

BIBLE STUDY, MONDAY MAY 3, 2010

LOVE

Matthew 22:36-40 “Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: **'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'** On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

THE VITAL NEED FOR LOVE: Human beings need genuine affection. Love is essential to the healthy growth, wellbeing, mental and sound development of a person. With the realization of the need for love comes awareness of the desperate lack of love.

Children need love. Whenever a child is rejected or brought up on a diet of scolding, punishment and humiliation, a vital element of human development is blocked. Confidence gives way to consuming fear, normal outreach towards others becomes distrust, and the inborn desire to achieve is paralyzed by feelings of inadequacy and failure. Interpersonal relationships become characterized by suspicion, resentment and aggression. The need for love does not end when we become adults.

The Greek Language uses three words for love ***Eros, Phileo and Agape.***

Eros is a term used to refer to aesthetic love, romantic love, sexual love, a love of the worthy and a love that desires to possess. The object of *Eros* is desired by the subject accompanied with an attitude of compulsion to possess.

- *Eros* was not used by the writers of the New Testament. Those writers preferred the use of *agape*. *Eros* may be beautiful as in the Song of Solomon.
- Marriage is sometimes based upon an expression of *Eros* love. Man sees a woman or woman sees a man, Two individuals observe each other and find that they are worthy of one another's attention.
- The chemicals of *Eros* dominate the emotional areas of our brain, and overrule the critical thinking areas. After those chemicals subside, the thinking regions come back, we may wonder what we ever saw in the other person!
- If *Eros* is the only type of love present in a relationship, that relationship will not last. If the foundation of a marriage is based upon *Eros* love that marriage is being held up on weak foundation.
- *Eros* was not the Greek term used by the New Testament writers because of the twin concepts that lay behind the term. The Greeks in Corinth viewed *Eros* as the ultimate religious expression. They thought the highest spiritual experience was the most powerful form of ecstasy. In Corinth the temple to Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. At one time the fertility cult employed about 1,000 priestesses prostitutes available to provide the ultimate “religious experience.” In the 1st Corinthians 6:15-20 the Apostle Paul is addressing that concern. *The Greeks of Corinth were not the only one that used temple prostitutes, in 1st Kings 15: 11-12. King Asa did away with the male temple prostitutes.*
- The Greek usage of the term *Eros* would have offered up a false and misleading concept of God to person's that were unsaved. God did not send his Son into the world because God found humankind to

be attractive and desirable to possess. Sin had driven a wedge between humankind and God's face was turned away from us.

The Biblical Teaching about Christian love includes "phileo". Phileo is the type of reciprocal love which describes friendship that's developed between two or more people.

- This category includes emotional warmth and tender affection toward a friend or family member. It involves closeness, bonding, and mutual sharing in a relationship. It is companionship, or brotherly and sisterly love.
- An example of this friendship within Scripture it observed within the friendship that existed between David and Jonathan (**1st Samuel 18:1, 3**) – When David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan love him as his own soul. V3. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. (**2nd Samuel 1:26**) I am distressed for you my brother Jonathan; greatly beloved were you to me: your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. This text refers to the loyalty of Jonathan to David against his own best interests.
- Jesus displayed this phileo love toward Lazarus in John 11:3 "Lord behold, he whom You love is sick."
- In a marriage relationship, the dominant fire of Eros gradually gives ground to the mature phileo of affection. Phileo becomes the cement that bonds and holds families together over the long haul. There is an actual shift in the balance of bodily hormones during this transition. In popular usage, we call this shift the end of the honeymoon period.

Agape love: ALL THREE EROS, PHILIA & AGAPE LOVE NEEDS TO BE PRESENT IF THE RELATIONSHIP/MARRIAGE IS TO SUCCEED.

- Agape-understanding, creative redemptive good will for all of humankind. It is an overflowing love which is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless and creative. It is the love of God operating in the human heart. It is a disinterested love. It is a love in which the individual seeks not their own good, but the good of neighbor (**1 Cor. 10:24**). Agape does not begin by discriminating between worthy and unworthy people or any qualities people possess. It begins by loving others for their sakes. Agape love makes no distinction between friends and enemy; it is directed toward both.
- God's love is eternal and fails not because human beings need God's love. Apostle Paul assures us that the loving act of redemption was done "while we were yet sinners" – that is at the point of our greatest need for love.
- Jesus founded his empire on love. Every empire established and maintained by force has sooner or later crumbled, but the kingdom of Jesus founded has continued to grow in extend and influence with every generation.
- Jesus love for people was expressed in term of what he wanted for them. When we truly love someone, we want for that person happiness and the chance to live fully, even if we ourselves must give up something to bring it about. Jesus talked about riches or character, fullness of live, joy, faith that can work wonders, freedom from hatred and fear, peace of mind, eternal life. Jesus wanted to help humans see the possibilities of happiness, contentment, peace and love-here and now on earth.