



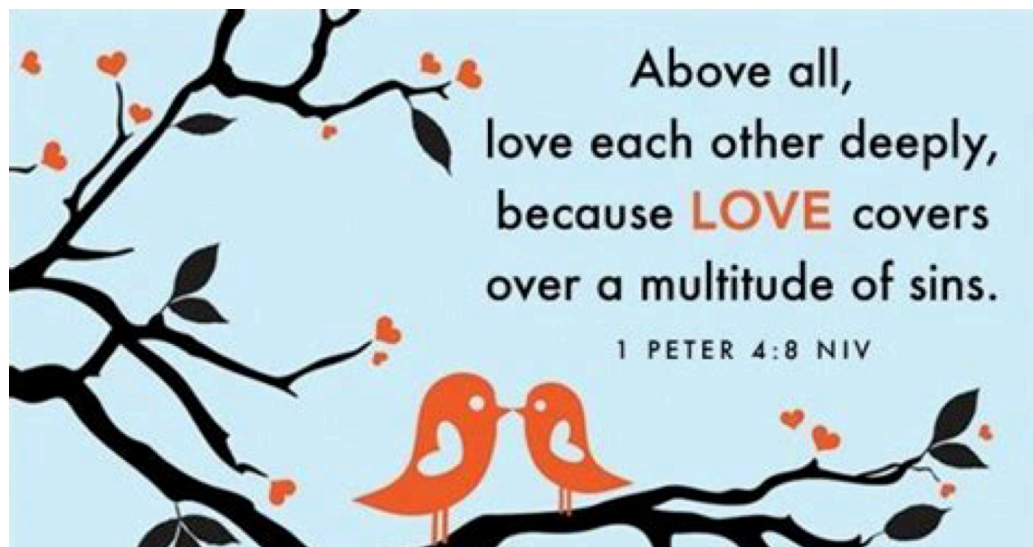
LOVE AGAPE

Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.
1 Corinthians 13:13

The Greek word for love in the passage above is *agape*. This is God's love for us, and is the love He has shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost (Rom. 5:5) that makes it possible for us to serve one another (Gal. 5:13). It is the first fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22)-the first evidence of God's Spirit living in our hearts. It is that which roots and grounds us in God (Eph. 3:17). It is that which comforts us and knits us together in the body of Christ (*Col. 2:2*).

Charity.

In the King James version every time charity is used it is from the Greek *agape*, therefore many newer translations have replaced the word charity with *love*. And above all things have fervent charity (*agape* love) among yourselves; for charity (*agape* love) shall cover the multitude of sins (it forgives and forgives over and over again) (1 Peter 4:8).



John tells us everything we need to know about agape love:

(1 John 4:7-12, 16-21; 5:1-3)

- (1) It is of God;
- (2) All born-again Christians have it;
- (3) If you don't have it you don't know God;
- (4) God loved us so much that He sent His only Son to die for us so that we might live;
- (5) If God loved us this much, we also must love one another;
- (6) He who lives in love, lives in God because God is love;
- (7) Where there is love there is no fear (of people, of being betrayed; of being hurt);
- (8) If a man says he loves God but doesn't love his brother, he is a liar;
- (9) He who loves God loves his brother;
- (10) We know we love the children of God when we love God;
- (11) We know that we love God if we keep His commandments;
- (12) The world will know we are Christians by the love we have for one another.
- (13) Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God.
- (14) He that does not love, does not know God, for God is love...
- (15) 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.
- (16) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins...
- (17) Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.
- (18) No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and his love is made complete in us...
- (19) And we have known and believed the love that God has to us.
- (20) God is love; and he who dwells in love dwells in God and God in him.
- (21) Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world.
- (22) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear; because fear has torment.
- (23) He that fears is not made complete in love.
- (24) We love Him, because He first loved us.
- (25) If a man says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his

brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

(26) And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God loves his brother also...

(27) Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and everyone that loves him that begat loves him also that is begotten of him.

(28) By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

(29) For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.

1. Agape love is an action, a choice

Keeping God's commandments is an action. It is *agape* love that God has given us that we might be called the sons of God (1 John 3:1). Hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren ... let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth (1 John 3:16,18). *Agape* love embraces deliberate exercise of the will as a matter of principle duty and propriety (what is right). In other words, this love is a selfless commitment to God and to others. It is not based on feelings or emotions. It is not based on understanding. It is not based on what the other person does or does not do. It flows from God-for God IS love.

2. Husbands Love your wives

Agape is the Greek translated love in the familiar passage in Ephesians 5:25,28,33: Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it...so ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself ... let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself. A Christian husband cannot reach the conclusion, "I just don't love her anymore," because love is a commitment to her welfare, to the best of everything for her, to her victory in all areas of her life. Isn't that what Christ's love for us was all about? And husbands must have the same *agape* kind of love. Married life is completed and crowned by that love.

3. Love your enemies

Jesus says we should love (*agape*) our enemies (Matt. 5:44). Remember that's not having a good, wonderful feeling toward them-but a commitment to pointing them in the direction of the cross for their salvation that they might become a new creation in Christ Jesus. Feelings are fickle. You cannot depend on them to reflect reality or truth. You must base your words and actions on God's Word.

4. Love your neighbor

Jesus says you should love (*agape*) your neighbor as yourself (Matt. 19:19). Do you want privacy and peace in your neighborhood? Then also give it to your neighbor! Sacrifice things you would like to do that might cause grief or hardship to your neighbor. Also refer to the story Jesus told of the Good Samaritan in answer to the question, "Lord, who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:30-37).

5. Love one another

The Apostle Paul takes *agape* love a step further and points out that faith works by love (*agape*) (Gal. 5:6). Thus love comes first, then faith. Faith, hope, love and the greatest (most important) of these is love. This love causes us to seek the welfare of others. Paul never defines love; he just tells his readers how it works.

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So brothers as sisters let us remember that the end (objective) of the commandment is love (*agape*) out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of unfeigned (real) faith (1 Tim. 1:5). Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love (*phileo*) of the brethren, see that you love (*agape*) one another with a pure heart fervently; being born again...by the Word of God which lives and abides forever (1 Pet. 1:22). Amen

