

## The Doctrine of Love

### 1. Introduction:

1.1 The Bible teaches in 2Pe 1:20 and 21 that we must study the Bible in categories and avoid eclectic treatments of biblical subject matters.

2Pe 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

2Pe 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

1.2 C. I. Scofield has footnoted this passage as follows: "Any private interpretation might read 'its own interpretation; i.e., not isolated from what the Scripture states elsewhere.'"

1.3 The fact that the Holy Spirit inspired the Word using the personalities of men in their respective dispensations tells us there is need to do categorical studies from time to time. This lesson is my attempt to study the subject of love categorically.

### 2. Definition and Concept:

2.1 God is said to be love - Agape in 1Jo 4:8

1Jo 4:8 .... for God is love. **Theos** is the subject of the ellipsis and **Agape** is the predicate nominative. So the sentence can be reversed as follows "love is God."

2.1.1 You will never find this grammatical structure to describe man's love. Only God is love though man can love, but man must have an object to love; since God is Love, God needs no object of His love.

2.2 The **Agape** kind of love depends entirely upon whom and what the subject is and not upon whom and what the object of the verb is.

2.2.1 Because God is love and can love with a divine love He always displays the right mental attitude toward all things.

3. **Agape** love can only come from a soul full of Bible Doctrine.

3.1 An **Agape** kind of love depends entirely upon whom and what the subject is and not upon whom and what the object is.

3.2 A case study from the book of Philemon will help us better understand this concept of **Agape** love.

3.2.1 Paul is appealing to Philemon on the basis of love to accept Onesimus back as a fellow believer. This run-away slave who made his way to Rome became a believer and a great help to Paul.

3.2.2 When Paul discovered Onesimus belonged to Philemon, a well-respected believer from Colossae, Paul decided to return the slave with a letter requesting Onesimus be treated with **Agape** especially given his new status as a royal family member.

3.2.3 Paul anticipated Philemon would use **Agape** - the right mental attitude emanating from his soul - with reference to the return of his run-away slave.

3.2.4 That Philemon would imitate God from the depths of his soul is Paul's expectation.

3.2.5 Paul believed Philemon's soul was full of this special thing called **Agape**.

3.2.6 Paul was confident Onesimus would be treated well when he arrived in Colossae.

3.2.7 This ability to love without emotional hang ups, i.e., always doing what is right - is what sets God's kind of love apart from the love of mankind.

3.2.8 To the extent that we can get the mind of Christ into our souls by the consistent use of the two power options is the extent to which we too can "love without emotional hang ups, thus thinking and doing what is right."

3.2.9 **Agape** is divine love which we in the flesh cannot do; it is only when we grow like our Savior through the intake of the Word that begin to get an inkling of how to **Agapao**.

3.2.10 Philemon had been cycling the Word and thus was being singled out in Scripture as a man full of doctrine, a winner in the Christian life, a man capable of receiving a runaway slave back into his home without animosity, without revenge, and thus an example for millions to follow.

3.2.11 Maybe not with reference to the taking of a slave back but certainly with reference to just daily successfully living the Christian life.

3.2.12 To better understand **Agape**, I want us to look at that other word for love found in the Bible.

3.2.13 That word is **Phileo** in verb form and **Philos** in noun form. This love more often than not will include an emotion; it is based on whom and what the object is.

3.2.14 Mankind in one sense was always loved by God with **Agape** but only the believer can experience the **Philos** kind of love from God.

3.2.15 Believers are objects then of God's **Philos** kind of love, certainly not because we are or even approach perfection, but because of what Christ did for us on the cross.

3.2.16 We can understand how Philemon might love in the **Phileo** sense any number of dutiful and efficient slaves who resided in his home and served him with distinction.

3.2.17 Such love of those loyal servants, who daily performed their assigned duties would be easy because Philemon's love would be based upon whom and what they were. Onesimus, however, is not a loyal slave. As an unbeliever he was not only a run-away but one who had stolen money from Philemon.

3.2.18 In this case however Paul purposefully begins his case for an amicable reception of Onesimus by using **Agape**. Do it because it is right says Paul, use the doctrine in your soul - love Onesimus based on whom and what you are; that's the message from Paul to Philemon.

Phm 5 Hearing of thy **love (Agape)** and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

Phm 6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

Phm 7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy **love (Agape)**, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

Phm 8 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient,

Phm 9 Yet for **love's (Agape)** sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

3.2.19 **Philos** love is not the issue here but instead it is virtue love, **Agape** love--that love which can only come when the Christian moves in the direction of Christ's likeness.

3.2.20 So Paul says to Philemon "I call on you to receive Onesimus back with a love based upon whom and what you are and not whom and what Onesimus is."

3.2.21 I appeal not to your emotions says Paul but to your soul where resident doctrine can be reverse processed and right conduct mustered. Paul however did not order Philemon; he leaves it with Philemon's volition.

4. When we, in our humanity, speak of love, it is temporal and dependent on certain things. Usually we are responding to conduct on the part of our spouse, friends, children etc.

5. Our love is incapable of reaching the pinnacle of love as God demonstrates love. His love, like His ways are often beyond our understanding.

Isa 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Isa 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isa 55:10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

Isa 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

6. The spirit is often willing but the flesh is weak. Rom 7:21-8:1

Rom 7:21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

Rom 7:22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

Rom 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Rom 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Rom 7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Rom 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

7. **Agape** is God's right mental attitude toward the world.

8. He had the right mental attitude toward the devil's world and sent His only born one into the world not to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved. Joh 3:16

9. Divine love (**Agape love**) is far distant from the concept of human love.

10. Human love depends on the conduct and actions of the object of the love.

11. This is not true of divine love.

12. Since there never was a time when God learned anything; His wisdom like His love, has always been; accordingly God has always been and has always known all things; there never was a time when God ever learned anything.

13. God never had to learn to love because He is omniscient and His love is perfect, concepts foreign to our mortal natures and human limitations.

14. There are so many Christians who know nothing about God's love and His protocol concerning the application of loving others.

15. None would be so bold as to say "I hate the Word of God and His wisdom" but their lack of consistency and interest in the things of God declare their apathy.

15.1 Thanks be to God, the Lord does not react emotionally to the negative believer, but from His omniscience and love He does that which is perfect, and though it may be a ton of discipline, such discipline is for our benefit. Heb 12:6-8

Heb 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Heb 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

Heb 12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

16. Secular love with rare exceptions always involves emotion as a response toward the object. In the flesh we can love no other way.

16.1 God's love, however, will involve emotion only as an anthropopathism. The dictionary says of the word anthropopathism: "The attribution of human feelings to non-human beings, objects or natural phenomena."

16.2 A related word is anthropomorphism which according to the dictionary is "The attribution of physical characteristics to an object not possessing same ..."

16.3 In the case of God He often has elected anthropopathisms and anthropomorphisms to communicate with man.

16.4 Thus God is said to have a hand, head, be in heaven and yet He is omnipresent, He is said to love, to hate, to repent, to be jealous etc. For example:

Joh 10:29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

17. How else can God relate to man except He use our vocabulary, concepts, idioms, analogies, body parts and metaphors familiar to man?

18. Normally God's love is said to be **Agape** meaning the right mental attitude which in most cases has little to do with emotion or attraction.

19. For example Joh 3:16 which most of us memorized at some point in our life says:

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

19.1 Doubtless the devil's world was no object of God's affection-in fact it would be blasphemous to ascribe to God a love for this miserable world in which we are temporarily residing, a world called of God "Satan's world."

20. The word translated love in Joh 3:16 is **Agapao**, the verb form of **Agape** and it might better be rendered, "For God had the right mental attitude toward the world based on His essences and attributes."

21. God never loved the **Kosmos**, i.e., the devil's world in a **Phileo** sense. The prince of this world was never, in his fallen state, the object of God's love.

22. This concludes our categorical study of the two Greek words translated love in the New Testament--**Agape** and **Philos**.