

Love is one of the most central themes in the Christian faith. It is both an emotion and an action expressed through compassion, sacrifice, acceptance, and commitment to others. In Scripture, love is not merely a feeling, but a command, a calling, and the very nature of God Himself.

“Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

1 John 4:8, ESV

The Bible reveals three main types of love, particularly through the original Greek words used in the New Testament: Eros, Phileo, and Agape.

1. EROS Romantic or Passionate Love

The word *Eros* (ἔρως) refers to romantic, passionate, or physical love, often associated with desire and attraction. While the term itself is not explicitly used in the New Testament, the concept is

biblically acknowledged especially in the Song of Songs, which celebrates marital affection and romantic love between a husband and wife.

Song of Solomon 1:13-17 (ESV)

“My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh that lies between my breasts. My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of Engedi... Behold, you are beautiful, my beloved, truly delightful. Our couch is green; the beams of our house are cedar; our rafters are pine.”

Eros love is good and God-given when expressed within the context of marriage. The Apostle Paul emphasizes this in:

Hebrews 13:4 (ESV)

“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”

2. PHILEO Brotherly or Relational Love

Phileo (φιλέω) describes love grounded in friendship, mutual respect, and emotional connection. It reflects the kind of love shared between close friends, family members, or fellow believers. This love is based on shared values or experiences and often reciprocated.

Romans 12:10 (ESV)

“Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”

Jesus demonstrated *Phileo* love when He wept over Lazarus's death:

John 11:36 (ESV)

“So the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him!’”

However, Jesus challenges believers to rise above *Phileo*, because even sinners express this kind of love:

Matthew 5:46-47 (ESV)

“For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others?”

This shows that while *Phileo* love is good, it is not sufficient to fully reflect the heart of God.

3. AGAPE – Unconditional, Sacrificial Love

Agape (ἀγάπη) is the highest and most divine form of love. It is selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional, seeking the best for others regardless of their response. This is the love that defines God's nature and is perfectly revealed in Jesus Christ.

John 3:16 (ESV)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Jesus calls us to imitate this kind of love:

John 13:34-35 (ESV)

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Agape love is not based on feelings or benefits it is a decision of the will to love even those who hurt, betray, or oppose us:

Romans 5:8 (ESV)

“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

This kind of love can only be truly lived out by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life:

Romans 5:5 (ESV)

“...God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

The Characteristics of Agape Love

In 1 Corinthians 13, the Apostle Paul describes what Agape love looks like in action:

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (ESV)

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.”

This love is not something we passively receive it is something we must actively pursue, especially in difficult situations:

When someone insults us, we respond with grace.

When someone hates us, we pray for them.

When we are wronged, we forgive instead of retaliate.

How to Grow in Agape Love

You cannot grow into Agape love by willpower alone. It is a spiritual fruit that grows as you walk closely with God:

Galatians 5:22 (ESV)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness...”

We must pray for the grace to love this way, even when it costs us.

1 John 4:12 (ESV)

“If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.”

Final Reflection

In God’s eyes, no spiritual gift, title, or ministry compares to love:

1 Corinthians 13:2 (ESV)

“...and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”

So let us seek to walk in *Agape* love the love that reflects the heart of God, draws His presence near, and transforms not just our lives, but the lives of everyone around us.

Be blessed you.

What Is Love, and How Many Types of Love Are There?

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