

Fake Family Love | Family Love, Part 2

I. The Definition of the World's Love

- One popular definition is that love is romantic and deals with sexuality and attraction. No one denies that it can also be experienced between family members and friends who aren't romantically inclined, but try googling the word love and then click on images and see what types of pictures flood your screen.
- Another very common idea is that love is completely tolerant and accepts a person the way they are with no expectation for change. This type of love will never disagree with you or say that something you're doing is wrong. I encounter this quite often in my ministry at Victory Academy. No doubt, some of you parents have had a child accuse you of not loving them simply because you disagree with their life choices.
- And lastly, the word "love" is often used to communicate enjoyment or liking. For example, a minute ago I said, "*I love studying other languages.*" What does that really mean? Well, I suppose it means more than "I like studying languages." Maybe it means I'm passionate about it. Who knows.

II. The Definition of *eros* "Love"

- *Eros* is never once mentioned in the Bible.
- *Eros* does not describe biblical, passionate sexuality between a man and a wife.
- The basic idea of this love is *self-satisfaction*. Though it's directed toward another, it actually has self in mind. We could say it this way, "*I love you because you make me happy.*"
 - It's primarily motivated by the benefits you'll receive from the relationship.
 - With God that's called idolatry. With others that's called idolatry. It's all about you.
- The foundation of this type of love is attraction to some characteristic in the other person which pleases you.
- What makes this fake love even worse is that if the characteristic that originally attracted you ceased to exist, the reason for the love would be gone.
- This is why family counselors encounter so many spouses who say, "I just don't love them anymore." This translates into, "The things about them I liked are gone," or "The benefit I received from being married to them is gone."
- But this extends far beyond marriage. This is why siblings love each other one moment and the next can't stand each other.
- *Eros* looks for what it can *receive*. If it does give, it gives in order to receive. If it fails to get what it wants or expects, bitterness or resentment develops.
- What makes it so dangerous is this: because you feel *eros* for you family members — you really like them and there are times you really get a long when you're getting what you want — you somehow think you're glorifying God by loving the way you should. But in the end, your interactions with your family are founded on nothing more than selfishness and idolatry.
 - Anyone can love like this. In fact, Jesus said the following in Matthew 5:46-47, "*If you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?*"
 - These verses come right after Jesus commanded us to love our enemies. There is no way that *eros* could ever show genuine love for an enemy. That's not how *eros* works.

III. Conclusion

- If you're unsaved, what we're saying is crazy! If you don't believe in God, there is nothing more important for which to live than your own happiness. Clearly, it doesn't make sense to love someone who doesn't benefit me. Even helping homeless people only has value as it makes me feel good about myself for helping people out.
- But, as followers of Christ, we must not be motivated by selfishness.
 - In Philippians 2:3 God says, "*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.*"
 - James 3:16 tells us, "*For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.*" That word "vile" just means worthless or bad. Are there worthless, bad, or wicked things going on in your home? Well, it's not there because of genuine, biblical love. It's there because *eros* didn't get what it wanted.
 - A chapter later James gives us the perfect picture of *eros*. I discussed it in great detail in episode 127, but I'll sum it up here by saying that conflicts and fights arise because we want something and we don't get it.
 - God calls that spiritual adultery. It's hate. It's selfishness. But it's also *eros*.

Please don't let this fake love, this "lust that takes," take any more from your family. Reject selfish lust, and practice the beneficial loves God does want us to have.

Love.
Parent.

... a part of the Evermind Ministries family.