

Learning to Love Pt. 1

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, February 9, 2020

Main Theme – A teaching on the subject of love—today we will address the four “types” of love

WORSHIP & PRAYER

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Special Events**

- Women’s Ministry – Tuesday, February 11, from 6:30–8pm
- Potluck Supper – Sunday, February 23, Following the Service

- **Housekeeping**

In recent weeks there has been an INORDINATE amount of movement (up-and-down) during the sermon time. **Q.** Can we try to give the Lord the best thirty minutes of our attention without so much distraction? Parents – if there is an issue a worker will come get you!

MORNING OFFERING

NOTE – I want to call forth our ushers. TWO offerings will be collected:

- 1) The 1st offering goes to support this local work and community outreach
- 2) The 2nd offering goes to support our regular missionaries (foreign/domestic)

May the Lord bless you as you give! May you experience His FAITHFULNESS in kind!

NOTE – I want to play a video while the offerings are being collected. This video (originally) was an appeal from a young man for his home church to give to/participate in missions. However, his words contain points that every church can glean from! **VIDEO**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Slvht4luVKw>

- **CHILDREN DISMISSED FOR CHILDREN’S CHURCH**

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INTRODUCTIONS

As always it is wonderful to see you. I look forward to these moments of corporate worship and instruction. I pray that you are ready to receive what the Lord has for you as we continue on into 2020! Please have your Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes.

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 1

NOTE – I want to open today’s teaching a bit DIFFERENTLY this morning (allowing for some crowd interaction). I am going to give you a word that you will likely be quite familiar with. All I want you to do is offer a working DEFINITION.

1) Taxes (Tis the Season)

A compulsory contribution to state revenue, levied by the government on workers' income and business profits, or added to the cost of some goods, services, and transactions.

2) Politician (Tis the Season)

A person who holds a political office; i.e., one who administrates, represents and governs a group of people in a specified geographic area.

3) Vacation (Tis the Season)

An extended period of leisure/recreation, especially one spent away from home or in traveling.

4) Pastor (Why Not?)

A minister in charge of a Christian church or congregation.

KEY – You all did so great! It is amazing how quickly we can define/articulate what words mean!

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 2

Yet now I want to define another word: i.e., LOVE

Q. How would you define this term? What words might you use to define or capture it?

KEY – Love is a word that we use all the time—but it can be difficult for us to accurately define.

Q. Why? Why is the word love so difficult to define?

A. It's hard to define because we use it in a VARIETY of ways!

e.g., I love my mom; I love my children; I love my wife; I love my friends; I love my dog; I love that movie; I love Doritos; I love guitars; I love the Red Sox; I love my church; I love taking naps on Sunday afternoons; I love the Lord, etc.

NOTE 1 – Love is an UMBRELLA term that is used to express an array of DIFFERING sentiments. Clearly, I don't love the Lord in the same way that I love Dorito's, yet I use the SAME word in BOTH cases! In our language we use this one word to convey many things, and we discern the meaning of the word based upon CONTEXT, etc.

NOTE 2 – But the languages of the ancients (sp. Greek) functioned QUITE differently. Whereas we might use ONE word to express a variety of meanings, Greek (i.e., the language of the NT scriptures) utilized MULTIPLE words with extremely precise meanings—words that are worthy of careful study/examination!

FYI – I would like to analyze the Greek words for love (FOUR in total). I want to consider what each means and what each should mean to Christian life/living. You'll be amazed at what truths can come out of this simple word study! Since we are in the midst of the Valentine's Day season—i.e., the season of love—I thought it would be BENEFICIAL to spend a few weeks on the topic!

LET'S DELVE IN...

EROS PT. 1 **SLIDE**

The FIRST Greek word for love that I want to touch upon this morning is EROS.

FYI – This ancient term for love does NOT appear in the New Testament scriptures.

Q. What does Eros mean? What type of love does Eros refer to?

A. Eros refers to a romantic love (i.e., love relating to ATTRACTION).

Q. Does this word bear resemblance to any English term?

A. It resembles “EROTIC”—our word erotic derives from Eros!

The ancients used Eros to express the feeling of ATTRACTION to someone beautiful/handsome.

FYI – I think it is necessary to report that Eros is NOT inherently negative because it has a SEXUAL connotation. Just because something can be abused/perverted (i.e., sexuality) does NOT make it intrinsically bad. Remember that God is the designer of human sexuality, etc., so Eros has its place in His plan for humanity!

NOTE – Eros is a VITAL type of love in human interaction: **a)** it plays a role in bringing couples together (Q. how many relationships are catalyzed because of physical attraction?); **b)** it adds excitement/passion to the marital relationship; and **c)** it is vital in the propagation of our species. Remove Eros and we LOSE something fundamental to our humanity!

EROS PT. 2

However, we must recognize that there are some LIMITATIONS with Eros...

NOTE 1 – Eros can be extremely influenced by EMOTION. **Q.** How many have paired up because they were so “in love” or because they experienced heightened sexual passion only to end up train-wrecked months/years later—after the love has FADED? Eros alone is a poor foundation.

NOTE 2 – Eros is a highly CONDITIONAL love by nature. It is activated by the attractiveness of the object. It is what you feel toward those who are lovely (v. what you might feel toward the haggard, etc.). Remove the beauty of the object and Eros DISSIPATES immediately!

NOTE 3 – Eros is intrinsically connected to SELF (i.e., what’s pleasing to your eye and how that attractive person might fulfill a sexual craving that you might have, etc.). It’s not really about the other person—it’s about how the other person makes YOU feel or what benefit YOU might experience because of them!

QUOTE – Eros is a totally human love. It often refers to sexual love, as the English word “erotic” implies. The basic idea in *eros* is getting something for yourself. While it may involve a genuine feeling for someone else, that feeling is kindled by the attractiveness of that person and by the excitement, pleasure and satisfaction which we believe that person will afford us. *Eros* poses as love for another but is actually love for oneself. It says, “I love you because you make me happy.” Its foundation is some characteristic in the other person that pleases us, such as beauty, charm, warmth, kindness or talent. If that characteristic is taken away there is nothing left, and *eros* dies. This kind of love looks primarily for what it can get. It may give a little, but the motive is usually to get something in return for what it gives.

Q. Is there a biblical example of Eros (even if the word is not used in the NT texts)?

2 Samuel 11:1–4 (NIV – David and Bathsheba)

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king’s men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

2 One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, 3 and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, “She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.” 4 Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her.

STORGE PT. 1 SLIDE

The SECOND Greek word for love that I want to touch upon this morning is STORGE.

Q. What does Storge mean? What type of love does Storge refer to?

A. Storge refers to FAMILIAL love (i.e., natural affections shared amongst family).

KEY – As you can see, Storge is quite DIFFERENT from Eros! Whereas Eros centers upon attraction between members of the opposite sex, Storge is about affections shared between KIN (e.g., parents, children, siblings, etc.).

NOTE – Storge is an incredibly essential and powerful form of love. It is what keeps families knit together and is exceedingly hard to break. By nature, it is unconditional and selfless WITHIN the family unit!

Q. How many of you have children? Raise hands please...

Q. Did you have to learn to love your children? Was there a required class or course?

A. NO! Your love for your children was instant and instinctual—they didn’t need to earn it!

Q. How many have sacrificed for your children? How many would you give their life? YES!

STORGE PT. 2

However, we must recognize that there are some LIMITATIONS with Storge...

KEY – While it is incredibly strong, unconditional and selfless within the family unity, it is usually LIMITED to a select number of people. i.e., It DISSIPATES quite quickly beyond the immediate family.

Q. How many parents would give their lives for their children (bio/adoptive)?

Q. How many would give their lives for your third cousin (twice removed)? Enemy?

Q. Is there a biblical example of Storge?

Genesis 18:20–33 (Abraham re: Lot in Sodom, etc.)

20 Then the Lord said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous 21 that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.” 22 The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord. 23 Then Abraham approached him and said: “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24 What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare[e] the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? 25 Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” 26 The Lord said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”

27 Then Abraham spoke up again: “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, 28 what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five people?” “If I find forty-five there,” he said, “I will not destroy it.”

29 Once again he spoke to him, “What if only forty are found there?” He said, “For the sake of forty, I will not do it.”

30 Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?” He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.”

31 Abraham said, “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?” He said, “For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it.”

32 Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?” He answered, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.” 33 When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.

Q. Why was Abraham so passionate in intercessory prayer? A. He had kin in Sodom (Lot et al.)!

PHILIA PT. 1 **SLIDE**

The THIRD Greek word for love that I want to touch upon this morning is PHILIA.

Q. What does Philia mean? What type of love does Philia refer to?

A. There are TWO facets to Philia-love (please take note of the following):

- 1) It is a love felt for friends/companions.
- 2) It is a general care for your fellow man.

FYI – The city of Philadelphia is called the City of Brotherly Love (FYI – root word is “Philia”)!

KEY – Philia is an extremely important type of love! Philia **a)** enables us to forge incredibly strong bonds of friendship with those who are not kin (i.e., beyond Storge); and it **b)** opens our eyes to the needs around us (e.g., feeling of sympathy toward a little old lady struggling to carry her groceries sympathy).

PHILIA PT. 2

However, we must recognize that there are some LIMITATIONS even with Philia...

NOTE 1 – Like Eros, Philia is highly CONDITIONAL by nature (i.e., it is based upon how people treat and respond to you). If you show loyalty or kindness and they reciprocate in kind, Philia will flourish. If not, Philia DISSIPATES quite quickly!

NOTE 2 – Like Eros, Philia is highly predicated/founded upon SELF. We often forge friendships and enjoy Philia with those we may DERIVE BENEFIT FROM (e.g., they may be entertaining or good listeners, etc.). Yet in the end it is still about US...

NOTE 3 – Though Philia may produce awareness of and sympathy toward those in need, action is NOT assured. You may choose NOT to step in and help because the cost/personal sacrifice is too great (e.g., you may not help that old lady with her groceries because you’re too late for a meeting, etc.).

Q. Is there a biblical example of Philia?

1 Samuel 18:1–4

1 After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. 2 From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family. 3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. 4 Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

2 Samuel 1:26

26 I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother;
 you were very dear to me.
 Your love for me was wonderful,
 more wonderful than that of women.

AGAPE PT. 1 SLIDE

The FOURTH and FINAL Greek word for love that we will cover is AGAPE.

FYI – This is the principal/dominant word for love in the NT (utilized MANY times).

Q. What is agape? What type of love is agape?

A. It is an UNCONDITIONAL and SELFLESS form of love.

KEY – This form of love has NO limitation of any kind. it is ENTIRELY positive and the highest possible order of love in both heaven and on earth. Allow me to share a few thoughts along these lines:

NOTE 1 – Agape is truly UNCONDITIONAL. Eros is founded on the beauty of the object; Storge is limited by familial connection; Philia hinges upon reciprocity. Agape is love for the unlovely; the unlovable; the stranger; the enemy; the vile; and for those who would ultimately reject its offer!

NOTE 2 – Agape is truly SELFLESS/SELF-SACRIFICING. Whereas Eros and Philia focus on what you might GET from person (e.g., sexual gratification, the meeting of a social need, etc.), agape is focused on what you can GIVE with no consideration of return. Whereas Philia may produce SYMPATHY without action, Agape produces COMPASSION (i.e., love in action).

KEY – This is the kind of love that GOD demonstrates continually and perfectly!

John 3:16

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Q. Did God love us because of how lovable and lovely we were?

Q. Did God love us because of how much we loved/how well we treated Him?

Q. Did He love us because of what He could get from us? Because of needs we'd meet?

Q. Did God feel sympathy toward humanity or a sense of sincere compassion (love in action)?

AGAPE PT. 2

KEY – This is the type of love He has called/commanded US to pursue!

John 13:34–35

34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Matthew 5:43–48

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 22:36–39

36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

37 Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

CONCLUSIONS

KEY 1 – Agape is ultimately something BEYOND the scope of human love (DIVINE in nature). Whereas we can experience/operate in the other three types of love, Agape can ONLY be achieved by and through Christ (as His love works in and through us).

KEY 2 – We will CONTINUE this new series next Sunday as we will look DEEPER into Agape love.