

In a previous discussion I referred to the material component of a person which is tangible and temporal: the physical **body**. Then the immaterial aspects of a person are intangible: the **soul** and **spirit** which exist beyond the lifespan of the human **body** and into **eternity**. We examined the **soul** which is the **mind**, **will**, and **emotions** but only concentrated on the **mind** and **will**. This discussion will continue with a look at the **emotions**, primarily **love** and associated **friendship** and **fellowship**, as well as the detrimental aspects of **emotion** associated with evil and **fear**. I chose to examine **love** in particular separately as it is the hardest to express for some of us, maybe more so, if we were born in the 1930's and 1940's. I suspect it is a difficult **emotion** to understand in later generations as evidenced by the continued lack of the young people to accept Christianity, authority, and **love** plus the respect for one another. Today's time and generation in the United States is experiencing a 50% divorce rate for first marriages, 60% for second marriages, and 70% for third marriages. Where is the **love** component on which marriage is built?

From the moment we are conceived, we need **love** in the form of care and attention, and we continue to need **love** to thrive from then on through our lives. In discussing **love**, the Bible declares in 1 John 4:8 that: "*The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love*". And then Mat 22:37-40 says, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart' and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself'. On these two commandments depend on the Law and the Prophets*". What most people do not realize is that God issued a **new commandment** which enforced or modified the **second commandment** noted in John 13:34-35, "*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 love one another*". So, God tells us not only to **love** our neighbor as ourselves but also to **love** our neighbor as He **loves** us. Do we do this, and do we teach our children these principles? Do we **love** ourselves as He **loves** us? **Love** is defined as "a feeling of strong attachment induced by that which delights or commands admiration; preeminent kindness or devotion to another; affection; tenderness; as the feeling between brothers and sisters". And when considering "no **fear** of **truth**", John 4:18 says "*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*". Love is one of the most powerful emotions humans can experience. For Christian believers, love is the truest test of genuine faith. Through the Bible, we discover how to experience love in its many forms and to share it with others as God intended. God's Word refers to four types of love: Agape, Storge, Philo, and Eros:

Throughout the journey of our lives, we communicate **love** in different ways and with different levels of intensity depending on the person who is giving and the person who is receiving our **love**. As Christians, **love** is at the heart of our beliefs. Because of that, we should strive to show **love** in its highest form which is **agape love** as Jesus told us to do. After all, it is through **love** that we allow God to abide in us (1 John 4:12). And it is through love that we make ourselves known to the world as Christ's disciples (John 13:35). The Bible says that God is **LOVE** and that humans crave **love** from the moment of existence. But the word **love** describes an emotion with vastly differing degrees of intensity.

Agape Love is the highest level of **love** referenced in the Bible. This form of **love** is everlasting and sacrificial, whether or not the giver receives the same level of **love** in return. This term defines God's immeasurable, incomparable **love** for humankind. It is the divine **love** that comes from God. It is perfect, unconditional, sacrificial, and pure. In the original Greek translation of the Scriptural passage

“God is **love**,” the word **Agape** is specifically used to describe the type of **love** God embodies as noted in 1 John 4:8 “*The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love*”. Perfect **Love** as expressed by the Apostle Paul indicates in 1 Cor 13:4-8 “*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails*”. God displayed this perfect **love** when He sent His only Son to be sacrificed as an atonement for our sins so that, through our belief in Jesus, we may have eternal life (John 3:16). Jesus showed His **Agape Love** for His Father and humanity in living His life by God’s Will despite the emotional and physical agony that He knew awaited Him on the cross. Jesus said in John 13:35 that we are to **love** one another as He **loves** us. This highest form of **love** should be evidenced but often hard to achieve in marriage as a man and woman are brought together to become as **ONE** as we are **ONE** with the **Father**.

Storge love is described as a family type of **love** in a deep and caring bond that develops naturally between parents and children, husbands and wives, siblings, as well as other people who you may consider to be family or very close friends. This type of **love** can withstand many trials, is protective, and is loyal. The description of this **love** stresses a “natural affection” and can be categorized in 2 Tim 3:3 in an “opposite” sense as “*unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without control, brutal haters of good*”. This type of **love** is depicted in the Bible by the concern shown by Jairus for his sick daughter (Luke 8:40-56), and by the grieving shown by Martha and Mary for their brother Lazarus (John 11:1-44). Biblical figures who displayed the absence of **storge love** include Cain when he lured and murdered his brother Abel (Genesis 4:1-11), and Joseph’s jealous brothers who sold Joseph into slavery (Genesis 37:18-36). Christians are members of God’s family. Our lives are knit together by something stronger than physical ties, the bonds of the Spirit. We are related by something more powerful than human blood that is the blood of Jesus. God calls his children to **love** each other with the deep affection of **storge love**.

Phileo love as used in the Bible refers to the warmth and affinity shared by **special close friends**, almost as if those friends are actual siblings. This is similar to **storge love** but applied to non-family members. This is the most general type of love in Scripture, encompassing **love** for fellow humans, care, respect, and compassion for people in need. The concept of brotherly **love** that unites believers is unique to Christianity. Jesus said **phileo love** would be an identifier of his followers as in John 13:35 “*By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love one another*”. It is illustrated in Rom 12:10 which says, “*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor*”. Jesus crying at the site of Lazarus rising from the dead showed how much Jesus **loved** him in John 11:35-36 as “*Jesus wept. And the Jews were saying ‘Behold how He loved him’*”. I felt this kind of **love** for a **special friend** as in a divine appointment who was available to me after my wife’s funeral to provide companionship during my initial grieving for Linda’s loss.

Eros love refers to sensual or romantic **love** and depicts sexual desire, physical attraction, and physical **love** demonstrating much passion. Sexual **love** in and of itself is not impure but is a gift from God to married couples so that they may express their **love** with one another and continue the human race. This form of **love** seeks its own interest and satisfaction so is reserved basically for marriage. Within the

boundaries of marriage this **love** is to be celebrated and enjoyed as a blessing from God. The Song of Solomon is written to commend the virtues of passionate **love** shared between a husband and wife and begins with a bride's profession of passionate **love** for her husband as Song of Solomon 1:1-2 "*May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For our love is better than wine*". This Song makes clear, God intended for married couples to **love** each other emotionally as well as physically. But this kind of **love** without restraint can become a sin of sexual immorality. So, without boundaries a warning is provided in 1 Cor 6:18 "*Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body*". This is because **eros love** can tear apart relationships if it focuses solely on one's personal gratification. In contrast, **agape, storge, and phileo love** seek to strengthen relationships by emphasizing kindness and sacrifice toward others. Without **love** we are no better than the animals.

God brings people into our lives to make a difference in our life and put in place a direction for our life.
May God bless all who read this treatise on love and realize that love encompasses all we do and all that we are.