek language of the New Testament. The word most extensively used is *agapē*. Next is the word *philia*. Many who write on the subject add two or three additional words. C. S. Lewis speaks of *storgē* and *eros*. Dr. Leon Morris and Dr. Ed Wheat¹ add *epithumia*. We must carefully consider each word group as to its meaning and the bearing they all have on the subject of love in the New Testament.

Storgē

The first word we will consider is *storgē* which speaks of natural love or family love. It is found in the New Testament in only three passages. In Romans 1:31 and II Timothy 3:3 it refers to a person being "unloving" (KJV "without natural affection"). In both of these instances *storgē* has the α - privative which makes it negative. The third passage is Romans 12:10 where Paul writes, "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. . ." The word "devoted" is a compound of *philos* and *storgē*.²

¹Leon Morris, Testaments of Love, A Study of Love in the Bible; Ed Wheat, M.D., Love-Life for Every Married Couple, tape recording. (Springdale, AR: Bible Believers Cassettes, Inc.).

²James Strong, A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament (Nashville, Tenn: Thomas Nelson Publishers), p. 76

Kenneth Wuest sees *storgē* as "referring to love of parents for children, children for parents, husband for wife and wife for husband."³ C. S. Lewis writes concerning *storgē*, "The image we must start with is that of a mother nursing a baby, a bitch or a cat with a basketful of puppies or kittens; all in a squeaking, nuzzling heap together; purrings, lickings, baby-talk, milk, warmth, the smell of young life."⁴

Leon Morris writes concerning *storgē*:

Presumably it embraced uncles, aunts, grandparents, and many more relatives. The term was also extended to include kinds of love for these beyond the family: it can be used, for example, to indicate love of one's country. But the familial reference was the basic and characteristic one. Membership in a family meant a great deal to most people in antiquity, and *storgē* accordingly was both a valuable and valued element in one's life. Without it, what was possible was nothing more than a miserable and deprived existence, something that could scarcely be called life.⁵

At first it seems curious that *storgē* is not used in the New Testament to any great extent. Perhaps the reason is found in its very nature. It is "natural affection" which, as this implies, should not need to be developed. It is not something in which one needs instruction in order to express. Perhaps even in the instruction all hope of experiencing it would be lost. Lewis writes:

Affection would not be affection if it was loudly and frequently expressed; to produce it in public is like getting your household furniture out for a move. It did very well in its place, but it looks shabby or tawdry or grotesque in the sunshine.⁶

Perhaps another reason why this word is not used extensively in the New Testament is because it expects nothing and gives nothing. C. S. Lewis writes:

³Kenneth S. Wuest, "Romans," Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), p. 38.

⁴C. S. Lewis, The Four Loves, p. 53-54.

⁵Morris, Testaments of Love, A Study of Love in the Bible, p. 115.

⁶Lewis, The Four Loves, p. 56.

Nearly all the characteristics of this love are ambivalent. They may work for ill as well as for good. By itself, left simply to follow its own bent, it can darken and degrade human life. . . Affection will arise and grow strong without demanding any very shining qualities in its objects.⁷

Robert Frost described this type of love when he said, "Home is the place where when you go there, they have to take you in. Home is something you don't have to deserve."⁸

Epithumia

A second word often referred to as expressing love is *epithumia*. This is the first of a list of five given by Dr. Ed Wheat, M.D. in his taped message Love Life for Every Married Couple. Of this word Dr. Wheat states:

When it is used in the Bible in a negative way it is translated "lust." When it is used in a positive way it is translated "desire" and this is the way we will be using the word. For in your marriage you and your mate should have a strong physical sexual desire for each other. You may not have this at the present time simply because other aspects of your relationship are not working as they should.⁹

We need to carefully consider this teaching with that of the New Testament. Of the fifty-nine times *epithumia* and its cognates are used in the New Testament it is used only eight times of a positive desire and then never positively of the physical appetites of the body.¹⁰ It is curious that Dr. Wheat begins by defining this term as something to be promoted. He calls it "love" even while admitting that it is never referred to as such in the New Testament.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 62-63.

⁸ Wheat, Love-Life for Every Married Couple, taped message.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ W. F. Moulton and A.S. Geden, A Concordance to the Greek Testament (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1967), p. 367.

A background of the word will help us to better understand the issues here. *Epithumia* comes from two Greek words, "*epi*, upon, used intensively, and *thumos*, passion."¹¹ "*Thumos*. . .fundamentally denotes violent movement."¹² To this Buchrel adds, "From the sense of to well up, to boil up. . ."¹³ A further comparison of the use of this word will give an overall picture of why the New Testament does not use it either for love or for the sexual relationship legitimately expressed in marriage.

In Greek philosophy *epithumia* is the waywardness of man in conflict with his rationality. . .In the OT and Judaism *epithumia* is an offence against God, who demands of man total obedience and love from the whole heart, Dt. 5:5.¹⁴

In Paul. . .*epithumia* is evil, not because it is irrational, but because it is disobedience to the command of God. . .The essential point in *epithumia* is that it is desire as impulse, as a motion of the will. It is, in fact, lust, since the thought of satisfaction gives pleasure and that of non-satisfaction pain. *Epithumia* is anxious self-seeking. . .In *epithumia* man is seen as he really is, the more so because *epithumia* bursts upon him with the force of immediacy. Even after the reception of the divine Spirit, *epithumia* is always a danger against which man must be warned and must fight.¹⁵

Paul equates *epithumia* with the reign of sin in the body and forbids such for the Christian (Romans 6:12). The believer is to "make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."¹⁶ Paul writes:

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess

¹¹W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revel Co., 1966), p. 252.

¹²Hermann Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1962), p. 287.

¹³Friedrich Buchsel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 9 vols. ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 3:167.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 169.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 171.

¹⁶Romans 13:14.

his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles, who do not know God.¹⁷

Concerning this passage Leon Morris writes:

The God-empowered man rules his body. He is not caught in the grip of lustful passions he is quite unable to control. . . It is a solemn thought that those who reject the knowledge of God which has been afforded them thereby make it inevitable that they will be given over to evil passions.¹⁸

Therefore, *epithumia*, as a word used in the New Testament, should not be used as a positive synonym for love.

Eros

A third word often used for love is *erōs*. While this word is not found anywhere in the New Testament, it is probably the best known of the Greek words for love. We find it in our English word "erotic." The meanings that have been attached to it down through the years are about as numerous as our English word "love."

Arndt and Gingrich define *erōs* as "passionate love."¹⁹ Stauffer comments:

Erōs is a general love of the world seeking satisfaction wherever it can. . . *erōs* is determined by a more or less indefinite impulsion toward its object. . . *Eran* in its highest sense is used of the upward impulsion of man, of his love for the divine. . . *eros* seeks in others the fulfillment of its own life's hunger.²⁰

From this we see a similarity to *epithumia*. Yet there are important distinctions. *Epithumia* to the Greek mind over-powered and pulled men down. *Eros*, on the other hand, did not necessarily pull one down but instead could lift him up.

¹⁷I Thessalonians 4:3, 4.

¹⁸Leon Morris, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), p. 124-126.

¹⁹William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 311.

²⁰Ethelbert Stauffer, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Kittel, 1:37.

Anders Nygren in his monumental work traces for us Plato's attempt to elevate *eros* to the level of religious love or "'heavenly *Eros*,' a love for the bright world of ideas, a longing to participate in the Divine life."²¹ Dr. Nygren's purpose was to present *eros* and *agapē* in contrast so that no one would confuse the two regardless of how hard some philosophers might try. He points to the fact that the two stem from two opposing fundamental motifs. Nygren concludes:

There cannot actually be any doubt that *Eros* and *Agape* belong originally to two entirely separate spiritual worlds, between which no direct communication is possible. They do not represent the same value in their respective contexts, so that they cannot in any circumstances be rightly substituted for one another.²²

Debating with Plato's definition of *eros* as love for god or the divine principle is not our problem today for *eros* has once again returned to the language of passion and pleasure. *Eros* in Greek mythology was the god of love, son of Aphrodite and identified by the Romans with Cupid, the little imp characterized on Valentine's day.²³ Plato's monumental effort to change the minds of men was a virtual failure. Men still think of *erōs* as "sexual pleasure."²⁴

Bishop Trench writes concerning this:

Eros might have fared as so many other words have fared, might have been consecrated anew, despite the deep degradation of its past history; and there were tendencies already working for this in the Platonist use of it, namely, as the longing and yearning desire after that unseen but eternal Beauty, the faint vestiges of which may here be everywhere traced; *ouranios erōs*, Philo in this sense has called it. . . But in the

²¹ Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1953), p. 173.

²² Ibid., p. 31.

²³ Webster's New World Dictionary, s. v. "*Eros*."

²⁴ Ibid.

very fact that *erōs*. . .did express this yearning desire. . .this longing after the unpossessed. . .lay its deeper unfitness to set forth that Christian love. . .³²

Usually today love is viewed as passion or pleasure. Arthur Colman defines love as "the experience of ecstasy in an interpersonal relationship."³³ A. H. Maslow writes concerning love:

The core of the description of love must be subjective or phenomenological rather than objective or behavioral. No description, no words can ever communicate the full equality of the love experience to one who has himself never felt it. It consists primarily of a feeling of tenderness and affection with great enjoyment, happiness, and satisfaction in experiencing this feeling (if all is going well). There is a tendency to want to get closer, to come into more intimate contact, to touch and embrace the loved person, to yearn for him. . . This feeling of pleasure in contact and in being with, shows itself also in the desire to be together with the loved one as much as possible in as many situations as possible: in work, in play, during esthetic and intellectual pursuits.³⁴

James W. Davies takes Anders Nygren to task for failing to see *eros* as sexual love when he writes:

Nowhere in his book does Nygren deal substantially with common *eros*, that is, with libido. Instead he passes over it, treating it as an unworthy representative of Platonic *eros*, considering instead the heavenly *eros* of Plato as being the better match in the contest between *eros* and *agape*. He is not unaware of the elements of common *eros* in the heavenly *eros* of Platonic philosophy. . .It is a serious shortcoming of Nygren's presentation that vulgar *Eros* (as Plato termed what Freud calls the libido) is regarded as unfit for competition with *agape* because Nygren thereby overlooks what Freud came to discover as a basic drive of the human self. Of course, Nygren would simply write off libido, so-discovered, as egocentric, sensual, and sinful.³⁵

³²Richard Chenevix Trench, Synonyms of The New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), p. 44.

³³Arthur D. Colman, M.D., Love and Ecstasy (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), p. 1.

³⁴A. H. Maslow, The Meaning of Love, ed. Ashley Montagu (New York: The Julian Press, Inc., 1953), p. 60.

³⁵James W. Davies, "An Investigation of the History of *Agape* and *Eros* from the Perspective of the Psychoanalytic Phenomenon of Transference," Encounter, Vol 28 (1967), p. 155.

Dr. Wheat defines *eros* as that love:

. . .which more than any other kind carries with it the idea of romance. It is not always sensual, but it does include the idea of yearning to unite with and the drive to possess the object of one's love. *Eros* is romantic, passionate and sentimental.³⁶

Leon Morris writes, "Two things are especially characteristic of *eros*: it is the love of the worthy, and it is a love that desires to possess."³⁷ For our purpose in this study we will define *eros* as physical love recognizing that this does not limit it to sexual pleasure.

Philia

A fourth Greek word referred to in discussing love is *philia*. Morris makes the following notation:

Robert Flaceliere sees considerable variety in *philia*: "The word *philia* designates any feeling of attachment and affection between two persons, but the philosophers distinguished four kinds: the natural or parental *philia* (*physike*), uniting those of the same blood; the *philia* between host and guests (*xenike*), which indicates the importance of the virtues of hospitality; the *philia* between friends (*hetairike*), which alone corresponds to friendship, strictly speaking; lastly, the amorous *philia* (*erotike*), between persons of the same sex or of different sex. . .³⁸

This serves to point out that men have seen in this word a variety of connotations.

The New Testament does not use the word group in such a broad sense. While the noun, *philia* is found only once in the New Testament (James 4:4), the verb and its cognates are used numerous times. Since this word is a New Testament word, and because we are seeking a definition which expresses the

³⁶Wheat, Love-Life for Every Married Couple.

³⁷Morris, Testaments of Love, A Study of Love in the Bible, p. 120.

³⁸Ibid., p. 117.

authoritative teaching of the Bible, we must exercise care in coming to a conclusion about its meaning. The thoughts of others can guide us but ultimately its use in the New Testament must be the final arbiter.

Stahlin writes concerning the common Greek usage:

If the most likely basic sense of the stem *phileō* is "proper to," "belonging to," the original sense of the verb *phileō* is to regard and treat somebody as one of one's own people. It thus denotes natural attraction to those who belong, love for close relatives. . .³⁹

Kenneth Wuest defines *phileō* as ". . . a love which consists of the glow of the heart kindled by the perception of that in the object which affords us pleasure. It is the response of the human spirit to what appeals to it as pleasurable."⁴⁰

If Stahlin and Wuest are correct, then we have two essential ingredients in *philia*, attraction and affection.

Dr. Wheat teaches:

This kind of love (*phileō*) cherishes and has tender affection for the beloved. But it always expects a response. It is a love of relationship, comradeship, sharing, communication, friendship. While *eros* makes lovers, *phileō* makes good friends who enjoy the closeness and companionship of each other. They share their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, plans and dreams. The most intimate things which they would share with no one else."⁴¹

Stahlin notes, "In the first instance *philos* is the 'friend' as 'one who is close or well-known.'"⁴² "Elsewhere, too, unrestricted self-impartment is a mark of genuine friendship."⁴³ Jesus taught, "For the Father loves (*phileō*) the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and

³⁹ Gustav Stahlin, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Kittel, 9:115.

⁴⁰ Wuest, "Golden Nuggets," Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, p. 62.

⁴¹ Wheat, Love-Life for Every Married Couple.

⁴² Stahlin, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Kittel, 9:159.

⁴³ Ibid., 166.

greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel."⁴⁴ In the upper room Jesus comforted His disciples with these words, "No longer do I call you slaves; for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things I have heard from My Father I have made known to you."⁴⁵

Therefore, we would conclude that the starting point in understanding *phileō* is that it is the act of self-disclosure. From this comes attraction when individuals or groups recognize a commonality. From this, in turn, comes affection for one another within the sphere of that commonality which leads to friendship. *Phileō* is an important aspect of church life because it forms the basis of Christian fellowship. The essential aspects of *phileō* can thus be diagrammed:

self-disclosure → attraction → ^{affinity} identity → affection

Because *phileō* stems from self-disclosure, attraction, ^{affinity} identity, and affection, it will ultimately involve exclusion. This exclusive love is seen when Jesus teaches, "for the Father Himself loves (*phileō*) you, because you have loved (*phileō*) Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father."⁴⁶ This does not mean that God does not love the world. Jesus has already set forth this truth (John 3:16), but the reference there is to *agapē* rather than *philia*. God is never said to *phileō* the world in the New Testament sense of the word. But the Father has a special love for one who believes in His Son and loves the Son.

⁴⁴ John 5:20.

⁴⁵ John 15:15.

⁴⁶ John 16:27.

Luke is fond of recording the times when Jesus used *philos* to illustrate principles about the kingdom. A friend is one who can be counted upon to come to one's aid in time of need.

And He said to them, "Suppose one of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him;' and from inside he shall answer and say, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him *anything* because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs."⁴⁷

A friend is one who will share our joys with us because they will hold dear what is dear to us. So Jesus taught regarding the one who found a lost sheep and the woman who found the lost coin (Luke 15:6, 9). A tragic picture of this affinity is found in Luke 23:12, "Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been at enmity with each other."

It is not difficult to see how *phileō* and its cognate *philēma* come to be used to express the physical display of friendship, to kiss. The words reflect strong affinity and deep affection. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the betrayal of Christ by Judas made more despicable because he used the sign of deep friendship. Paul concludes four of his epistles by exhorting the brethren to greet one another with a holy kiss. Peter concludes his first epistle with the exhortation to greet one another with the kiss of love.

The concept of *phileō* love is indeed an important concept when seeking to understand love in the New Testament. Its importance will be seen ever more clearly when we come to the application phase of this study.

⁴⁷Luke 11:5-8.

AGAPĒ

The last word we need to consider in our study is *agapē*. Because this and its cognates are used so extensively in the New Testament, we must examine it from several different directions to gain a clear understanding of its meaning. Cremer writes:

Now, we find *agapē* used to designate a love unknown to writers outside of the New Testament. . . *love in its fullest conceivable form*; love as it is the distinguishing attribute, not of humanity, but, in the strictest sense, of Divinity.⁴⁸

Bishop Trench writes:

For it would not be forgotten that *agapē* is a word born within the bosom of revealed religion: it occurs in the Septuagint (2 Sam. xiii. 15; Cant. ii. 4; Jer. ii. 2), and the Apocrypha (Wisd. iii. 9); but there is no trace of it in any heathen writer whatever, and as little in Philo or Josephus. . .⁴⁹

Some are now disputing the exclusivity of this word prior to the Septuagint and the New Testament. However, no one has been able to establish a wide use of the word until the New Testament. Its frequency in the New Testament seems to be of greater significance than the lack of frequency before.

Concerning its meaning Leon Morris writes, "*Agapē* is spontaneous love, love freely given and not elicited by anything in the loved one."⁵⁰ Wuest appears to differ with this when he writes:

"*Agapao*" speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in an object which causes one to prize it. It springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object. It is a love of esteem and approbation. The quality of this love is determined by the character of the one who loves, and that of the object loved.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek, p. 14.

⁴⁹ Trench, Synonyms of The New Testament, p. 43.

⁵⁰ Morris, Love, Christian Style (Portland, Oregon: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1976), p. 11.

⁵¹ Wuest, "Golden Nuggets," Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, p. 60.

What is important to see in this statement is that of all of the words, *agapē* is the one which most reflects the nature of the one who expresses it.

Jesus taught:

But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.⁵²

He rebuked the unbelieving Jews when He said, "If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God. . ."⁵³

Not only does *agapē* reflect the nature of the one expressing it, *agapē* is foremost an act of the will. Cremer writes, "*Agapan* is used in all places where the *direction* of the *will* is the point to be considered."⁵⁴ It is important to note that *phileō* is never commanded because it does not stem from an act of the will but from attraction. When our Lord was asked, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" Jesus answered:

The foremost is, "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these."⁵⁵

Agapē, therefore, involves an act of the will.

If God is able to command *agapē*, then *agapē* involves a choice on the part of the one who expresses it. It is helpful to observe this when seeking to understand the full import of many statements. For instance, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other,

⁵²Matthew 5:44, 45.

⁵³John 8:42.

⁵⁴Cremer, Biblio-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek, p. 12.

⁵⁵Mark 12:28-31.

or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."⁵⁶ Clearly, a choice between two masters is made.

Love as a choice need not be a choice between two objects. To obey a command or not to obey is to make a choice between obedience and disobedience. Numerous times throughout the New Testament believers are exhorted to obey. Jesus commanded and Paul frequently repeated the command that followers of Jesus are to love one another. While this may involve the emotions, it is first of all a choice. The same is true of the command to the husband to love his wife, etc.

Unbelievers are said to express *agapē*. Jesus taught that "sinners also love those that love them."⁵⁷ The Pharisees "love the front seats in the synagogues, and the respectful greetings in the market places."⁵⁸ In each context the one who loves has made a choice.

It is curious to note that Luke records another instance when Jesus said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love (*phileō*) respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues, and places of honor at banquets."⁵⁹ In the statement in Chapter 11 Jesus is emphasizing that an act of the will has been made by the Pharisees. In Chapter 20 He is emphasizing the fact that the scribes find the respectful greetings attractive to them. The former is a condemnation delivered to the guilty parties for a wrong choice. The latter is a warning given to the people not to be like the guilty parties.

⁵⁶ Mark 6:24.

⁵⁷ Luke 6:32.

⁵⁸ Luke 11:43.

⁵⁹ Luke 20:46.

From *agapē* as a choice to *agapē* as an act of obedience seems to be a small step. Yet further reflection will show that it is a giant step theologically. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."⁶⁰

In this statement *agapaō* is seen as an act of obedience. Love for Jesus means a willingness to obey Him. However, the context of this statement is future; it is to apply after the cross and after the ascension. The obedience referred to here and hence the love enjoined will require a knowledge of the master's will. If Jesus will no longer be present, how can they or future disciples obey Him?

The answer is found in verses 16 and 17. The Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, will come to make known the will of Jesus to them. In this way, Jesus said the disciples will "know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you."⁶¹ It will be possible to both have and keep His commandments and thereby love Him (John 14:21).

So we see that when the New Testament speaks of love as obedience, it assumes that the individual expressing the love has the knowledge of the Divine will and has the Holy Spirit who enables conformity to the Divine will. In other words, the person who is obedient is born again. We see this repeated by Paul when he teaches that the fruit of the Spirit is love (Galatians 5:22). John expresses this in a different way when He writes, ". . . everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."⁶² Clearly, in this last passage the concept of *agapē* has progressed from a matter of personal choice to conformity to the Divine will made possible only by rebirth.

⁶⁰ John 14:15.

⁶¹ Ibid., vs. 20.

⁶² I John 4:7.

Masumi Toyotome calls *agapē* "the 'in spite of' kind of love."

The person is loved "in spite of," not because of, what he is. One may be the most ugly, most wretched, most debased person in the world and would still be loved when he meets this "in spite of" kind of love. . . He may seem absolutely worthless, and yet he would be loved as though he were of infinite worth.⁶³

Undoubtedly this writer had in mind verses such as Romans 5:8 where Paul writes, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."⁶⁴

Nygren shed light on this aspect of *agapē* when he delineated the content of Divine love. He gives the following outline:

1. *Agapē* is spontaneous and "unmotivated" (i.e., not out of self-need)
2. *Agapē* is "indifferent to value" (i.e., not regarding the value of the object loved)
3. *Agapē* is creative (i.e., that *agapē* loves and imparts value by loving)
4. *Agapē* is the initiator of fellowship (i.e., that God's love is the only way for man to enter into fellowship with God)⁶⁵

Agapē will often be expressed toward an object inspite of the unworthiness of the object to receive it. However, this is not always true of Divine love. Jesus said, "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again."⁶⁶ Concerning this Robertson writes:

For this reason (*dia touto*). Points to the following *hoti* clause. The Father's love for the Son is drawn out (John 3:16) by the voluntary offering of the Son for the sin of the world (Romans 5:8). Hence the greater exaltation (Philippians 2:9).⁶⁷

⁶³ Masumi Toyotome, 3 Kinds of Love (Madison, WI: InterVarsity Press, 1961), p. 8.

⁶⁴ Romans 5:8.

⁶⁵ Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, pp. 75-81.

⁶⁶ John 10:17.

⁶⁷ Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville, Tenn., 1932), p. 182.

One cannot, therefore, press Nygren's outline in every context. His point is better seen as a secondary rather than a primary meaning of *agapē*; the primary meaning being the expression of one's nature as an act of the will.

Agapē is often depicted as sacrificial. Many today are laboring under the misconception that in order to love with *agapē*, one must give up something dear for others. This is not only a misconception of the Biblical concept of sacrifice, it is a misconception of *agapē*. A sacrifice in the Bible is not something that one gives against his will or at great personal expense. A sacrifice is giving something willingly out of a heart of obedience to God.

John wrote, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome."⁶⁸ It is possible that God may choose for some to pay a great price or even die for their faith. At times *agapē* is manifested in this way. However, when this happens it is not because the essence of *agapē* is self-denial or personal loss. It is because the essence of *agapē* is obedience to God.

Carl Henry writes:

Unrecompensed love is to structure the whole of life as the Divine command. The moral agent will promote at the same time his own best interest and that of his fellow man by doing the will of God. In love the supreme interests of all men coincide. . .Ewing rather humorously evaluated it: "In sharp contrast to even the higher egoism and still more to egoistic hedonism the ethical view properly preached in Christian countries has usually been that the primary virtue is unselfishness viewed as the readiness to sacrifice oneself for other men. But this view cannot, any more than egoistic hedonism, be carried to its absolute extreme. A society in which everybody spent his life sacrificing all his pleasure for others would be even more absurd than a society whose members all lived by taking in each other's washing." A major weakness of this stress on self-sacrifice is its lack of

⁶⁸I John 5:3.

assurance that the individual's own interests are really preserved in the promotion of those of others. . . Love holds the interest of the self and of others together.⁶⁹

Therefore, the primary meaning of *agapē* is that it is a love of the will which reflects the nature of the one who expresses it. As an act of the will it involves a choice. For the believer this choice is based upon knowledge of and obedience to the Divine will of God. Additional considerations such as the unworthiness of the object or the self-sacrifice of the giver are secondary to the primary meaning.

THE MOST IMPORTANT GREEK WORDS FOR AN UNDERSTANDING OF LOVE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In this chapter we have given the definition of five Greek words often referred to when discussing love in the New Testament. Of the five, two--*storgē* and *epithumia*--may be eliminated from further consideration.

Storgē may be eliminated because it is insignificant as used of love in the New Testament. When reference is made to *storgē*, it can be called by another name. Husbands are commanded to love (*agapaō*) their wives, wives are to submit to their husbands, children are to obey their parents. Any instruction necessary in the matter requires other words: obedience, submission, etc., which are foreign to *storgē*. *Storgē* will allow one to take another for granted and will encourage failure at being conscientious and concerned in the relationship. Christians are called to a higher level in their relationship than that expressed as *storgē*.

Since the New Testament studiously avoids using *epithumia* as a word for love and when used of sexual gratification always in the negative, it

⁶⁹Carl F. H. Henry, Christian Personal Ethics (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), p. 170.

is questionable that we today should once again be promoting such a concept. This is not to say that the physical relationship in marriage is evil. Quite the contrary. The Christian husband and wife are commanded to engage in the physical relationship on a regular basis (I Corinthians 7:3). We will be looking into this passage more in depth later. It is sufficient to say here that this passage does not present physical desire as *epithumia*.

Consistent, conscientious attention to the physical relationship in a marriage will help to avoid *epithumia* rather than promote it. The spiritual Christian who is diligent in his/her marriage relationship will learn a balanced, self-controlled expression of the physical needs and will do nothing to encourage *epithumia* to take control of the life. This will be true of all of the physical appetites: sexual, and otherwise. Paul writes, "All things are lawful for me, but *I will not be mastered by anything.*"⁷⁰

At its best *epithumia* is only temporary and will pass away along with the rest of the world (I John 2:17). At its worst it enslaves the believer with cruel slavery never intended for those whose master is the Lord Jesus Christ. To encourage *epithumia* is both contrary to the Scriptures and confusing to any serious student of God's Word. The marriage counselor would be well advised to use a different word.

This leaves us with three words which may be employed to express the New Testament concept of love: *eros*, *philia*, and *agapē*. As we will see in the next chapter, we may demonstrate a distinction between these words but must not separate them. Each word describes a different facet of love which cannot be understood by a single word. No single word expresses fully the whole concept of love.

⁷⁰I Corinthians 6:12 (italics mine).

Even though *eros* is never used in the New Testament, we will retain its use in this study when referring to physical desire because the New Testament does speak of the proper expression of physical desire. *Eros*, traditionally, is the word expressing this facet of love.

Philia refers to the act of self-disclosure which leads to attraction which in turn leads to ^{affinity} identity followed by affection. In the remainder of this study we will be calling *philia* affection.

The most prevalent word group is *agapē*. *Agapē* expresses one's nature and is essentially a willful decision. For the Christian, *agapē* is a moral choice based upon obedience to God's revealed will. This love may take the form of a love for the unworthy and may be expressed as "self-sacrifice." But these are both only manifestations of *agapē* based upon the revealed will of God. *Agapē*, while it can be expressed by the unregenerate, can be a reflection of God's love only when expressed by one who is born again, controlled by the Holy Spirit and has a working knowledge of God's Word.

CHAPTER II

AGAPĒ, PHILIA AND EROS CORRELATED

We have explored the meaning of five Greek words as they relate to love and have selected three which are of primary importance for our present study. Our efforts have been directed toward defining these words as they are used in or are related to the New Testament. We have not explored at any length how the words relate to each other. In order to understand the New Testament teaching regarding love, we must see both the comparison and the contrast between them.

There are numerous books and articles in print which analyze the individual words and a few works which draw a distinction between them. However, within the time frame and resources available for this study, works which adequately correlate the words have not been found. Yet it is the opinion of this writer that it is the correlation between the words for love more than the distinctions between them which forms the basis for a strong counselling and teaching ministry. Dr. Wheat, in his books and tapes, has come the closest to this kind of approach. Yet he really does not correlate the words but merely distinguishes them.

Words derive meaning from the context in which they are used. When considering the context of a chapter, a book, the writings of a particular author, or the writings of several authors in the New Testament, how the

author(s) use the word in relation to synonyms is very important. Believing that the Holy Spirit is the ultimate author of the New Testament and that inspiration extends even to the words and word order, a good student of the Bible will carefully consider the relationship between words.

Concerning the study of words Bishop Trench writes:

And while thus the characteristic excellences of the Greek language especially invite us to the investigation of the likenesses and differences between words, to the study of the words of the New Testament there are reasons additional inviting us. If by such investigations as these we become aware of delicate variations in an author's meaning, which otherwise we might have missed, where is it so desirable that we should miss nothing, that we should lose no finer intention of the writer, as in those words which are the vehicles of the very mind of God Himself?¹

W. E. Vine explains concerning the use of *agapaō* and *phileō* in the New Testament:

Yet the distinction between the two verbs remains, and they are never used indiscriminately in the same passage; if each is used with reference to the same objects, as just mentioned, each word retains its distinctive and essential character.²

THE DANGER OF ARTIFICIAL DIVISIONS

Artificial divisions have been made concerning these three words for love. Some have seen them as physical love, emotional love, and spiritual love. Others have sought to relate *eros* to the body, *philia* to the soul and *agapē* to the spirit. Nygren, after drawing deep meaning for *agapē* from Paul's writings, finds John's use of the word almost unsettling to him. He writes:

In John, as in Paul--though perhaps not with the same clarity--it is God who is the acting subject in Christ's sacrificial work of love. Yet it would not be entirely true to the facts to say without quali-

¹Richard Chenevix Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), p. 44.

²W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revel Co., 1966), p. 252.

fication that the Johannine idea of love marks the culminating point of the New Testament *Agape* motif; for while John says the last word as to its form, Paul has a deeper insight into its essential meaning and content. Nor does the Johannine view of love display the strict unity and consistency that we found in Paul, for at many points there is a certain doubleness to be observed in what John says about *Agape*. Just when the *Agape* motif is brought to its highest expression it is also in a peculiar way weakened down.³

Nygren's system of *agapē* derived in detail from Paul began to be threatened when he noticed that John used *agapē* in ways that do not fit his mold. He writes:

Yet it is just at this point that we can observe the modification and weakening already spoken of. It is principally evident in the fact that John does not, after all, find it entirely meaningless to let the object of *Agape* determine its significance. He knows of a form of *Agape* which must be repudiated, a kind of love against which he must warn us: *love of the world*.⁴

In an attempt to bring out the full meaning of *agapē*, Nygren has derived a system which applies in some contexts but which conflicts with others.

When it comes to *agapē* in the New Testament, if anything, John presents the deepest and clearest use of the term, especially due to the fact that he alone used *phileō* in contexts where the two can be compared and contrasted so as to demonstrate the nuances of each. Leon Morris goes to the opposite extreme and sees no distinction between the concepts when he considers the change in words in a single passage to be "a stylistic one, not one of meaning."⁵

EMOTION, WILL, AND INTELLECT IN LOVE

We must avoid seeing distinctions where none exist as well as seeing no distinctions at all if distinctions do in fact exist. When Jesus stated

³Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1953), p. 173.

⁴Ibid., p. 156.

⁵Leon Morris, *Testaments of Love, A Study of Love in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981), p. 125.

that the greatest commandment is "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,"⁶ He was affirming that *agapē* involves one's total being. Within this great command we find *agapē* being the expression of the heart, the seat of the will. It involves the soul, the seat of the personality, sentiment and, at times the appetite.⁷ It involves the mind, the seat of the intellect.

Phileō also involves emotion, will, and intellect. Even though it is never commanded, each time one object is loved more than another the element of choice is involved. We see this in Matthew 10:37 where Jesus warned against loving father or mother more than Him.

In its combined form we find that one is able to learn to increase *phileō*. Older women are to train younger women to "love their husbands (*philandros*), to love their children (*philateknos*)."⁸ Paul notes that the believers at Thessalonica love the brethren (*philadelphia*) and have no need for further instruction in the matter because they "are taught by God to love (*agapē*) one another."⁹ Even so, they are "to excel still more."¹⁰

From this we see that *agapē* and *phileō* are closely connected and that within both concepts are the elements of emotion, will, and intellect. In what way are they distinctive? *Agapē* emphasizes a moral choice whereas *phileō* emphasizes the emotion with regard to affinity. One concept of love cannot be expressed totally isolated from the others. Cremer writes:

⁶Matthew 22:37.

⁷Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 21.

⁸Titus 2:4.

⁹I Thessalonians 4:9.

¹⁰Ibid., vs. 10.

The range of *philein* is wider than that of *agapan*, but *agapan* stands all the higher above *philein* on account of its moral import. It does not in itself exclude affection, but it is always the moral affection of conscious deliberate will which is contained in it, not the natural impulse of immediate feeling.¹¹

Eros as physical love or the need for self-gratification also carries within it the three concepts of emotion, will, and intellect. No one would dispute the emotional aspect in *eros*. We find this in I Corinthians 7:9 when Paul writes, ". . .it is better to marry than to burn." Vine defines "burn" as "metaphorically of the emotions."¹²

While emotions are involved in *eros*, uncontrolled emotion would be *epithumia* which Paul forbids (I Thessalonians 4:4, 5). In I Corinthians 7 Paul instructs the Corinthian believers in how to avoid having *eros* become *epithumia*. God's method is for the marriage partners to maintain a consistent physical relationship within their marriage. One purpose of marriage is to meet one's physical needs. The goal is to put the physical needs of one's marriage partner above one's own. This concern for one's mate is commanded.¹³ Therefore, we find the will being expressed in *eros*.

The summary of I Corinthians 6 indicates that the physical relationship between husband and wife is to be viewed as service to God. In another place Paul writes, "For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."¹⁴ The connection between body and spirit is one that cannot be broken.

In another place Paul writes, "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, accept-

¹¹Hermann Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1962), p. 287.

¹²Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 159.

¹³I Corinthians 7:3.

¹⁴I Corinthians 6:20.

able to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."¹⁵ "Your bodies" refers to "the complete man."¹⁶ "Spiritual service" is that which is "pertaining to the reasoning faculty."¹⁷ Therefore, emotion, will, and intellect all play a part in the expression of *eros*.

THE VALUE OF LOVE

Another unfortunate distinction often made is that it is said one kind of love is of greater value than another. God created man male and female and saw His creation as good. God is concerned for man as a whole being and not just as a spirit or a soul. The fact that the physical body is to be seen as a vehicle in which to glorify God proves that the physical relationship between a husband and wife is no less sacred than the willful love of a believer for his brother or his enemies.

Instead of seeing the physical relationship as profane the New Testament commands, "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge."¹⁸ *Koite* in this context refers to the physical relationship between husband and wife. The marriage state together with the sexual relationship is to be both honored and pure.

Throughout the history of the church degrees of abstinence or even celibacy have been taught as the means to this honor and purity. Joe K. Adams notes this erroneous teaching in his article, "The Hidden Taboo of Love." He writes:

¹⁵Romans 12:1.

¹⁶Vines, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 136.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 253.

¹⁸Hebrews 13:4.

The overemphasis on "sex morality" was accompanied by denigration of the body and thus of the self, with inevitable loss of self-respect and respect for others. The extent of denigration of the body and of the sex act is illustrated by Lotario de' Conti, a young man in the late twelfth century, who later became the most powerful Pope in history, Innocent III:

How filthy the father; how low the mother; how repulsive the sister. . .dead, human beings give birth to flies and worms; alive, they generate worms and lice. . .consider the plants, consider the trees. They bring forth flowers and leaves and fruits. But what do *you* bring forth? Nits, lice, vermin. Trees and plants exude oil, wine, balm--and *you*, spittle, snot, urine, ordure. *They* diffuse the sweetness of all fragrance--*you*, the most abominable stink. . . We who shrink from touching, even with the tips of our fingers, a gob of phlegm or a lump of dung, how is it that we crave for the embraces of this mere bag of night-soil? . . .[God has decreed that] the mother shall conceive in stink and nastiness.

The denigration of the body and the attitude that sexual "sins" outweigh all others has continued right up to the present day.¹⁹

Mr. Adams has painted a bleak picture of the approach many Christian writers have taken in defining and distinguishing the various forms of love. While much of his conclusion is to be rejected, we can learn from him the danger of over-zealousness or over-sentimentality when defining what we mean by love. One example is the following:

There are three words in the Greek language which are translated "love." One of these tells of the love of passion, of lust, of sensual desire. . .So base were its associations that Christianity could find no use for it. The second of these words tells of the love of impulse, of affection, of natural inclination. . .It occurs in both Testaments, and speaks chiefly of our love for one another, of affection among relations and friends. But the third word, that which occurs in this chapter and so often in the New Testament, is expressive of character determined by will, and not of spontaneous natural emotion. Christianity took up this word and infused into it an entirely new meaning, which distinguishes it from all that is lustful or merely emotional. This word is absolutely unstained by any evil association.²⁰

From this, one could surmise that *agapē* is all that is important and that *eros* and *philia* are of little importance. However, a careful study of

¹⁹ Joe K. Adams, "The Hidden Taboo on Love." Love Today, ed. Herbert A. Otto (Associated Press, 1972), pp. 36-37.

²⁰ W. Graham Scroggie, The Love Life (London: Pickering and Inglis), pp. 16-17.

the New Testament does not support this view.

LOVE AND THE DIVINE WILL

Nygren, Scroggie and others, in their zeal to see *agapē* as a holy and spiritual love have fallen into the trap of seeing a dichotomy where none exists. The physical body is not innately evil. The affections of men are not innately capricious and untrustworthy. Nor is the will of man automatically good. We do not need to castigate the one in order to exalt the other. If *agapē* finds a high place in biblical teaching, it is not because *eros* and *philia* are so profane and unworthy but because God through Christ has infused *agapē* with a particular meaning by a peculiar demonstration of His own Divine love.

Rollo May touches a sensitive nerve and causes us to consider carefully what we mean by will in *agapē* when he writes:

To begin with, the terms "will power" and "free will" are dubious, to say the least, and perhaps no longer even helpful if they are available. "Will power" expressed the arrogant efforts of Victorian man to manipulate his surroundings and to rule nature with an iron hand, as well as to manipulate himself, rule his own life in the same way as one would an object. This kind of "will" was set over against "wish" and used as a faculty by which "wish" could be denied. . . Will power, then, was a way of avoiding awareness of bodily and sexual urges and of hostile impulses which did not fit the picture of the controlled, well-managed self.²¹

. . . contrary to its intention, Victorian "will power," by implying that every man was "master of his fate" and could decide the whole course of his life by a resolution on New Year's Eve or on a chance whim in a Sunday-morning church service, actually belittled life, robbed it of dignity, and cheapened human experience.²²

Agapē expressed apart from the Divine will can be just as degrading as *eros* and *philia* apart from Divine will. The fact that a person exercises

²¹Rollo May, Love and Will (Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1969), p. 18.

²²Ibid., p. 206.

a warning to the "well-managed" church leader who appear to have total control. This is not leadership by love.

his/her will does not automatically change circumstances or relationships for the better. Man cannot alter circumstances or relationships by merely willing it to be so. Therefore, *agapē* is very impotent and tends toward banality when expressed apart from the Divine will. However, when spoken of as God's love, the picture is altogether different. *Agapē* can alter circumstances and relationships by willing it so if it is God who is loving. God has shed His love abroad in the hearts of all who are born of God and are partakers of His divine nature being cognizant of and obedient to His will.

We see, therefore, that man's *agapē* must be subservient to and an expression of Divine *agapē*. *Philia* and *eros* also must be subservient to Divine *agapē*. When this is true, all three concepts find a hallowed place in the New Testament concept of love. Unlike many secular writers who tend to emphasize physical or romantic love over willful love or many Christian writers who stress the willful love over the other two, a conscientious approach to New Testament love is to see the distinctions as well as the correlations between them.

Important point to make regarding church leadership.

THE FOUNDATION FOR INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Most secular and some religious authors, whether writing from a philosophical or psychological perspective, present *eros* or its equivalent as the foundation for interpersonal relationships. James A. Davies calls *eros* "the basic drive of the human self."²³ Rollo May writes:

The dilemma we face in our society is similar to the one Freud faced--the assumption that the ultimate goal of existence is the satisfaction of impulses has led sex into the cul-de-sac of tedium and

²³James W. Davies, "An Investigation of the History of *Agape* and *Eros* from the Perspective of the Psychoanalytic Phenomenon of Transference," Encounter, Vol 28 (1967), p. 155.

banality. *Eros*, drawing us ahead, refers to the realms of possibilities; it is the reach of human imagination and intentionality.²⁴

Davies argues:

. . .it is the conviction of this article that Freud's libido theory deserves essential acceptance by theologians. This acceptance becomes a matter of vital importance because the libido-theory restores both to theology and to life the rightful centrality which belongs to sexuality.²⁵

Arthur and Liddy Colman express this view in a similar fashion when they write:

. . .*love is the experience of ecstasy in an interpersonal relationship.*

Both ecstasy and relationships are universal to the human condition. They are rooted in our biology and our society. We possess a neuro-physiological "pleasure center" which underlies the potential for ecstasy throughout our lives. Every culture has special social institutions designed to activate and shape the forms of ecstatic experience. Similarly, relationships are essential to our biological survival and personal development. All cultures have social institutions designed to facilitate and delimit patterns of relating with others.²⁶

From these examples we see that, though the phrase "the foundation for interpersonal relationships" is not used, the implication is there. The concept is implicit in Maslow's scale of hierarchical needs (See Figure 1).²⁷ In his list the physiological needs would correspond to *eros* and the love and esteem needs would correspond to *philia*. According to Maslow, one cannot develop relationships based upon the fulfillment of higher needs such as belongingness or esteem until the lower physiological needs are met.

²⁴May, Love and Will, p. 86.

²⁵Davies, "An Investigation of the History of *Agape* and *Eros* from the Perspective of the Psychoanalytic Phenomenon of Transference," Encounter, pp. 152-153.

²⁶Arthur D. Colman, M.D., Love and Ecstasy (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), p. 1.

²⁷Robert F. Biehler, Psychology Applied to Teaching (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978), p. 517.

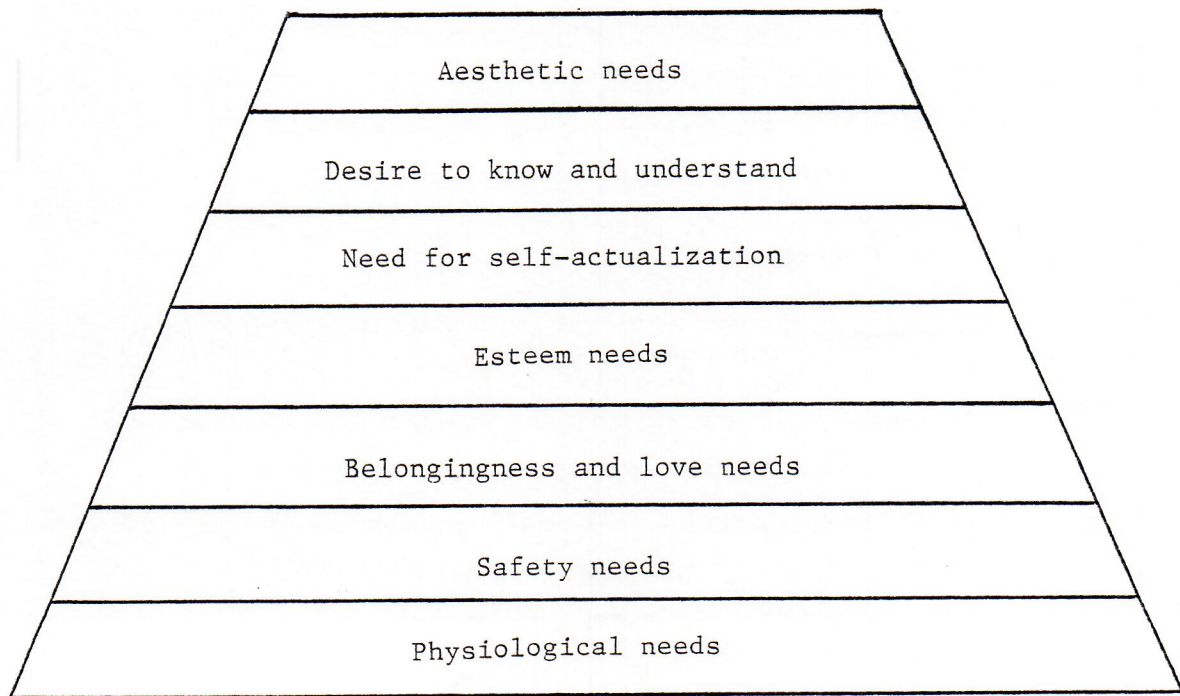


FIGURE 1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Concerning Maslow's theories, Robert F. Biehler writes:

He refers to need gratification as "the most important single principle underlying all development," adding that "the single, holistic principle that binds together the multiplicity of human motives is the tendency for a new and higher need to emerge as the lower need fulfills itself by being sufficiently gratified."²⁸

If Maslow's theory were applied to the subject of love, it would mean that one would not have a desire to express *philia* or *agapē* until *eros* was sufficiently gratified (See Figure 2).²⁹ Many today accept Maslow's theories in whole or in part. When viewed in this way *eros* would form the foundation for all interpersonal relationships. The physical needs must be gratified before there will be a desire for the higher needs. *Philia* would be a step up from *eros*. *Agapē* would be considered the most exalted expression of love reflecting the highest level on the scale of hierarchical needs.

Those who exalt *agapē* to the degree of Nygren and Scroggie in essence are conceding to a similar hierarchy of love. They choose to depreciate or ignore the physical needs and in the process elevate *agapē* to a place where it is irrelevant to everyday life. But tragically this hierarchy of love does not meet the human dilemma nor does it reflect the New Testament teaching regarding love.

One can hold to an exalted view of *agapē* and still teach as if *eros* is the most important aspect of love. We see this in the proliferation of Christian sex manuals in evangelical book stores today. Many give the impression, on the one hand, that *agapē* is something to venerate but, on the other hand, imply that *eros* is the root cause of most marriage problems.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 516.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 531.

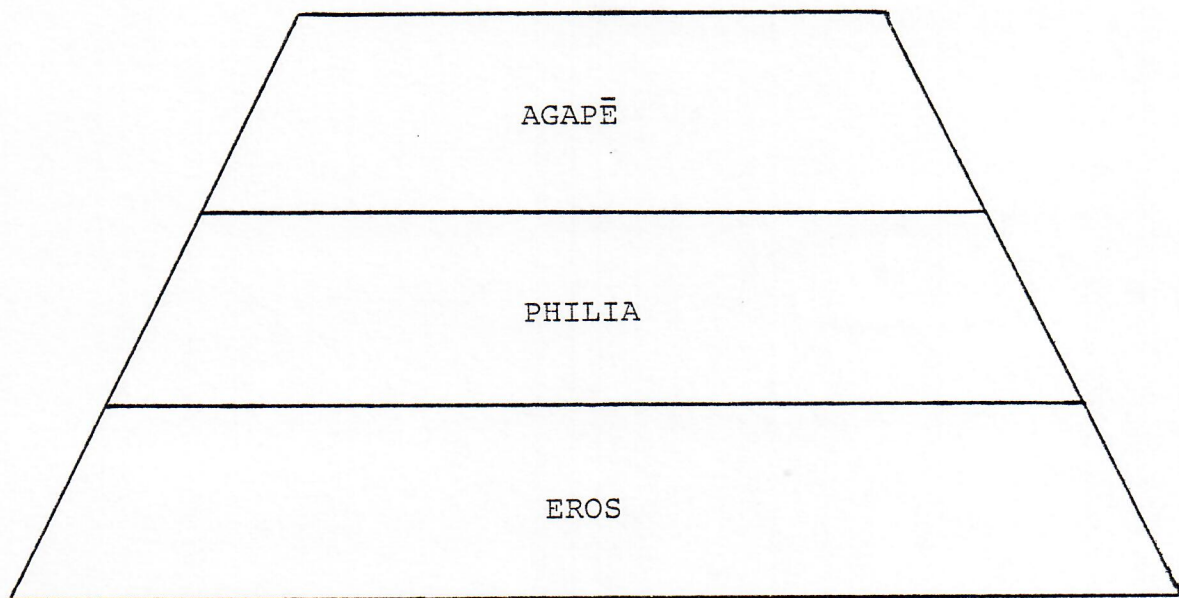


FIGURE 2 The love of fallen man (*eros* is seen as the foundation for all interpersonal relationships.)

Kenneth L. Woodward and Eloise Salholz in a recent article in Newsweek magazine called attention to the number of "Christian sex manuals" available for evangelical consumption in our day. They exclaim, "Surprisingly, a literal approach to the Bible turns out to be a license for sexual permissiveness."³⁰ The almost satirical tone of this article serves as a warning that perhaps evangelicals are losing perspective and succumbing to the philosophy of the world, a philosophy which places too great an emphasis upon sexual gratification as the foundation for happiness. The impression is left that a few lessons in the mechanics of sex will solve interpersonal problems in marriage.

Rollo May observes this unwholesome tendency when he writes:

But sex, too, has become Western man's test and burden more than his salvation. The books which roll off the presses on technique in love and sex, while still best-sellers for a few weeks, have a hollow ring; for most people seem to be aware on some scarcely articulated level that the frantic quality with which we pursue technique as our way to salvation is in direct proportion to the degree to which we have lost sight of the salvation we are seeking.³¹

God never intended *eros* to be the foundation for interpersonal relationships as seen today in our society. However, Figure 2 does have some validity if only as a negative illustration. What this diagram represents is not the ordering of love intended by God but the ordering which is the result of the fall. Fallen man in his sinful state makes a mockery of divine order and legitimate expressions of love. Because, apart from God, man is soulish and earthy, he becomes preoccupied with passion and pleasure. His will becomes more important than, or completely replaces, God's will.

³⁰Kenneth L. Woodward and Eloise Salholz, "The Bible in the Bedroom." Newsweek (February 1, 1982): p. 71.

³¹May, Love and Will, p. 14.

It is logical that those who rely upon data collected from the analyst's couch or experimentation would discover love present in fallen man to be like that represented by Figure 2. It is equally logical that many would conclude from this kind of research that willful love does not exist or, if it does, it is negligible.

What is amazing is that so many Christian writers in seeking to refute the findings of the scientists have argued on their level. The product has been a mass of confusion and contradictory argumentation. The worst of all results, however, has been the confusion ascribed to the Biblical data because this framework (Figure 2) has been superimposed upon the Scriptures.

If Figure 2 describes the concept of love seen in fallen man, Figure 3 describes the concept of love which we would expect to see in redeemed man. *Agapē* instead of *eros* is seen as the foundation for all interpersonal relationships. As redeemed man enters a relationship with God and grows in His knowledge of the Divine will, the Holy Spirit leads this new creature in Christ to express *agapē* toward every one around him. He begins to choose to do the will of God toward each one.

Rollo May makes an interesting observation regarding psychotherapy when he writes:

People go to therapists to find substitutes for their lost will: to learn how to get the "unconscious" to direct their lives, or to learn the latest conditioning technique to enable them to behave, or to use new drugs to release some motive for living.³²

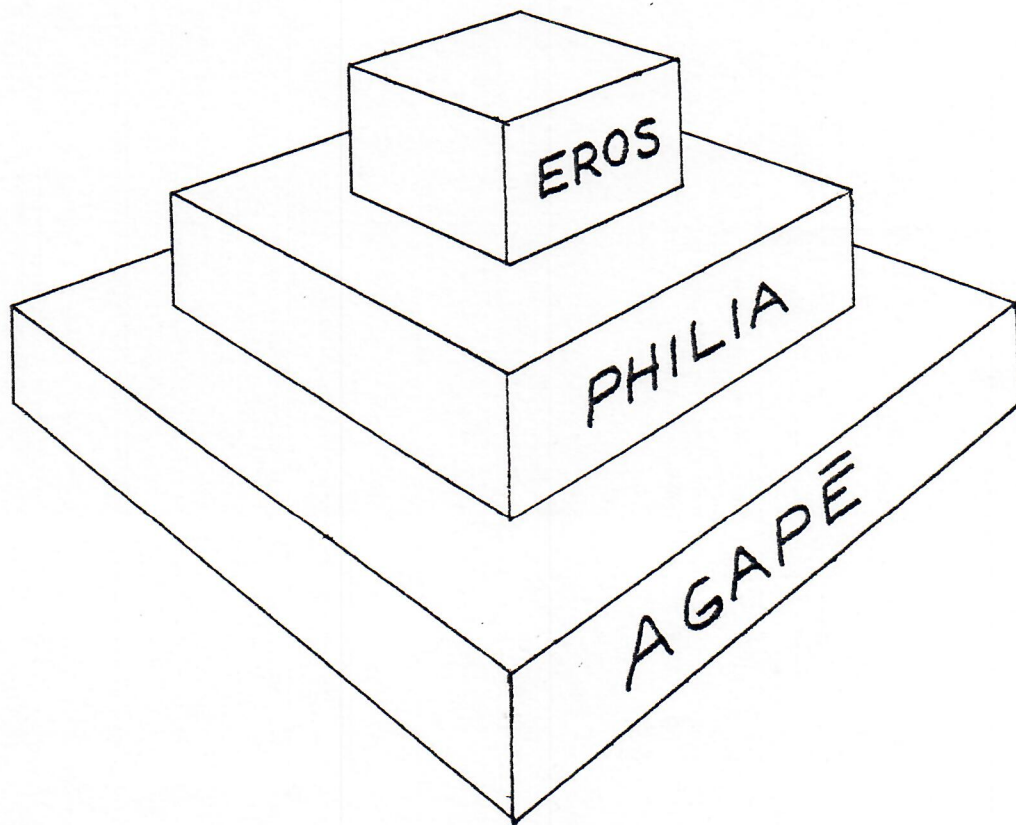
The solution to man's problems today for Dr. May is to seek to integrate love and will. He writes:

But when sexual love becomes *desire*, will is involved; one chooses the woman, is aware of the act of love, and how it gets its fulfillment is a matter of increasing importance. Love and will are united as a task and an achievement.³³

³²May, Love and Will, p. 15.

³³Ibid., p. 307.

FIGURE 3 The love of redeemed man (*agapē* is seen as the foundation for all interpersonal relationships.)



We must not settle merely for integrating love and will. We must see love (*agapē*) and will as one and the same and that our will must be in conformity to the Divine will. In this way *agapē* forms the foundation for all interpersonal relationships. Upon this foundation we then build *philia* and *eros* (See Figure 3). *Philia* is placed above *agapē*, not because it is more important but because it should be the outgrowth of *agapē*. The friendship of redeemed man is generated from acts of obedience to God. *Philia* is a step up from *agapē* because, for the Christian, it represents an affinity based upon a like nature with God. All who share in that nature should also share affection for those who possess that nature.

Eros is placed above *philia* because it is an outgrowth of *philia* for the believer. One should not seek to build a physical relationship with someone apart from the Divine will to which the believer responds in *agapē*. Also, except in situations where one who is already married becomes a believer and thus is now married to an unbeliever, *eros* should not be expressed to one who does not bear the like nature of God to which the believer responds in *philia*.

Figure 4 represents the breadth of each love. *Agapē* is the aspect of love which should find the broadest sphere of expression. *Philia*, by its nature will be expressed to a smaller group. *Eros* is to be limited to just one other person, forming what the Bible calls "one flesh."

There is some overlapping of *agapē*, *philia*, and *eros* as well as some exclusivity. The believer is commanded to love his wife, the brethren, and his enemies. The believer should find an affinity with his wife and the brethren, but not his enemies. The believer must never have a physical relationship with anyone but his/her mate.

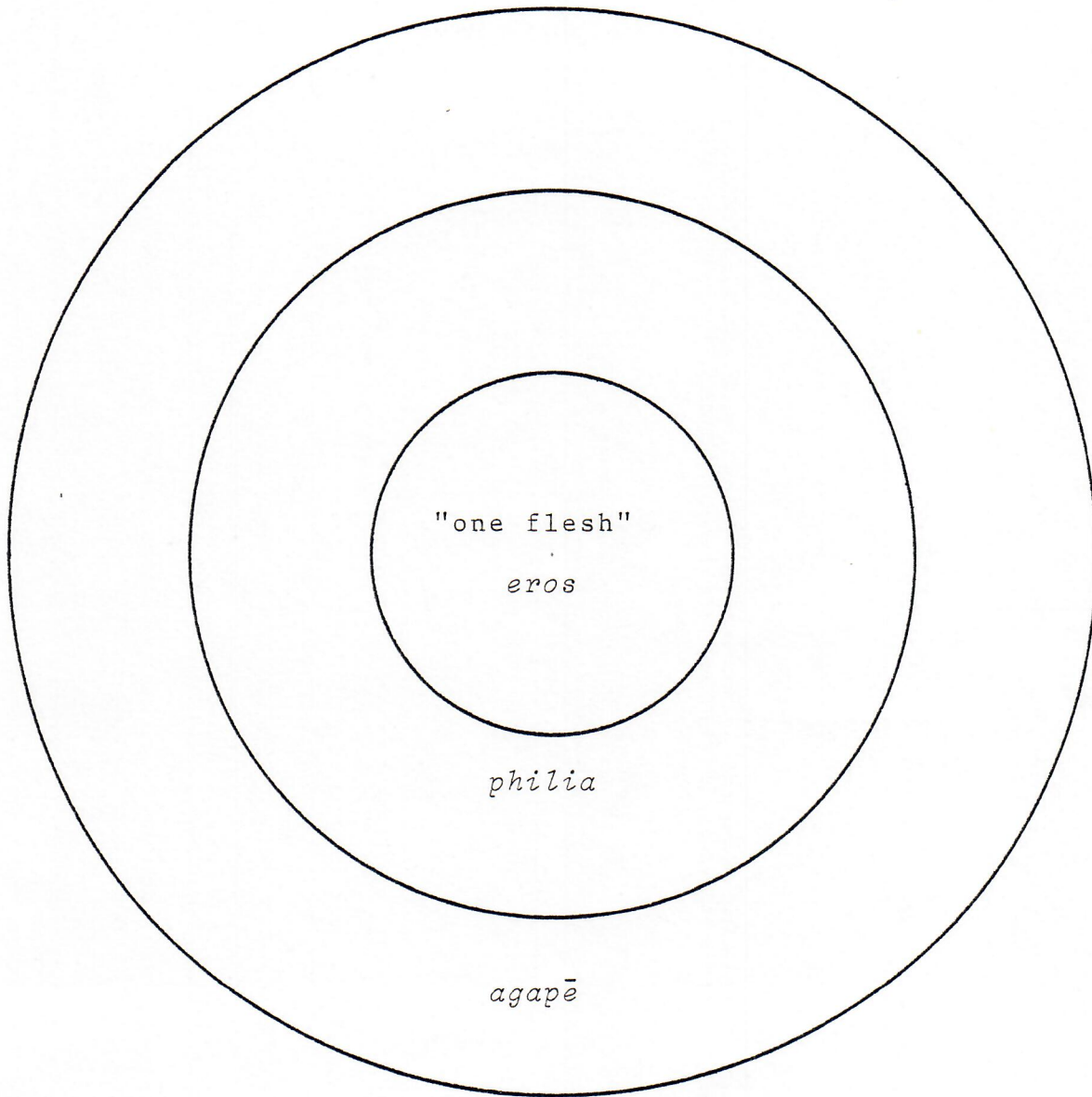


FIGURE 4 The breath of love

CONCLUSION

We have sought to correlate the three facets of love: *agapē*, *philia* and *eros* and to correct some misunderstanding about the relationship between them. Emotion, will, and intellect play a part in all three. In the believer, one should not be separated from the other. One should not be seen as having greater value than the others. *Agapē* and not *eros* forms the foundation for all interpersonal relationships for redeemed man. *Eros* forms the apex of our love because it is to be expressed to the smallest sphere, our mate, and because it should be based upon *philia* and *agapē*.

It has been the experience of this writer that the principles set forth in this chapter have proved invaluable in interpreting various passages in the New Testament. They have also proved to be a useful tool in explaining love in the counseling setting as well as in classroom teaching. It is a balanced approach to the concept of love which avoids the excesses and inconsistencies of both the secular scholars and the theologians of the past.

CHAPTER III

PRINCIPLES OF LOVE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

We have defined and correlated three facets of love: *agapē*, *philia*, and *eros*. In this chapter we will draw principles from the New Testament concerning these facets. In order to avoid some of the excesses of past writers, we will carefully observe each text from the standpoint of the ^{N.T.} writers, keeping in mind the teaching of the entire New Testament. In order to present the material in a manageable form, we have outlined the New Testament teaching of love using the general headings: Love Of God, Love For God, and Love Among Men.

We will not attempt to expound every passage but will refer only to those which have a direct bearing on the area under consideration. The principles stated at the beginning of each section summarize the content of that section. The combined total of all of the principles provide a summary of the New Testament teaching regarding love.

THE LOVE OF GODGod is love:

Principle: God is the ultimate standard for evaluating love.

The passage which forms the watershed for drawing principles from the New Testament regarding love is I John 4:7-10. In these four verses John sets

forth the standard for evaluating love. Characteristically he used *agapaō* rather than *phileō* or *eros* because *agapaō* reflects one's nature and will.

The great command for every believer is that we love one another. In order for this love to be the genuine article, it must be a reflection of God's love. To understand God's love one must understand God. This is obtained in two ways: first, one must be born of God (verse 7); second, one must know God (verse 7).

Rebirth refers to a one-time event which takes place the moment one receives Jesus Christ as personal Savior. At that moment the believer becomes a child of God. Knowing God, on the other hand, refers to the continuous personal relationship which results from being born of God.

When one is born of God and enters into the continuous personal relationship with God, then he will be able to understand that "God is love" (verses 8, 16). Many today are confusing this statement by interpreting it to mean, "Love is God" and see this as a definition of love. Others interpret this statement to mean, "God is loving" and believe this statement refers to the way God acts when He chooses.

When comparing the statement "God is love" with other statements by John, we see that neither of the above is correct. John is describing an essential aspect of God's nature. B. F. Westcott writes:

For the most part St John, like the other writers of the Bible, leaves the reader to form his conception of God from what is recorded of His action; but in three phrases he has laid down once for all the great outlines within which our thoughts on the Divine Nature must be confined. The first sentence is in his narrative of the Lord's words: '*God is spirit*' (John iv.24); the two others are in his first Epistle: '*God is light*' (I John i.5 note) and '*God is love*' (I John iv. 8, 16).

The three phrases which have been quoted do not simply specify properties of God (as '*God is loving*'), but, so far as we can apprehend them, essential aspects of His Nature. The first, if we may venture to distinguish them, is *metaphysical* and describes God in Himself, in His Being: He is Spirit. The second is *moral*, and describes God in His character towards all created things: He is Light. The third is

personal, and describes God in His action towards self-conscious creatures: He is Love.¹

"God is love," therefore, becomes the standard for evaluating all other love. If God by nature is *agapē*, then the one who is born of God and knows God must be by nature *agapē*.

John describes two kinds of individuals. In both instances the present participle *agapōn* is used to delineate individuals in a certain class.² There are those who love and those who do not. As God is by nature love, so all who are born of God and know God will go on loving as an expression of their union with and likeness to God. Those who do not, demonstrate that they are not united with and do not have the same likeness as God.

Even though an individual may be born of God and may know God, he still has the inner propensity to not act according to that divine likeness. Because of this there is a difference between saying that God is love and saying that the believer is love. God could never choose to act contrary to His nature, but men still blighted by sin in the world are able to do so. Therefore, the command to love one another is in order. Men must chose to love. However, this love does not have its origin in man. Its source is God and comes through rebirth.

Frequently the question is asked, "How can God be love and let all the suffering exist in the world?" This question betrays two errors. First it begins with man as the standard for love, and second, it fails to comprehend what God's love has led Him to do about the suffering in the world.

¹Brooke F. Westcott, The Epistles of St John (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), p. 167.

²Ernest D. Burton, Syntax of the Moods and Tenses (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1966), p. 56.

When men express love, often their love is harmful. For example, a child observes the struggles of a butterfly seeking to break out of its cocoon. Out of a sincere love and desire to help, he breaks apart the chrysalis that seems to be trapping the butterfly. To his horror his expression of love results in the death of the butterfly.

The love John commands of the believer for others is not the love which comes from within man but from God. God's love is never harmful. He has already expressed that love by sending His Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins (verse 10). God's love makes possible the transformation of a man from one who is by nature a sinner to one who is by nature like God. God's love removes the guilt of sin and the wrath which sin justly deserves. This transformation process can be compared to that of the larve being transformed into a butterfly. But God's love does not make the mistake that men might make by forcefully removing the chrysalis of life which would leave the transformed creature stunted, weak, and unable to sustain life.

Because God is love, men are able to love one another. Through rebirth and the indwelling Holy Spirit this perfect love of God is reproduced in the believer (verse 12) and becomes the standard for love.

Love within the God-head

Principle: Love within the God-head forms the pattern for love between believer and God and among believers.

In order to fully understand the love which God has for men, we must first understand the love expressed within the God-head. It is instructive to note that the terms *agapaō* and *phileō* are both used to describe the Father's love for the Son. However, the Son's love for the Father is never described as *phileō*. This does not imply that the relationship of the Son to the Father

is cold and without affection but is a reflection of the Divine order within the God-head.

In John 5:19, 20 John writes:

Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel.

The principle Christ is trying to establish is not only that He is equal with God but that His healing on the Sabbath was consistent with the works of the Father. The Son's actions were a result of this unique relationship to the Father.

It would be inappropriate to speak of the Son loving (*phileō*) the Father in this way because the purpose of the Son is to do the works which the Father has disclosed to Him. The Father, on the other hand, does not do the works disclosed to Him by the Son. For this reason, *agapaō* would be the only appropriate term to use in describing the Son's love for the Father. There is, therefore, an important and unique order within the God-head expressed in the concepts of love used.

It is also instructive to note that neither *agapaō* nor *phileō* is ever used of the Father and the Son for the Holy Spirit. Again, this does not in itself rule out love for the third person of the Trinity but reflects the emphasis upon the order within the God-head.

In a similar way we will see that the believer is commanded to love God and the Son but never the Father nor the Holy Spirit. The Divine order within the God-head requires a certain propriety with regard to love which is seen among the members of the God-head and reflected in man's love for the individual members of the God-head.

In John 14:31 Jesus said, ". . .I love (*agapaō*) the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do." Inasmuch as *agapē* is a love of the will and expresses one's nature, it best expresses the relationship of the Son to the Father. The Son's love is expressed in acts of obedience to the Father's will and for this reason becomes the supreme example of the believer's love for the Son.

On the other hand, in John 10:17 Jesus taught, "For this reason the Father loves (*agapaō*) Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again." The obedience of the Father is not what is in view here but the matter of the Father's choice. A. T. Robertson describes this when he writes, "The Father's love for the Son is drawn out (John 3:16) by the voluntary offering of the Son for the sin of the world (Rom. 5:8)."

Therefore, within the relationship between God the Father and God the Son we find a relationship of *agapē*: the Son for the Father as an act of obedience. This is not a chronological order but a logical one. If the Father loves the Son because of the Son's love (obedience) for the Father, then it is correct to say that the Father's love logically follows that of the Son. The fact that this is an economic ordering rather than a chronological ordering is seen in John 17:24b when Jesus prays, ". . .for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world."

The love relationship between Father and Son is eternal without beginning and end. It is a relationship of communion with the Father disclosing His will to the Son (*phileō*), the Son responding with obedience to the Father's will (*agapaō*), and the Father responding back in kind (*agapaō*) because of the Son's obedience.

³A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament 6 vols. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1932), 5:182.

The pattern of love within the God-head is also seen in the term "beloved." On two occasions during the earthly ministry of our Lord, God the Father audibly expressed His love for the Son. At the baptism of Jesus a voice was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."⁴ On the Mount of Transfiguration again a voice was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"⁵ In both instances the verbal adjective *agapētos* was used.

Arndt and Gingrich define this as "inclining strongly toward the meaning only-beloved."⁶ It speaks of one who is the recipient of another's love. The Synoptic writers chose to reserve this title for Jesus alone. Mark and Luke record an instance where Jesus used the term in a parable with clear reference to Himself (Mark 13:6; Luke 20:13). Matthew recalled a time Jesus used this title when interpreting a passage from Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 42:1) which spoke of the coming Messiah. The Hebrew word used is *rāsa* which described God's pleasure with his servants, particularly the Messiah.⁷

Therefore, *agapētos*, speaks of a peculiar love relationship. Luke was consistent with this usage when he recorded that Paul and Barnabas were called *agapētos* (Acts 15:23). The occasion was a letter sent from the First Jerusalem council to Antioch. This was the first time the title was addressed to men in the New Testament. From that time on it became a common title for men and spoke of their relationship to God and to one another.

⁴Matthew 3:17.

⁵Matthew 17:5.

⁶William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 6.

⁷R. Laird Harris, ed., Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament 2 vols. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:859.

The historical connection between the term used of Christ and used to refer to the disciples must not be over-looked. As the Son is beloved to the Father so the one who believes in the Son is beloved to God and to other believers. The adjective in the New Testament sense cannot correctly be applied apart from this association. The use of *agapētos* supports the principle that love within the God-head is the pattern for love between believers and God and among believers.

God's love for the world:

Principle: God's love for the world is supernatural and demands worship on the part of all who receive it.

Perhaps the greatest statement regarding the Good News of Jesus Christ in all of the New Testament is John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." This is the only specific reference to God loving the world in the New Testament. Jesus implies such in Matthew 5:45 when He taught His disciples to love their enemies "in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." The implication is that believers should love their enemies as God loves His enemies.

Paul suggested that God loves the world when he wrote:

. . .I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men. . .This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.⁸

Peter intimates the same when he writes, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."⁹

⁸ II Timothy 2:1-4.

⁹ II Peter 3:9.

The love of God for the world referred to in John 3:16 is presented in contrast to the love of unregenerated man. His love in sending His Son into the world was not an act of judgment but one of seeking to save those who would otherwise perish. God's love has the same effect that a beam of light would have in a dark room. As it illumines the objects in the room, it merely indicates their presence. It does not place the objects there. In like manner, Christ's presence as the incarnate Son, crucified for the sins of the world, reveals the nature of the love of every man who has not been born of God. As an act of the will he loves darkness which is the antithesis and, in this context, enemy of the light.

Therefore, God's love to everyone who will receive it brings salvation and eternal life and is not for the purpose of judgment. In contradistinction the love of men apart from Christ results in judgment because it chooses darkness rather than light. In this way Jesus demonstrated to Nicodemus the necessity of being born again. Left to themselves, men by their unregenerate love will bring about their own judgment. God's love seeks to overcome this.

In Romans 5:8 Paul adds another dimension to God's love. He writes, "But God demonstrates His own love (*agapē*) toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The supreme expression of *agapē* is that men who did not deserve it, but in fact deserved wrath, became its objects in Christ. In another place Paul calls this God's "great love with which He loved us."¹⁰

This is not characteristic of human love. While history records many acts of bravery by God's children, dying for one who does not deserve it is completely illogical and never required by God. Christ's death as an act of

¹⁰Ephesians 2:4.

God's love for the unworthy is logical only because it is effective in changing the object of that love from one who was by nature a sinner to one who is by nature like Christ. John writes, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God. . ."¹¹ The greatness of His love is found in the results: transformed lives.

The passages which give instruction regarding our love for others always stop short of commanding self-sacrifice for an unworthy object. When Jesus taught that we are to love our enemies and thereby demonstrate that we are sons of the Father in heaven (Matthew 5:44, 45), He does not refer to God's act of giving His son as the point of comparison but rather to the Father's impartial work of sustaining the world.

John writes, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."¹² We should not understand this to be a command to love the same way that Paul spoke of God loving in Romans 5:8 for two reasons. First, John is exhorting love for one's brother. The term brother is used by John in this epistle to refer to other believers and not to one's enemies. Second, John gives us clear instruction as to how this love for the brother is to be expressed. ". . .whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?"¹³ Laying down one's life for his brother means sharing what one has with a brother in need.

When speaking of God's love we must see it as supernatural love which far exceeds human love. It is capable of affecting a change in an object, transforming it from that which is unworthy to that which is worthy. To

¹¹I John 3:1.

¹²I John 3:16.

¹³I John 3:17.

equate the love commanded of believers too closely with the love God has for the world is to either limit God's love or to place upon men, even redeemed, spirit-empowered men, a burden God never places upon them. When confronted by the supernatural love of God, the only proper response is to fall down and worship the one who is the expression of that love.

God's love for believers:

Principle: Those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior are unique objects of God's love.

To the truth that God loves the world must be added the principle that God, in a special way, loves those who believe in His Son. As Israel in the Old Testament enjoyed a special relationship with God (Amos 3:2) so those who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior enjoy a special relationship with God today. This love takes the form of *phileō* in John 16:27 when Jesus said, "For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father." Affection for the Son on the part of believers brings affection for the believers on the part of the Father.

God the Father is said to *agapaō* those who *agapaō* Jesus (John 14:21). In both this verse and John 16:27 the love of the Father for the believer, motivated by the believer's love for the Savior, demonstrates a unique relationship between the Father and the believer. This should be of great encouragement to each one who has named the name of Christ.

The love of God is the basis for His discipline of His children (Hebrews 12:5-11). It is never for the purpose of punishment. Through God's discipline the believer becomes a partaker of His holiness (verse 10). Even though momentary discipline may bring sorrow, the final result will be "the peaceful fruit of righteousness" (verse 11).

While God's chastisement might appear to be the punishment at the time it is experienced, a perspective of eternity will demonstrate that this is not so. John writes, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love."¹⁴ Often Christians have mistakenly thought that what they were experiencing was punishment. However, God's love for the believer is never to punish but always has a positive purpose.

The word for love in Hebrews 12:6 is *agapaō*. However, Christ speaking to the church in Laodicea said, "Those whom I love (*phileō*) I reprove and discipline. . ."¹⁵ Therefore, discipline proceeds from both *agapaō* and *phileō*. Discipline as the expression of God's love for those who believe in Jesus Christ sets the believer apart as a unique object of God's love.

Most of the references to God's love for believers in the New Testament speak of Christ's love. Inasmuch as Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, it follows that God's love is most readily manifested through Him. Jesus taught His disciples, "He who has seen me has seen the Father."¹⁶ "Just as the Father has loved Me I have also loved you; abide in my love."¹⁷ Jesus both expresses and is the expression of the Father's love for the believer.

Christ's love is a reflection of the Father's love. Christ's love is also an act of His own volition. Paul writes, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant

¹⁴I John 4:18.

¹⁵Revelation 3:19.

¹⁶John 14:9.

¹⁷John 15:9.

aroma."¹⁸ This thought became the motivational force behind Paul's ministry. He wrote to the church at Corinth:

For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.¹⁹

To the Churches of Galatia he wrote:

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.²⁰

We have already noted that the Father loves (*phileō*) the Son and discloses Himself to Him (John 5:20). In the upper room Jesus comforted His disciples with these words, "No longer do I call you slaves; for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you."²¹ "Friend" translates the Greek work *philos* from which the verb *phileō* is derived. Therefore, we see that Jesus loves His disciples in a manner similar to the way the Father loves the Son. As the believer is a unique object of the Father's love, so also he is a unique object of the Son's love.

LOVE FOR GOD

Love for God the Father:

Principle: God has made Jesus Christ the supreme object of the believer's willful and affectionate love.

¹⁸ Ephesians 5:1, 2.

¹⁹ II Corinthians 5:13-15.

²⁰ Galatians 2:20.

²¹ John 15:15.

Jesus identified the greatest command to be, ". . . You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."²² All three synoptic writers record this teaching. Paul identifies love for God to be the basis for everything good in life (Romans 8:28). God's blessings for the believers who love Him are beyond comprehension (I Corinthians 2:9). Love for God is absolutely essential for all who claim to be his children.

It is instructive to note, however, that there is no reference in the New Testament to love on the part of the believer for God the Father or God the Holy Spirit. The New American Standard Bible translates I John 5:1 as if to contradict this statement. It reads, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him." While the translation does not present a serious problem, it is none the less an error. *Gennēsanta* does not refer to the Father but to God as the one who begets. *Patēr* does not occur in the sentence. Besides the fact that the believer is never said to love the Father, we find no reference stating that the believer is begotten of the Father. Therefore, the King James translation, ". . . and every one that loveth him that beget. . . ." is a more accurate translation.

We must not conclude that the believer should not love God the Father or God the Holy Spirit. The command to love God would include the Father and the Holy Spirit. But the absence of any direct reference to such love serves to underscore a truth about God the Son.

Jesus taught the disciples regarding the Holy Spirit:

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it

²²Matthew 22:37.

This along with the study on dyathysos sure destroys the Fatherhood of God heresy!

to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you.²³

The very nature of the Holy Spirit's ministry is such that He does not draw attention to Himself but to the Son instead. Therefore, He does not directly become the object of willful love or affectionate love. His ministry will lead to Jesus Christ becoming the object of the believer's love. Those today who single out the Holy Spirit for attention have failed to comprehend His function within the God-head.

The absence of any reference to the believer's love for God the Father is due to the nature of the Son's ministry. Paul writes, "And He is the image of the invisible God. . ."²⁴ "For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him."²⁵ "For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form."²⁶ As the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ is to be the specific object of love for every believer. This fact places in strong relief the importance of accepting the deity of Christ. John writes, "Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also."²⁷

All of the heresies since the day of Pentacost which have denied either the deity or the humanity of Christ have failed to see this important principle of love. The Jews were the first to deny Christ's deity. Their denial was based upon the claim that God was their Father. To this Jesus replied, ". . .If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent me."²⁸

²³ John 16:13-15.

²⁴ Colossians 1:15.

²⁵ Colossians 1:19.

²⁶ Colossians 2:9.

²⁷ I John 2:23.

²⁸ John 8:42.

*To claim God
as their father if
to would make them
equal with christ.
Jesus never gave credency
to this for them or for
anyone else?*

The incarnation has made Jesus Christ the focal point of our love for God.

Not only is Jesus the image and fulness of God, but He is also the one in whom God is glorified, Jesus taught His disciples, "And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."²⁹ To love Christ is to be loved by the Father (John 14:21). It is the Father's will that Jesus Christ be the object of all the love directed toward God.

This is what Paul meant when he wrote:

Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.³⁰

Love for God the Son:

Principle: Love for God the Son means being obedient to His will.

We have seen that God the Son is the person within the God-head to whom we are to direct our attention. Love, whether *agapē* or *philia*, is not some intangible entity. All of man's theories about love fall apart when they become so metaphysical as to lose all corporal reality. Jesus Christ is the corporal reality of God and therefore to be the object of our love.

John wrote:

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.³¹

In his first epistle he further wrote, "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands

²⁹John 14:13.

³⁰Philippians 2:9-11.

³¹John 1:14, 18.

handled, concerning the Word of Life--. . .what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also. . .³²

The great truth of the New Testament is that God, in His infinite wisdom, has given to us a clearly defined Object to love. The Old Testament saints could only experience God through the temple worship with its sacrificial service and were left to anticipate a more complete relationship with God. Yet their faith led them to a life of obedience to God which often resulted in self-denial, deprivation, and death. We read in Hebrews 11:39 and 40, "And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect." The purpose of this statement was to call the believer to a level of obedience and service to God that should at least equal, if not surpass, that of the Old Testament saint.

Peter expressed this in another way when he wrote:

As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things into which angels long to look. Therefore, gird your mind for action. . .³³

The tragedy in our day is that so many who claim to believe in Jesus Christ do not exhibit conviction and love for God which leads to godly character. Like the church at Laodicea they are nauseatingly tepid (Revelation 3:15, 16). The letter to the church at Ephesus could also be addressed to them which reads, "But I have this against you, that you have left your

³²I John 1:1, 3.

³³I Peter 1:10-13.

first love."³⁴

In another place Jesus, speaking of a time yet future, said, "and because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold."³⁵ Under the guise of being spiritually astute, many have separated faith and love from obedience. The very nature of love will not allow this to happen without the destruction of love itself.

The danger of emphasizing instruction regarding the law is that it might be misconstrued as the way of salvation without a close personal relationship with God. Law is not the way of salvation because:

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.³⁶

But this does not mean that the Gospel of Jesus Christ can be preached apart from instruction in obedience. The great commission commands the Church to make disciples by "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. . ."³⁷

The error that Timothy faced at Ephesus was that false teachers were teaching the law apart from regeneration (I Timothy 1:7). However, Paul writes, "But the goal of our instruction (commandment) is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."³⁸

Love and obedience cannot be separated without the destruction of love itself. Jesus taught His disciples, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and

³⁴ Revelation 2:4.

³⁵ Matthew 24:12.

³⁶ Titus 3:5, 6.

³⁷ Matthew 28:20.

³⁸ I Timothy 1:5.

Legalism ⇒ Teaching the Law without love?

he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him."³⁹ John pleaded with his flock, "Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."⁴⁰ The way for the church at Ephesus to rekindle its first love was to ". . .do the deed you did at first. . ."⁴¹

A few years ago a young man who professed to believe in Jesus Christ insisted on the privilege of being able to live his life as he pleased. He boasted, "No one can tell me I don't love God." The simple reply was the quoting of John 14:15, 21. With this he walked away without saying a word.

We have now come full orb from the rich young ruler in Christ's day who thought he could be right with God simply by being obedient. Today many believe that one can be right with God without being obedient at all.

Salvation comes through faith in God which in turn leads to obedience. This obedience from the heart is called *agapē*. If the love of God the Son was manifested as obedience to the Father (John 14:31), then the believer's love for the Son must be manifested as obedience.

On one occasion we are taught that believers are not only to *agapaō* Jesus Christ but also to *phileō* Him. Paul writes, "If any one does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Marantha."⁴² Because many have made a value judgment regarding *agapaō* and *phileō*, seeing *agapaō* as of greater value than *phileō*, the impact of this statement is lost to them.

The great poverty of all human philosophies of love is that they teach one can sustain affection apart from obedience. In fact, as we have demon-

³⁹ John 14:15, 21.

⁴⁰ I John 3:18.

⁴¹ Revelation 2:5.

⁴² I Corinthians 16:22.

strated in Chapter 2, true abiding affection arises out of obedience. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth to call them to a higher level of love and obedience. While his emphasis was on love for fellow believers, it would have been anticlimactic if he had not encouraged the same level of love on the part of believers for Jesus Christ in his conclusion.

What Paul stated in this passage was that the believer must add *phileō* to his obedience to the Savior. Because of the nature of *agapaō* it can be detached from any affinity for its object. One can love (*agapaō*) his enemy as well as his brother. But one can only love (*phileō*) someone to whom he is attracted. Affection for the Lord should be the natural outgrowth of obedience to the Lord. If anyone does not come to *phileō*, then even his *agapaō* is questionable. The one who is unable to express *phileō* and hence *agapaō* should be considered as not being saved at all. Love for God will be expressed as obedience to Jesus Christ. This obedience will not be a legalistic response to the Law but, while being the fulfillment of the law, will be a heart-felt response to the Savior.

Love as a precondition for service:

Principle: Christian service must be motivated by a love for God.

Throughout human history men have consistently erred by viewing the universe as man-centered rather than God-centered. Salvation has been viewed as primarily for the benefit and comfort of man rather than for the glory of God. A true appraisal of the Old and New Testaments will show that, while men benefit directly from God's saving grace, the unifying principle of Scripture is God's glory rather than man's salvation. This truth is nowhere seen more clearly than in the doctrine of love in the New Testament.

Perhaps the greatest expression of love in the New Testament is the prayer of Jesus in the upper room. He prayed:

And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.⁴³

As Jesus prayed this prayer He knew that glorifying the Father meant that He would have to suffer the cruel agonizing death of crucifixion. It would require causing his disciples great sorrow. But that sorrow would be turned into joy as the disciples came to realize the ultimate purpose of it all. This obedience of the Son exemplifies love for every believer.

Paul described Christ's death on the cross as ". . .an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."⁴⁴ Even though it was an act of love toward men, it was not an action primarily for the benefit of men but for God. This is to be true of Christian service as well.

We read concerning the believer's works, "For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints."⁴⁵

As our Lord's service was motivated by love for the Father and a desire to glorify Him, so should be the believer's. In John 21:15-17 as the resurrected Lord ate breakfast with His disciples, He began to probe the heart of Peter. Peter had suffered humiliation by denying the Lord on several occasions, later by failing to appraise the meaning of the empty tomb, and now by going fishing as if the resurrection meant little to him. The series of questions which our Lord addressed to Peter was not for the purpose of dis-

⁴³ John 17:3-5.

⁴⁴ Ephesians 5:2.

⁴⁵ Hebrews 6:10.

covering what was in Peter's heart, but to reveal what was there and to emphasize that the only lasting motivation for Christian service is love for Christ.

Jesus asked, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" In the upper room Peter had loudly protested that he was willing to go both to prison and to death for his Lord (Luke 22:33). At the suggestion that the disciples would all fall away, Peter had retorted, "Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away."⁴⁴ Now Jesus asked, "Do you love (*agapaō*) me more than these?" Peter responded, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love (*phileō*) You."

Many take Peter's use of *phileō* here to be an expression of a newly found humility because they regard *phileō* as a lower form of love than *agapaō*. B.

F. Westcott wrote:

He does not assume any superiority over others (more than these): and he lays claim only to the feeling of natural love. . . of which he could be sure. He does not venture to say that he has attained to that higher love (*agapan*) which was to be the spring of the Christian life.⁴⁷

It is interesting that the same commentator writes concerning the Father's love for the Son in John 5:20:

The word (*philein*) marks personal affection based upon a special relation (xi.3, 36; comp. Matt. x. 37), and not the general feeling of regard, esteem, consideration (*agapan*) which comes from reflection and knowledge: the former feeling answers to nature, the latter to experience and judgment (iii. 35, x. 17), and so is specially appropriate to spiritual relations. This love expresses (so to speak) the moral side of the essential relation of the Father to the Son. And so it is through the Son that the personal love of God is extended to believers: xvi. 27; comp. Rev. iii. 19.⁴⁸

It is curious why the same author would use *phileō* to refer to a high form of love of the Father for the Son but of a low form of love of Peter for the Savior, especially so soon after the crucifixion and in the setting of John 21.

⁴⁶Matthew 26:33.

⁴⁷Westcott, The Epistles of St. John, p. 303.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 85.

We must studiously avoid placing high or low value on these words but rather should see their difference to be that of kind. Rather than a love of the will, Peter wishes to emphasize his relationship to his risen Lord to be one of deep affection. While he does not venture to compare his love with that of the other disciples, his response to Jesus' question of comparison was an expression of sincere affection.

Jesus asked a second question, "Simon, son of John, do you love (*agapaō*) Me?" This is not the same as His first question because it is no longer a question of comparison. However, Peter gives the same answer as he did to the first question.

Then a third time Jesus asked a question of Peter. This question is different from both the first and second because this time He uses the word *phileō* instead of *agapaō*. John records, "Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time. . . ." Peter's grief could not be due to Jesus asking the same question three times, because He did not. Nor would the context allow that failing to get Peter to rise to His level, the Savior came down to Peter's. If Jesus were merely agreeing, it should have brought relief rather than grief.

In Peter's two previous answers he was not denying that he loved the Savior with *agapē* love. Instead, he indicated that he loved with the dimension, *phileō*, as well. In the first two questions Jesus was asking two basic things: the first drawing a comparison between Peter and the other disciples, and the second regarding a single object, "Me." The third questioned Peter's first two answers. This was the reason Peter was grieved.

Peter preceded his third answer with the protestation, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love (*phileō*) You." In each of the previous two answers Peter made reference to Jesus knowing (*oīda*). Now the reply was, "You (*oīda*) all things; You know (*ginōskō*) that I love you." B. F. Westcott

wrote, "The knowledge to which he appeals is not only that of divine institution, but of immediate observation."⁴⁹ Peter's grief was that his Master would question his previous two answers. He appealed to His present experiential knowledge.

It is important to note that our Lord ends His series of questions with this third one which directly questioned Peter's previous answers. This was not because, unable to accomplish His purpose, He gave up. In fact, His purpose was accomplished. He was able to draw out of Peter what He knew was there all along, but that which Peter needed to hear from his own lips. Peter had both *agapaō* and *phileō* for Jesus. Both would be required for the type of ministry to which Peter was to be called. This interpretation best corresponds to Paul's injunction in I Corinthians 16:22.

It is true that a spiritual leader in God's family must display a love for those to whom he ministers. But most important, a leader must first have love, both *agapaō* and *phileō*, for Jesus Christ. Paul reminded the churches in the Lycus valley:

And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. . . .Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."⁵⁰

Peter needed this exercise in self-evaluation because one day his service for his master would lead him to suffer similarly to the way He had suffered. As we have seen, the primary motivation for Jesus' suffering such agony was His love for the Father. For Peter it would be his love for the Son.

⁴⁹Westcott, The Epistles of St. John, p. 303.

⁵⁰Colossians 3:17, 23, 24.

Before we leave the subject of love as the precondition for Christian service, there is one additional passage that clarifies the matter of *agapaō* and *phileō* as motivational factors. In John 11:1ff John wrote that Lazarus of Bethany was sick. Out of great concern for their brother, his two sisters approached Jesus with the plea, "Lord, behold, he whom you love (*phileō*) is sick" (verse 3).

The appeal of the two sisters was based upon the deep affection which Jesus had for those within the inner circle of followers. After spending hours with them over a period of many months, it is understandable that such a relationship should arise. It was not just *agapaō* but also included *phileō*.

It was not John's style to mention himself by name in his gospel. On four occasions when he made reference to himself, he spoke of "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). This did not mean that Jesus loved John and no others. John himself stated ". . .having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."⁵¹

One of these references, however, used *phileō* instead of *agapaō* (John 20:2). In that text John was describing the occasion when he and Peter first heard about the empty tomb and ran to see for themselves. John added the description of deep personal affection which existed on the part of the Lord for him and the disciples. It was the separation from this affection which heightened John's anxiety and quickened his pace as he ran to the tomb. Jesus had loved (*phileō*) him.

Therefore, it was completely in order for the sisters of Lazarus to appeal to Jesus on the basis of His affection for the one who now lay gravely ill. One would expect that the loving thing to do would have been to heal this friend immediately or at least go to him and heal him. But John records

⁵¹John 13:1.

that Jesus did not do either. He wrote, "When therefore He heard that he was sick, He stayed then two days longer in the place where He was" (verse 6). Jesus delayed on purpose until Lazarus had died. When He did finally journey to the home of His friend, Lazarus had been in the tomb four days (verse 17). This apparent neglect and delay would not seem to have been the affectionate response in such a situation. Therefore, John inserted the editorial comment, "Now Jesus loved (*agapaō*) Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (verse 5).

The love which Jesus was now expressing for His friend was a love of the will rather than a love of affection, even at the sake of being misunderstood. His love (*agapaō*) for His disciples arose out of His love for the Father and a desire to do His will and to glorify Him (verse 4). Only through this obedience could He accomplish the purpose of God.

In this account and by observing John's careful use of *agapaō* and *phileō*, we see a principle for Christian service. At times a leader's love (*agapaō*) for God must override his love (*phileō*) for others out of deference to the will of God. The recipients of this love may not understand the resultant action if they have not come to appreciate God's will in the matter.

Christian service must be motivated by a love for Christ rather than by a love for others. This love must include both *agapaō* and *phileō*. Love for Christ will be translated into love for the recipients of this service. At times, obedience to God will require *agapaō* to override *phileō*. φ. II Co
5:14!

Luke recorded an incident when Jesus was eating a meal in the house of Simon the pharisee (Luke 7:36-50). On that occasion a woman of the street dared to violate social custom by entering Simon's house, approaching his esteemed guest, and washing His feet with tears and costly perfume. This act of service on the part of the woman was done at great personal cost to her.

Simon was offended both by the woman's act and by the Lord allowing her to do this. Jesus rebuked him because the woman, in her own way, had performed a service, washing Jesus' feet, which should have been the least that Simon, the host, should have done. Jesus then taught an abiding principle, ". . .he who is forgiven little, loves little" (verse 47).

Any servant of Jesus Christ who does not serve out of a heart of love for the Master has failed to comprehend his own sin and the great price that was paid to provide forgiveness. Love for Christ must be the motivation for Christian service; that love originates from an appreciation for what Christ has done for us.

LOVE AMONG MEN

Love for others:

Principle: Love for one's neighbor is as important as love for God and requires a believer to do what is beneficial for all men as God enables.

To this point we have seen the emphasis upon the great commandment to love God in the New Testament. Jesus said, "This is the great and foremost commandment."⁵² However, He did not stop there but went on to teach, "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."⁵³

Love for God cannot be emphasized to the exclusion of love for men any more than love for men can rightly be emphasized to the exclusion of love for God. Men, even unsaved men, still bear the image of God. James revealed the error of those who think they can love God without loving men when he wrote concerning the tongue:

⁵²Matthew 22:38.

⁵³Matthew 22:39, 40.

But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing.⁵⁴

John underscored this same error in thinking when he wrote:

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.⁵⁵

A young bitter woman sought counsel from a pastor for a variety of personal and family problems. When it was pointed out to her that the root of her problems was a deep resentment toward her mother, and that to correct these problems she needed to learn to love her mother, she exploded, "You cannot tell me I have to love my mother. I cannot and I will not ever!" The tragedy of this response was that the woman betrayed an inability to truly love God by her statement.

We have noted already the teaching of our Lord regarding our enemies (Matthew 5:43ff). The Jews mistakenly were teaching that because they were God's chosen people, they had a right to love their neighbor and hate their enemy. The fallacy of this teaching, besides the fact that it was never taught in the Old Testament, was that it led them to subjectively determine who was a neighbor and who was an enemy. In their opinion this gave them license to hate anyone they chose.

A lawyer came to Jesus wishing to justify himself with regard to the law commanding love for one's neighbor. He asked, ". . . who is my neighbor?"⁵⁶ In answer to this, Jesus presented the parable of the Good Samaritan. The man

⁵⁴James 3:8-10.

⁵⁵I John 4:20, 21.

⁵⁶Luke 10:29.

in the parable who had been accosted was not identified as to nationality but he was probably a Jew. The first two who passed by were Jews. One was a priest, God's servant who offered sacrifices in the temple. The other was a Levite, a representative of the people at the temple who performed various services. The one who offered aid and comfort to the bruised and broken man was not even a Jew, let alone a Priest or Levite. In fact, he was a Samaritan who, at that time, represented everything the Jews hated.

It is interesting to note that Jesus did not answer the lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbor?" Instead He asked a second question, "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?"⁵⁷ The command to love one's neighbor is a command to be a good neighbor. The burden of responsibility rests with each individual to be a good neighbor and so to fulfill the law of love. The qualifying phrase, "as yourself" is very important. It means doing for others what we would do for ourselves.

This qualification stops short of encouraging self-love and most certainly does not imply that we are to put self-interest above the interest of others. In our day there is an unwritten law called "The Law of Reciprocity." This states, "I will be good to you because you have been good to me." It is akin to the law that says, "I will be good to you in order to get you to be good to me."

On one occasion when Jesus was a guest at a dinner, He spoke up and said:

. . .When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and repayment come to you. But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Luke 10:36.

⁵⁸ Luke 14:12-14.

Loving one's neighbor should not be based upon the Law of Reciprocity but upon their need and our ability, as God provides, to meet that need.

However, the teaching of Jesus does not stop with forbidding the Law of Reciprocity when expressing love to one's neighbor. He went on to teach that we ought to use our money and influence in this life to make friends for eternity. In Luke 16:9 Jesus taught, "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings."

Whereas it is wrong to use our money and influence in this life simply to get others to love us out of selfishness, it is right and even commendable to get others to love us so that they, in turn, will love God and receive His grace and mercy. Concerning this passage A. T. Robertson wrote:

The purpose is that those who have been blessed and helped by the money may give a welcome to their benefactors when they reach heaven. There is no thought here of purchasing an entrance into heaven by the use of money. That idea is wholly foreign to the context. These friends will give a hearty welcome when one gives him mammon here. The wise way to lay up treasure in heaven is to use one's money for God here on earth. That will give a cash account there of joyful welcome, not of purchased entrance.⁵⁹

Many have thought that the command to "love your neighbor as yourself" teaches self-love. This is becoming more popular in our "Me, My, and Mine" generation. However, Paul warned of a time when "men will be lovers of self (*philautos*). . . rather than lovers of God (*philotheos*)."⁶⁰

In Matthew 6:25-34 Jesus counseled His followers regarding anxiety in life. His remarks regarding anxiety form a conclusion drawn from verse 24 where He said, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." We see from this passage that anxiety is a

⁵⁹Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 2:218.

⁶⁰II Timothy 3:2-4.

form of self-love where one has put love for things above love for God.

In John 12:25 we read, "He who loves (*phileō*) his life (*psuchē*) loses it; and he who hates his life (*psuchē*) in this world shall keep it to life eternal." This verse should not be confused with I Peter 3:10 (where Peter quoted Psalms 34:12, 13), "For, let him who means to love (*agapaō*) life (*zōē*) and see good days refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile."

The statement in John 12:25 referred to a form of self-love where the physical life becomes more attractive than doing the will of God. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, did not love His life (*psuchē*) but was willing to lay it down for the sheep (John 10:15). All who would be His servants must follow His example.

In I Peter 3:10, *zōē* refers not to the physical life together with its pleasures, but to "The present sojourn of man upon the earth with reference to duration."⁶¹ Lenski comments, "David and Peter are not thinking of easy pleasant, sunshiny days but of a life and of days that are full of rich fruit."⁶²

It is not wrong to have a positive outlook on life and a desire to achieve. But when this begins to deviate from God's will and overshadows our love for God and our neighbor, then it becomes self-love. John noted a form of self-love on the part of many who observed the miracles of Jesus in John 12:42, 43:

⁶¹W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revel Company, 1966), p. 336.

⁶²R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), p. 144.

Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

Loving one's neighbor and loving self are equal in importance but both must be subservient to loving God. There is little danger that someone will love his neighbor more than himself. But when one loves himself more than he loves his neighbor, his self-love becomes disobedience and hence is a lack of love for God.

In Paul's epistle to Titus he stressed the need to do good works. Sound doctrine (1:9) will build Christians who are sound in the faith (1:13) who, in turn, will be zealous for good deeds (3:1). Good deeds are good and profitable for men (3:8). This consideration for all men (3:2) is important because we ". . .once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived. . .but when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us. . .(3:3-5).

Our good works for men should be motivated by the same attitude which motivated God to provide for our salvation: kindness and love for mankind (*philanthrōpia*). This serves as a practical application to the command to love our neighbors. We, like God, should have a love for mankind and be willing to do what is beneficial for them.

A very confused man once asked a pastor, "How far does the command to love my neighbor go? Does it mean I have to sell my house and give all I have to the poor?" Like the rich young ruler who spoke to Jesus in Luke 18:23, this man was very rich and had put love for things above love for God. Both men exhibited a lack of faith in God as well as a lack of love for God.

As we become more acquainted with God through His Word, we find that we

can love God and obey Him fully because He never asks of us something He has not already enabled us to do. The command to love our neighbor as ourselves gives us both the breadth and the depth to which we are to love others. But within this obligation to love others, we find an order of priority taught in the New Testament.

Paul wrote:

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."⁶³

He followed this statement with an explanation of what it means to "walk in the Spirit." The fruit of the Spirit, is love, joy, peace, patience, etc. (Galatians 5:22). In Chapter 6 we find that those who are spiritual will seek to restore those who are caught in a trespass. The one who is spiritual will help to bear the burdens of others (verse 2) and will bear his own load (verse 5). He will share all good things with the one from whom he receives instruction (verse 6). The section closes with this exhortation, "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."⁶⁴

There are God-given priorities within the command to love our neighbor as ourselves. The obligation to love others is not some ethereal, nebulous concept which becomes impossible to fulfill. It has a starting point in time. Even this is narrowed by Paul when he wrote, "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever."⁶⁵

⁶³Galatians 5:13, 14.

⁶⁴Galatians 6:10.

⁶⁵I Timothy 5:8.

When we understand the God-given priorities within the command to love our neighbor and when we fulfill this command by walking in the Spirit, we will be set free from the burden of guilt in thinking we can never do enough for others. Also we will be free to set limits for ourselves by determining what we need in life. We will be able to enjoy that which God has led us to keep for ourselves to meet our own needs, the needs of our family, and the needs of our church.

This careful balance is found in I Thessalonians 4:9-12 where Paul wrote:

Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren. . . .to excel still more, and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you; so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

All three relationships are seen here: the brethren, our neighbors, and self.

When we love others as God commands and as we seek to have our own needs met, the results will be tranquility and contentment rather than agitation and guilt at not being able to do enough.

When we exhibit God's priorities in our love, we will be demonstrating that certain things are true about us. When we take care of our own family, we are demonstrating a proper faith in God (I Timothy 5:8). If we love the brethren as our Lord commanded, we are proving ourselves to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 13:34). It is imperative that every believer learn what the priorities of love are and how to express them.

A good text to summarize this section is found in Romans 13:8-10 where Paul writes:

Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.

Important to see in Church leaders

Love for the brethren:

Principle: Love among the brethren is required for the proper functioning of the body.

On the last night before our Lord went to the cross, He spent several hours with His disciples in an upper room. John recorded some of the conversation in the section known as the upper room discourse (John 13-17). One of the most profound statements made by Jesus that entire evening is found in John 13:34-35 when He said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Throughout the instructions given to the early church in the Epistles we find this theme repeated. This command is foundational to John's first epistle where he wrote:

Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes. I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.⁶⁶

Paul used the phrase "one another" in his writings approximately thirty-two times when referring to the relationship between believers in the body of Christ. In I Thessalonians 4:9 he wrote, "Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another." The fact that Paul was martyred twenty to twenty-five

⁶⁶I John 2:7-11.

years before John wrote his gospel demonstrates that our Lord's emphasis upon love for the brethren was common knowledge in the early church.

The command to love the brethren was a continuation and refinement of the command to love one's neighbor. Paul wrote, "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another."⁶⁷ In this verse Paul saw love for the brethren as an extension of the command to love one's neighbor.

Both *agapeō* and *phileō* are to be expressed toward the brethren. Paul concluded four of his nine church epistles with an exhortation to express Christian affection with a kiss (*philēme*). He ended his letter to Titus, "Greet those who love (*phileō*) us in the faith."⁶⁸

Paul used *agapē* in the same context with *philadelphia* (Romans 12:9, 10; I Thessalonians 4:9) demonstrating that the two concepts are not isolated. If we are truly expressing *agapē*, it should grow into *philadelphia*.

There is an old saying, "To dwell above with the saints we love, oh, that will be glory! But to dwell below with the saints we know, well that's a different story!" This should not be true if individuals within the body of Christ are exercising the principles of love taught in the New Testament.

James wrote that the royal law, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (James 2:8), must be translated into an active care for a brother or sister who is in need in order for faith to be genuine. There must never be partiality based upon such arbitrary standards as material wealth or position in the body of Christ.

⁶⁷Ephesians 4:25.

⁶⁸Titus 3:5.

Peter saw an unbreakable link between faith and love when he wrote:

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding Word of God.⁶⁹

In the list of Christian virtues in II Peter 1:5-7, he exhorted his readers to add love (*agapē*) to brotherly love (*philadelphia*). In verse 9 he wrote, "For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins."

Love within the body must not be limited to those who are familiar to us. It is important to demonstrate hospitality. The Greek words translated "hospitality" are *philoxenia* and *philoxenos* and refer to a love of strangers. In each of the five contexts (Romans 12:3; Hebrews 13:2; I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8; I Peter 4:9) where these words are used, love for the brethren who are not personally known is in view.

Assisting unbelieving strangers may fall under the heading of loving our neighbor. But there is a danger. John warns, "If any one comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds."⁷⁰ Christians must be very discerning not to exercise hospitality in such a way as to promote the cause of the enemies of Christ.

Hospitality is an important way to help promote the Gospel ministry. The church on the island of Crete was to help those who journeyed through

⁶⁹ I Peter 1:22,23.

⁷⁰ II John 10, 11.

their region (Titus 3:13, 14). This was behind Paul's exhortation in Titus 3:15 when he instructed them to "Greet those who love us in the faith."

Society in Paul's day was much different than today. People were not as mobile. It took longer to travel distances and there were no Holiday Inns along the way. For a missionary to travel from Jerusalem to Corinth, weeks rather than days were required. Sending a personal message between churches often required a long journey by personal envoy.

It cannot be argued, however, that the ease of travel and the existence of modern communication today has eliminated the need for Christian hospitality. In the two passages regarding the selection of church leaders (I Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:8), hospitality is given as a qualification.

Peter places hospitality at the beginning of the list of ministries which believers should practice among themselves in 1 Peter 4:9. To his exhortation he adds that hospitality should be provided "without complaint." This expresses the thought that hospitality is not simply a good idea if we want to do it and if it is convenient. It should be practiced when the need arises for the benefit of the other party, even if providing it will be costly to us.

Love within the body of Christ is the "grease that causes the gears to run smoothly." In Ephesians 4, love is the evidence that individual members of the body are walking in a manner "worthy of the calling with which you are called" (verse 1). In verse 2, forbearance is to be shown "in love." In verse 15, the truth is to be spoken "in love." In verses 15 and 16 Paul wrote:

. . .we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

The body of Christ cannot function without love. There is always the

potential for conflict when two or more individuals live and work together. Some have the attitude today that becoming a Christian automatically makes one loving, and therefore, that working with Christians should be very easy. Experience demonstrates that the opposite is true. Love is the fruit of the Holy Spirit but must also be learned. Paul wrote, "Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, and offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."⁷¹ We should give as much attention to encouraging love as we do to good works. We read in Hebrews 10:24, "and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds."

Peter wrote, "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins."⁷² The thought that love covers sin is found in Proverb 10:12 and repeated in James 5:20. This cannot mean that we are to seek to hide sin from God. Nor does it mean that we are to look the other way and ignore sin in the lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul exhorted, "Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted."⁷³ Christians are to judge regarding sin in the body. To not judge is to be unconcerned about God and our brother and therefore to lack love.

"Covering a multitude of sin" means that we are to have a gentle patience with each other until a level of maturity is reached where the sin disappears. This is not a toleration of sin. Tolerance for the sin of a brother or sister in Christ cannot be construed as love.

⁷¹ Ephesians 5:1, 2.

⁷² I Peter 4:8.

⁷³ Galatians 6:1.

God's love caused Him to be longsuffering with men until salvation in Christ could be provided. Peter spoke of the patience of God which "kept waiting in the days of Noah."⁷² In his second epistle he wrote:

But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.⁷³

Believers are to ". . .regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation. . ."⁷⁴

As God has expressed His love by His patience, so we should express our love by our patience. This love will motivate us to pray for the erring brother (I John 5:16,17). Like God the Father, we will be willing to exercise discipline in the body of Christ (I Corinthians 5:16, 17) and to forgive when repentance is expressed (II Corinthians 2:5-11).

In Hebrews 12:11-15 we read:

All discipline for the moemnt seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.

There are many more references to love for the brethren in the New Testament but space is not available to comment on each. There is one additional passage, however, that we need to consider--I Corinthians 13. We have reserved this passage until now because there is a proliferation of works dealing with this passage. It is the most familiar of all of the texts regarding love. Yet it is the opinion of this writer that the great love

⁷²I Peter 3:20.

⁷³II Peter 3:8, 9.

⁷⁴II Peter 3:15.

chapter has often been disconnected from its immediate context and given such emphasis that some of the original meaning has been lost.

Paul's first epistle to the church at Corinth dealt with a multitude of problems existing in that local church. One such problem was the misuse of the speaking gifts in the public worship services. Chapter 12, 13, and 14 addressed this specific problem. Many in that day thought that if someone was an eloquent speaker, that was all that was necessary in order to be a successful pastor. The gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge were, therefore, the most coveted by individuals. But Paul said that without love the entire point of the Gospel was missed.

Both the context and purpose of Paul required an almost hyperbolic explanation of *agapē*. This does not mean that what Paul said was untrue or can be ignored. To Paul, love is the essence of the Gospel. Without love all other ministries are worthless. Love does not come easy. It must be pursued with diligence. Of the three main Christian virtues—faith, hope, and love--love is the greatest (I Corinthians 13:13).

This writer was beginning a new ministry in a church that had had many problems. It was obvious from the outset that many of the problems still festered, so love was the theme of the sermons preached for the first few weeks. One Sunday after the morning worship service a very bitter and unhappy woman spoke up as she left the service, "Love! Love! Is that all you can preach on? There are other things in the Bible, too, you know!" What Paul probably would have said to her was, "No, lady. Without love there is nothing else. With love all the rest of the Scriptures make sense."

Love in the home:

Principle: Love in the home must be based upon the foundation of a love for God.

Just as love for one's neighbor and for the brethren must be learned, so love in the home must also be learned. Younger women must be taught to love their husbands (*philandros*) and their children (*philoteknos*) (Titus 2:4). Husbands are exhorted to love their wives (Colossians 3:19; Ephesians 5:22).

We noted earlier a propriety in the instructions regarding love observed within the God-head and between the believer and God the Father. A similar propriety is found in the instructions regarding the family. Except for Titus 2:4, the love of the woman for her husband and children is never mentioned. Instead, wives are commanded to be submissive to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; I Peter 3:7). Fathers are to discipline their children (Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21), and children are to honor their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20).

Each of these exhortations regarding family relationships, however, must be seen in the total context of the New Testament. The relationship of the wife to her husband is to be similar to that of the church to Christ which we have seen is a relationship of both *agapē* and *philia*. The relationship of an earthly father toward his children compares to that of the Heavenly Father toward His children which is also a relationship both of *agapē* and *philia*.

Therefore, what we have concluded about love in the New Testament regarding other relationships must also be applied to the family. The only difference is with reference to the relationship between the husband and wife. To the love of the will and the love of affection in the marriage relationship must be added physical love.

In Chapters 1 and 2 we noted that the Greek word, *eros*, does not occur in the New Testament. Because it has become associated with physical love and

because the physical relationship is mentioned in the New Testament, we have chosen to retain *eros* in our list of Greek words for love.

It is the opinion of this writer that the reason *eros* is not specifically mentioned in the New Testament is not because physical love is evil or unimportant, but because, to be properly expressed within marriage, both *agapē* and *philia* must be present. Without the love of obedience (*agapē*), *eros* becomes lust or promiscuity and will lead to fornication and adultery. Without the love of affection (*philia*), *eros* is repulsive and leads to frigidity or impotency. When *agapē* and *philia* are properly expressed in the marriage, *eros* becomes natural and fulfilling. The problems caused by *eros* being expressed apart from *agapē* and *philia* are considered in the New Testament.

Therefore, this writer has avoided specific counseling regarding *eros* in the pastoral ministry. If there is a physical problem, this should be discussed with a competent Christian physician. If there is a lack of knowledge, there are a number of works available where the information is presented in good taste. However, such information should be discussed between husband and wife in the privacy of their home and not in the company of others. The current trend toward more and more freedom in open discussion is not the answer. Such practice promotes *epithumia* rather than God-honoring *eros*.

Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew 5:27 and 28, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery;' but I say to you, that every one who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart." Jesus taught in this passage that it is possible to commit adultery in the mind. It is possible for marriage counselors and counselees to do so. Our Lord's warning should be heeded in our, so-called, open society today. While it may become easier with practice to talk openly about sex, it does not make it right.

In Hebrews 13:4 we read, "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge." It is possible to dishonor the marriage bed under the guise of giving counsel. We need to return to a holy dread of offending God which is of greater importance than whether or not we are as successful in *eros* as Hollywood or current opinion say we should be.

The Scriptures are very careful never to speak in a suggestive way or to use sensual language. Some argue today that the Old Testament Song of Solomon is composed of such literature. However, one must use another method besides the literal method of interpretation to see it as such. A proper interpretation of both Old and New Testaments demonstrate that discretion is never sacrificed to satisfy man's unquenchable desire to know.

Coupled with the increased openness in sex therapy and group discussions is the attitude that anything done behind closed doors is right. Yet Hebrews 13:4 states very clearly that the physical relationship can become defiled. This does not refer only to adultery. It is possible for a husband and wife to commit fornication with each other. A consistent spiritual walk will guide a couple in what is and is not glorifying to God.

The physical relationship in marriage was intended for pleasure as Dr. Ed Wheat explains in his book and tapes. But that is not the only purpose or even the primary purpose. The physical relationship was intended by God first for procreation and then to draw one man and woman into a fulfilling relationship in which He could be glorified.

Eros, as we have defined it, must never be expressed outside of marriage. Once a man and woman have come to the marriage relationship, it is their duty to satisfy their mate's physical needs. I Corinthians 7:1-7 gives us the obligation of the husband and wife. Ephesians 5:22-33 gives us the pattern.

In the Ephesians passage Paul was not referring specifically to *eros*. Yet as the principles of this passage are applied to the marriage, *eros* will naturally follow. In verse 22 the wife is to be subject to her own husband. This does not mean that the husband is the despot in the home who has the right to make ever-increasing demands on the wife. The Christian wife can submit to her husband without fear because he is her head as Christ is the head of the Church (verse 32). The headship of Christ was demonstrated by His act of giving Himself for the church (verse 25).

The husband is, therefore, to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He must consider how he might best help her to be the kind of wife that will please God. If his relationship to God is distorted, his relationship to his wife will be distorted as well. If he is in fellowship with God and seeking to please Him in all respects, then his wife will have little difficulty being in subjection to him.

Peter counsels:

You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.⁷⁵

Failure to give due respect and love to the wife will hinder the relationship of the husband to God and will make it difficult for the wife to submit to her husband.

Therefore, when *agapē* and *philia* exist on the part of the husband and wife for God and between each other, *eros* will naturally follow. Apart from this it will become unholy and unsatisfying.

It is important that Christian parents provide sound instruction concerning hygiene to their children. This should include wise counsel concerning *eros*. Enough information should be given to satisfy healthy curiosity with-

⁷⁵ I Peter 3:7.

out arousing unholy desires. This training should also include a clear presentation of the biblical data concerning God's will in marriage.

Christian young people must be equipped with the knowledge God has revealed if they are to make the right choices. This will include both the positive prospects for a happy marriage in Christ as well as the dangers involved in violating God's will.

One tragic consequence of our permissive society today is that many Christians hold the opinion that it is next to impossible to choose the right marriage partner and avoid the heartbreak of divorce. Even if the Christian parent has not been totally successful in marriage or has gone through a divorce, it does not mean that God's plan for a successful marriage will not work today.

Even though we are addressing the New Testament in this study, one verse in the Psalms stands out regarding this pessimism toward a successful marriage. In Psalm 73 as Asaph pondered the wickedness of the world around him, he considered whether or not it was worth the trouble to remain pure in heart. It seemed to him as if sin was rewarded and purity was in vain. But he stopped himself and in verse 15 exclaimed, "If I had said, 'I will speak thus.' Behold, I should have betrayed the generation of Thy children." Any believer who says that a happy successful marriage as God intended is impossible today is denying the faith and is betraying this generation of young people. A love for God as outlined in the New Testament will form a solid foundation for a happy home. Marriages fail, not because Scriptural principles have been followed, but because they have been violated.

Eros in marriage should be seen as the physical expression of biblical *agapē* and *philia*. Then when marriage counseling is necessary, the focus

will be upon *agapē* and *philia*. This is the approach taken by the Holy Spirit who is the author of the New Testament. We cannot improve upon His method.

While *agapaō* is commanded of every believer and *phileō* is seen as an obligation, *eros* in the New Testament is seen as not being absolutely essential. In I Corinthians 7:7-9 Paul wrote:

Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that. But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.

Some individuals have been given the ability to remain unmarried and to have no need for the expression of *eros*. In verse 15 Paul refers to "a gift from God" (*charisma ek Theou*). If an individual does not need to express *eros*, it is not necessary to marry. But if one needs to express *eros* it would be foolish and contrary to God's plan not to marry. Both the need and the lack of need, according to Paul are "*charisma ek Theou*."

If an individual enters the marriage relationship, he or she must accept the responsibility for his or her part of the relationship and, by faith claim God's provision to be able to fulfill their responsibility to their mate. On the other hand, if an individual does not wish to enter into marriage, he or she must, by faith, accept the responsibility to live in godliness and purity and not express *eros*.

Marriage should never be viewed as wrong for mature adults who are seeking God's will for their lives. This is the generally expected pattern. However, at times God does single out individuals to serve Him in a special way. These individuals are not "missed" or in any way unfulfilled. The depth of relationships available to others is available to them as well.

Individuals may choose to forego expressing *eros* for a time because God has called them to a special ministry. This is never true of married couples

except for short periods of time set aside for prayer by mutual consent (I Corinthians 7:5). Those who intend to forego *eros* should remain single.

Paul wrote:

Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy. I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you should marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin should marry, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.⁷⁶

Here he is not forbidding marriage but merely calling attention to the fact that at times family responsibilities may make it more difficult to serve the Lord.

Marriage should never be seen as conflicting with God's will. To know what God's will is and not do it is sin (James 4:17). However, Paul makes it very clear that marriage by mature adults is not sin. Celibacy as taught by some churches is not Pauline. Paul is simply presenting the truth about marriage. If someone wishes to marry, praise the Lord. God will provide what is necessary to effectively serve Him apart from marriage or in marriage. But at times it will be easier for the single person to perform certain kinds of ministries. Paul concludes, "And this I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is seemly, and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord."⁷⁷

The fact that Paul teaches abstention from *eros* under certain conditions as well as that *eros* is proper only in marriage totally refutes current theories in psychology and philosophy which place *eros* as the foundation of

⁷⁶I Corinthians 7:25-28.

⁷⁷I Corinthians 7:35.

all interpersonal relationships. God's children must find their authority for faith and practice in the New Testament rather than in human philosophies.

CONCLUSION

There are three facets to love: willful love, affectionate love, and physical love. These are expressed by three Greek words: *agapē*, *philia*, and *eros*. Only *agapē* and *philia* and their cognates are found in the New Testament.

Agapē is essentially a love of the will whereby an individual makes choices which reflect his true character. For the Christian; *agapē* is the expression of obedience to the will of God revealed in the Word. The desire and ability to love in this way comes through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. God's will may lead to self-sacrifice or the act of loving someone who is not worthy. However, this is not the essence of *agapē*, but only a manifestation of it.

Philia is the love which arises from familiarity as individuals come to know each other and recognize an affinity for one another. Therefore, it is essentially self-disclosure and affection. As it is possible to make wrong choices and hence to have an improper *agapē*, so it is possible to be attracted to the wrong object or express *philia* in the wrong way. Therefore, as *agapē* must be based upon God's Word, so *philia* must be based upon *agapē*.

Both *agapē* and *philia* will be the natural outgrowth of a life of faith in God. If an individual is unable to express either, his or her faith can be seriously questioned. The two facets of love--*agapē* and *philia*--exist within the God-head and should be reflected in the body of Christ and in the home.

Agapē should be expressed toward all men in the same way that God loves

the world. But neither God nor the believer will find a close affinity with the world. The love of God and of Christians for the world leads them to do what is beneficial for mankind. However, this love does have its limits. The love for one's family and for other believers takes precedence over love for the world. ^AThe balanced view of the New Testament should be the guideline so that God's will is accomplished in every respect.

Love for God is the greatest commandment. Love for others and love for self are of equal value for the Spirit-controlled individual. Self-love, on the other hand, is the result of putting one's own desires above the will of God. Therefore, self-love is actually a lack of love for God.

Eros is not the foundation for all interpersonal relationships as held by many today. *Agapē* is the foundation. *Eros*, for the believer, must be based upon a proper expression of *agapē* and *philia*. When this is true, it is clear that *eros* should only be ^{expressed} experienced in marriage.

Therefore, *eros* should be under the control of one's will. Apart from marriage it can and must be suppressed. In marriage it becomes a means whereby the physical needs of the marriage partner are met and God is glorified. It is the obligation of both husband and wife to express *eros* in the marriage. When *agapē* and *philia* are properly expressed, *eros* will be fulfilling rather than burdensome.

At times God equips some individuals so they do not need physical love. This may be for a period of time or for life. These individuals should not enter marriage but instead should seek to serve God as He leads. Whether an individual marries or remains single, if he/she is following the Lord in the matter, God will give grace to do His will. Celibacy is not a sign of greater spiritual maturity and may actually lead to sin if promoted as such.

The goal of this study was to clarify the New Testament teaching regard-

ing love. We have seen that the New Testament is balanced and easy to understand. It is the speculations and romanticism of men that have made the subject complicated. It is the sin of men's hearts that has turned love upside down and given physical love an importance God never intended. It is the misunderstanding of Bible interpreters that has placed *agapē* so high above *philia* and *eros* in importance that interpersonal relationships have become distorted, either by failing to give *philia* and *eros* their proper place or by encouraging believers to follow the teaching of the world because they do not understand the practical teaching of Scripture.

Christian leaders and counselors must be very careful what they counsel and how they counsel. *Eros* must never be emphasized so as to increase *epithumia* or presented as having the importance given to it by fallen man. The goal of all Christian ministry should be to teach a proper concept of love, free from the errors of the world.

Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more. For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. Consequently, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.⁷⁸

you might have considered the meaning of "vessel" above - but a good treatment anyway. P.L.K.

⁷⁸I Thessalonians 4:1-8.

Incidentally, I personally think it refers to a wife. This seems fairly clear given the moral situation at Thessalonica! - It accords well, too, with your general thesis!

INDEX OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXTS

Matthew

3:17 50
5:27-28 86
5:43ff. 71
5:44-45 17, 53
5:45 51
6:25-34 73
10:37 28
17:5 50
22:37 28, 57, 65
22:38 70
22:39-40 70
24:12 61
26:33 65
28:20 61

Mark

6:24 18
12:28-31 17
13:6 50

Luke

6:32 18
7:36-50 69
7:47 70
8:42 17
10:29 71
10:36 72
11:5-8 15
11:43 18
14:12-14 72
15:69 15
18:23 75
20:13 50
20:46 18
22:33 65
23:12 15

John

1:14 59
1:18 59
3:16 14, 20, 49, 51
3:35 65
4:18 55

4:24 45
5:1 57
5:19-20 48
5:20 14, 56, 65
8:42 58
10:15 74
10:17 20, 49, 65
11:1ff. 68
11:3 68, 65
11:36 65
11:4 69
11:5 69
11:6 69
11:17 69
12:25 74
12:42-43 74
13-17 78
13:1 68
13:23 68
13:34 77
13:34-35 78
14:9 55
14:13 59
14:15 19, 62
14:16-17 19
14:20 19
14:21 19, 62, 54, 59
14:31 49, 62
15:9 55
15:15 14, 56
16:13-15 58
16:27 14, 54, 65
17:3-5 64
17:24 49
19:26 68
20:2 68
21:7 68
21:15-17 64
21:20 68

Acts

15:23 50

Romans

1:31 5
5:8 20, 49, 52, 53

6:12 8
8:28 57
12:1 30
12:3 80
12:9-10 79
12:10 5
13:8-10 77
13:14 8

I Corinthians

2:9 57
5:16-17 83
6:12 23
6:20 29
7:3 23, 29
7:5 91
7:7-9 90
7:9 29
7:15 90
7:25-28 91
7:35 91
12-14 84
13:13 84

II Corinthians

2:5-11 83
5:13-15 56

Galatians

2:20 56
5:13-14 76
5:22 19, 76
6:1 82
6:5 76
6:10 76

Ephesians

2:4 52
4 81
4:1 81
4:2 81
4:15 81
4:16 81
4:25 79

5:1-2 56, 82

5:2 64

5:22 85, 88

5:25 88

5:32 88

6:1-3 85

6:4 85

Philippians

2:9 20

2:9-11 59

Colossians

1:15 58

1:19 58

2:9 58

3:17 67

3:18 85

3:19 85

3:20 85

3:21 85

3:23 67

3:24 67

I Thessalonians

4:1-8 94

4:3-4 9

4:4-5 29

4:9 78, 79

4:9-10 28

4:9-12 77

I Timothy

1:5 61

1:7 61

3:2 80

3:3 81

5:8 76, 77

II Timothy

2:1-4 51

3:2-4 73

3:3 5

Titus

1:8 80, 81

1:9 75

1:13 75

2:4 28, 85

3:1 75

3:2 75

3:3-5 75

3:5 79

3:5-6 61

3:13-14 81

3:15 81

Hebrews

6:10 64

10:24 82

11:39-40 60

12:5-11 54

12:6 55

12:10 54

12:11 54

12:11-15 83

13 83

13:2 80

13:4 30

James

2:8 79

3:8-10 71

4:4 12

4:17 91

5:20 82

I Peter

1:10-13 60

1:22-23 80

3:7 85, 88

3:10 74

3:20 83

4:8 82

4:9 80, 81

II Peter

1:5-7 80

3:8-9 83

3:9 51

3:15 83

I John

1:1 60

1:3 60

1:5 45

2:7-11 78

2:17 23

2:23 58

3:1 53

3:16 53

3:17 53

3:18 62

4:7 19, 44

4:7-10 44

4:8 44, 45

4:16 44, 45

4:10 47

4:12 47

4:20-21 71

5:3 21

5:16-17 83

II John

10-11 80

Revelation

2:4 61

2:5 62

3:15-16 60

3:19 55, 65

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

- Benda, Clemens E. The Image of Love. The Free Press of Glenoe, Inc., 1961.
- Chesser, Eustace. The Cost of Loving. London: Methuen & Co., 1964.
- Colman, Arthur D. Love and Ecstasy. New York: The Seabury Press, 1975.
- Drummond, Henry. The Greatest Thing in the World. New York: Grossel & Dunlap, n.d.
- Fowles, Barbara K. Separateness: The Meaning of Love and Concern. Guild Lectures No. 148, 1968.
- Furnish, Victor Paul. The Love Command in the New Testament. New York: Abingdon Press, 1972.
- Geisler, Norman L. The Christian Ethic of Love. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973.
- Henry, Carl F. H. Christian Personal Ethics. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957.
- Lewis, C. S. The Four Loves. New York: A Harvest/HJB Book, 1960.
- May, Rollo. Love and Will. Dell Publishing Company, 1969.
- Miller, Howard, and Siegel, Paul S. Loving, A Psychological Approach. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1972.
- Montagu, Ashley, ed. The Meaning of Love. New York: The Julian Press, Inc., 1953.
- _____. The Practice of Love. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1975.
- Morgan, Douglas. Love: Plato, The Bible and Freud. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1964.
- Morris, Leon. Love Christian Style. Portland: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1976.
- _____. Testaments of Love, A Study of Love in the Bible. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981.

- Nygren, Anders. Agape and Eros. Translated by Philip S. Watson. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1953.
- Otto, Herbert A., ed. Love Today, A New Exploration. New York: Associated Press, 1972.
- Palmer, Earl F. Love Has Its Reasons. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1977.
- Scroogie, W. Graham. The Love Life, A Study of I Corinthians 13. Pickering & Inglis, n.d.
- Trobisch, Walter. Love is a Feeling to Be Learned. Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1971.

B. COMMENTARIES AND LANGUAGE HELPS

- Bauer, Walter. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. Translated by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1957.
- Briggs, Charles A.; Driver, Samuel R.; and Plummer, Alfred, eds. The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, by Archibald T. Robertson and Alfred Plummer.
- Burton, Ernest De Witt. Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1898.
- Cremer, Hermann. Biblio-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895.
- Dana, H. E., and Mantey, Julius R. A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1955.
- Geden, A. S., and Moulton, W. F., ed. A Concordance to the Greek Testament. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963.
- Harris, R. Laird. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, 2 vols. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.
- Kittel, Gerhard, ed. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 9 vols. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968.
- Lenski, R. C. H. The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963.
- Morris, Leon. The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th ed., "Personal Ethics, The Commandment to Love God and Neighbor," by Helen Hemingway.

The Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1933.

Robertson, Archibald Thomas. Word Pictures in the New Testament, 7 vols. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1933.

Stong, James. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, n.d.

Trench, Richard Chenevix. Synonyms of The New Testament. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966.

Vine, W. E. An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1940.

Westcott, Brooke Foss. The Epistles of St. John. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966.

_____. The Gospel of St. John. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967.

C. PERIODICALS

Aronson, Leonard J. "The Imp of God: Can God Command Us to Love Him?" Conservative Judaism 34 (September/October 1980):28-36.

Davies, James W. "An Investigation of the History of *Agape* and *Eros* from the Perspective of the Psychoanalytic Phenomenon of Transference." Encounter 28 (1967):151-160.

Geisler, Norman L. "Biblical Absolutes and Moral Conflicts." Bibliotheca Sacra 131 (July 1974):219-228.

Grounds, Vernon C. "Therapist and Theologian Look at Love." Christianity Today 15 (July 1971):14-16.

Harris, Charles E. "Can *Agape* Be Universalized." The Journal of Religious Ethics 6 (Spring 1978):19-31.

Jones, Ralph M. "Is the New Morality Working--and for Whom?" Religion in Life 42 (Summer 1973):249-260.

Milhaven, John Giles. "Response to *Pure Love* by Robert Merrihew Adams." Journal of Religious Ethics 8 (Spring 1980):101-104.

Pentecost, J. Dwight. "For Love's Sake." Bibliotheca Sacra 129 (October-December 1972):344-351.

Phipps, William E. "The Sensuousness of *Agape*." Theology Today 29 (April 1972-January 1973):370-379.

Reeder, John P. "Assenting to *Agape*." The Journal of Religion 60 (January 1980):17-31.

Salholz, Eloise, and Woodward, Kenneth L. "The Bible in the Bedroom." Newsweek February 1, 1980, p. 71.

D. DISSERTATION

Du Bose, David Singleton. Toward a Researchable Perspective on Love: The Association of Romantic Love Attitude with Self-Acceptance and Selected Background Factors Among Students in Marriage and Family Classes. PhD. Dissertation, The Florida State University, 1971. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms.

McDonald, Ronald Lee. A Study of the New Testament Words for Love. Bachelor of Divinity dissertation, Talbot Theological Seminary, 1969.

Pekarok, Arthur Leon. A Contextual and Exegetical Study of the Words for Love in the Greek New Testament. Bachelor of Divinity dissertation, Talbot Theological Seminary, 1957.