

## Natural Family Love | Family Love, Part 3

### I. The Definition of *Storge*

- The root is not used in the Bible, but *astorge* and *philostorgos* are, and they both contain the root word.
- It's a natural affection or obligation. It's a result of God's common grace and usually is extended to close family or people who are viewed as close family.
- Anyone can feel *storge*.
- But *storge* can be lost. Romans 12:28-30 and II Timothy 3:1-5 tell us that those who know God's Truth and reject it will lose their natural affection.
  - Ephesians 4:17-19 reveals that people can become callous by practicing impurity.
  - *Storge* will be lost when people repeatedly and consistently reject God's Truth and live for self.
- In Romans 12:10 we encounter *philostorgos*. We're commanded to have this hybrid love for believers.
  - It's a combination of *storgē* and *philos*, and *philos* means "beloved, dear, and friendly."
  - What's interesting is that we're being commanded to feel this love-hybrid. Now, remember, *Storge* is nowhere commanded of us because it's considered a natural affinity, and the biblical author chose not to use the word *phileo*.
  - Whether we're born again or not, we should all exhibit the natural affection for family that God created us to have.
  - But once you're born again into a new, spiritual family, God expects that there will be a new kind of natural affection for our fellow believers.

### II. The Family Application of *Storge*

- **God created all of you to love each other with a natural affection.**
  - Do you experience that natural affection that enjoys being around your family?
  - When something negative happens to your family, do you respond with a desire to protect them?
  - Does the thought of losing any of your family members make you sad? If not, your callouses may be growing.
- **This natural affection can only be lost as we repeatedly choose to disobey God's Truth.**
  - Do you love your pet more than you love your parents?
  - Does the idea of spending an evening home playing games with your family make you cringe?
  - When that natural affection starts to callous over, we must not blame the other person.
  - It's super easy for parents terrorized by their child to blame the kid for the aversion they now feel.
  - It's second nature for children to blame their parents when the child starts to grow away from them.
  - But the reality is that if your natural affections are slipping, it's your fault. And the reason is distressing because it can only mean that somewhere in your life you're repeatedly choosing to disobey God's commands,
  - And the really scary thing about it is your sinful choices may not have anything to do with the family member you're struggling to *storge*.
  - The point is, if we feel that natural affection slipping away, the answer is personal and the answer is sin.

- **If you and your family members are born again, God actually commands you to exhibit *philostorgos* for your born again family.**
  - You see, this is a much bigger deal. Regular old *storgé* comes naturally and can't be commanded, but the natural affection amongst the family of God can be commanded.
  - How do you feel toward your saved children, parents, and siblings?
  - Do you enjoy spending time with your born again family with your extended born again family . . . at church?
  - Is that something to which you look forward?
  - What about family devotions?
  - If you don't enjoy that, if you're not drawn to spending time with your saved family and God then there's a problem.
- **This natural affection for other believers can also be lost only when we choose to disobey God's Truth.**
  - Like I observed before, if your parents are saved and you really don't like hanging out with them, the issue is yours.
  - I'm not saying they don't do annoying things. I'm not saying they make consistent strides to be likable and be lovable.
  - I'm simply saying that there should be a deep and abiding affection for family. That's on you. Only consistent sin steals that from us.

### III. The Way to Regain *Storge*

- **Repent of your sin.**
  - When you rightly see God, and when you rightly see yourself in light of God's Word, and if you truly believe what God has to say about family love, you will want to repent. You will want to change.
  - This is the most important part of rebuilding *storgé* in your life. Natural affection dies in an atmosphere of habitual sin.
- **Schedule deliberate time to recreate with your family**, specifically the family with whom you're at odds.
  - This takes a significant amount of prayer and a deliberate desire to glorify God. Generally speaking, if you're becoming calloused in your natural affections, then things are pretty rocky as it is. Much of the time you spend together is probably dripping with relational carnage.
  - Start slow, and keep the word recreate in mind. The word means to "re-create," to "create again." Look at it as an opportunity to create a new relationship with that family member.
  - If you're already a strong family in this area, you still need to take deliberate times for recreation. Many times our relationships get strained because we push them and push them and we go through difficult family times and we just assume the good relationships will hang in there under the strain.
- **Be people who are fun to be around.**
  - Parents, there's no excuse for not being any fun. There's no excuse for not pretending with your kids. There's no excuse for not having a tea party or playing Uno or running around outside or going on a bike ride.
  - *Storgé* thrives when we have fun together, but it's really helpful to be fun people.
- **Be productive in your relationships.**
  - It's great to have fun, but I firmly believe that *storgé* thrives in relationships where people are beneficially caring for one another to the glory of God.