



WORD OF THE MONTH

“Love” Your Neighbor

“Love” Your Enemy

Love is one of the most ambiguous (unclear-indefinite) words in the English language. A man will say I love my wife, I love my dog, I love to drink, I love drugs, I love God, I love my car. These are all certainly different types and levels of affection or affinity. The kind of affection (liking) a man has for his car or for drinking is certainly not on the same level or character when another man truly loves God.

Men speak of unconditional love. There is no such thing from the original Biblical Text. First lets look at the word “Love”. Two completely different words in the Greek Text have been falsely translated into the one word “Love” in the English Bible. These words are *agape* and *phileo*. They are not the same word in Greek.

Phileo is the word that we think of in our English language when we speak of “Love”. *Phileo* means to be a friend or be fond of or to have affection showing personal attachment of sentiment or feeling. It is to be personally attached to something or someone because of a natural attraction. This is not the meaning of the word *Agape*. *Agape* is a word that has to do with obedience. *Agape* is a love or affection that a king has for the subjects of his kingdom. It is a love they return to him. It is not merely, as some say, “A love of the will”. It is the relationship that a king or a father had for their people, and their desire of honorable obedience to him. He would give them laws as a righteous ruler and

they would lovingly obey these laws. John the Beloved gives us the best definition of *Agape*:

II John 6 – This is Love (*Agape*), that we walk after His commandments, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it (walk in *agape*). – John is saying, “from the beginning in the garden you have a commandment to love (*agape*) God by eating of the trees he commanded, but not of the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil”. – This is *Agape*.

Again John says,

I John 5:3 – For this is the love (*agape*) of God that we keep His commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (Barus-weighty, burdensome, heavy-His commandments are not too heavy for us to bear).

This word “Keep” in the above verse does not mean to observe without breaking. It is the word “Tereo” which means to guard or keep from loss or injury. It means to reserve them and keep them unchanged. When we keep and reserve Gods words (all his commandments) in our hearts unchanged, as God has written them (**II Cor 3:3**), they will in time, under the scourge and fire of God, change us.

Each time the Bible says “Love your Neighbor, Love your enemy,” or God is Love, the word Love in these verses is always “*Agape*”. It is never “*Phileo*” which means to have an affection. If we love our neighbor and our enemy we will tell them truth and walk in Gods word (his commandments or *Agape*) before them daily. Loving your neighbor is to walk in truth in all the

ways God has given his commandments. Loving (*agape*) them is not taking them ice cream and cake and letting them have their way. If you *agape* (love) your children, you set up your commandments for them. You give them truth and what is good for them. You make them go to bed at the right hour so they will have enough sleep to do well in school – You spank them when necessary – you make them eat vegetables. You don’t allow them to eat pizza, hamburgers, and ice cream every meal. You take them to the mean old doctor and have him stick a needle in their arm when they are sick. You see, this is the kind of *agape* (love) God has for us. He gives us truth and causes us to walk in it (Spiritual health and exercise practices).

When Paul says we are to speak the truth in Love (*agape*) to one another (**Eph 4:15**), he is not saying that we should be nice to each other and show affection to one another. He is saying, “Walk and speak truth (the word) to one another even if it offends some of the brethren.” John speaks in another place how that the *agape* (Love) is given to us.

I John 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us.

Because God sent his only begotten son into the world, that we might live through him.

Love (*agape*) is a Person. It is a person in the form of Jesus.

John 4:8 God is Love (*agape*) or God equals *agape*.

Romans 13:10 Love (*agape*) worketh no ill to "his" neighbor (you see, *agape* is a "Him").

God gave us *agape* (love) when he sent Jesus into the world to give us his words (commandments i.e. *agape*) and his life as an example. Jesus tells us of conditional love John 15:14 Ye are my friends (*Philia*, which comes from *Phileo*, one of the words mistranslated into the English word "love") "if" you do whatsoever I command you.

Here Jesus is saying I will have affection (*Phileo* or be your friend) for you under one condition - That is, if you do the things I command (*agape*). He is saying I will *Phileo* (have affection for) you if you *agape* (walk in my commandments) me. When we keep His commandments (unchanged) we keep and do more than merely the 10 commandments. Each time in the New Testament Greek when the scripture uses an "imperative mood" in the Greek Text, it is a commandment. An "imperative" is a command. When my son was living at home, I used "imperatives" on him all the time. I never invited him to take the garbage out. I gave the command (imperative), "Take out the garbage", "Clean your room". Jesus has given us these same kinds of imperatives when he said "Strive" (*agonizomai*, agonize) to enter in at the strait gate

(Luke 13:24) - "Mortify" (*Nekroo* - kill off) the deeds of the flesh

(Col 3:5) - "Humble" (*tapeinoo* - level self) yourselves under the mighty hand of God

(I Peter 5:6) - "Deny" (*aparneomai* - utterly contradict) self - "Take" (*airo*- lift up) your cross daily - "Follow" (*akoloutheo* - to be in the same "way" with - the narrow way) me (Luke 9:23). There are many

imperatives "Be ye Holy" etc.

You may not know the Greek words; however, if God has written his word in your heart, you will keep these words unchanged and guard them from loss or injury. You will even say I am unable (like Paul in Rom 7:18) to do all these commandments that God has convinced me are true. I will guard them with my life. I love (*agape*) my God, I will keep them. As I learn to crucify and deny self I will do them when I am given power through years of fiery trials and scourging (Heb. 12:5-8).

This is true *agape* (love). Then God has affection (*Phileo*-love) for us. This is our example, those who have the word written in their hearts, like us, they keep these imperative commands of God (in time) and we love these brethren. This is called *Philosadelphos* or Philadelphia, a love (affection-*phileo*) of the Brethren (*Adelphos*-the Greek word for brother).

It is impossible to do what the world defines as loving your enemy. They say have affection (*Phileo*) for your enemy. (May I remind you to love your enemy is to *agape* them by doing to them and before them what God commands). It is impossible to have affection (*phileo*) for an ax murderer who killed your family and burned your house down. You can *agape* him by giving him truth. "If" he repents (Luke 17:3) then you can forgive him and in time, if he shows a change and Christ begins to deal with him in repentance, then you can work on having an affection for him over a period of time, as he walks in the commandments of God.

Summary

Agape (Love) is when a man has been made willing as a matter of principle, duty, and propriety (from

Strong's exhaustive concordance). A "Principle" is a fundamental truth, law, doctrine (instruction), or motivating force (Holy Spirit) upon which others are based - a rule of conduct. "Duty" is a middle English word meaning What is due (owing - we owe God everything). It is a rule of conduct based on moral obligation (to God). "Propriety" is conforming to what is proper or fitting. Jesus speaks of our being fit for the kingdom (Luke 9:62-14:34, 35). Paul says that we are predestined to be conformed (propriety) to be like Jesus The Principles which are the Truths and doctrines of Gods word dictates our duty to God (All to him I owe) as we conform to what is proper and fitting (propriety) of our calling in Christ. This is *agape*.

In Gods "imperatives" he commands us that we are to "withdraw" from Christians who refuse to walk according to the word of God (II Thess 3:6). Strange as it may sound to a 20th and 21st Century America, He forbids us to be cheerful (bid Godspeed) to those who bring another doctrine (instruction) other than *agape* (II John 10,11). I will address this in a future letter.

May God continue to teach you.

Jim

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