

True Family Love | Family Love, Part 5

I. Some Technical Observations Concerning *Agapē*

- It's the noblest word for love in the Greek language.
- It's not kindled by the merit or worth of its object, which means this is the first love that allows us to love unlovable people.
- It's a choice. It's not a natural instinct, it isn't inadvertently pulled out of us. It's a conscious decision.
- This love keeps on loving even when the loved one is unresponsive, unkind, unloveable, and unworthy. It is truly considered an unconditional love.
- However, it too may be used in a fleshly, selfish way.
 - In John 3:19 Jesus tells us that, "*people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.*" The word used here for love is the verb form of *agapē*, *agapeō*.
 - In II Timothy 4:10 we're told that Demas *agapeō*-ed this present word and deserted Paul.
 - II Peter 2:15 tells of Balaam who *agapeō*-ed gain from wrongdoing.
 - And I John 2:15 warns us not to *agapeō* the world.
 - And then not only can it be used in a selfish way, but even Christ-honoring *agapē* can fade away.
 - In Matthew 24:12 Jesus tells us that *agapē* can grow cold.
 - And Revelation 2:4 we learn that the Ephesians abandoned their first *agapē*.

II. The Origin of True Love

- True Love originates with God.
- **God can command us to love because of the nature of love.** True Love is volitional. It's not an emotion, it's not a feeling. It's not something into which we fall. The object of our love doesn't have to be lovable.
- **God can command us to love because He is love.** The extremely high biblical expectations for True Love may seem like having to climb Mount Everest. That's why it's a comfort to remember . . .
- **God can command us to love because He's powerful.** But we're also going to find out that not only is it a comfort that God will help us out *if* we struggle having True Love, we need Him to have True Love in the first place. We can't do it on our own. It's *impossible* for anyone in your family to truly love anyone else without God.
- **God can command us to love because we're forgiven . . . or at least, we should be.**

III. The Recipients of True Love

- **We're commanded to love God.**
- **We're commanded to love our neighbor**
 - Ephesians 5:25; 5:28; 5:33, and Colossians 3:19 command husbands in particular to love their wives.
 - I Peter 2:17 tells us to love the brotherhood.
 - II John 1:5 commands us simply to "*love one another.*"
- **We're commanded to love our enemy.**

IV. The Characteristics of True Love

- **True Love flows from, is empowered by, and must return to God.**
 - Romans 5:5b, *“God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”*
 - II Corinthians 5:14, *“For the love of Christ controls us.”*
 - I Thessalonians 4:9b, *“You yourselves have been taught by God to love one another.”*
 - I John 4:19, *“We love because he first loved us.”*
 - Unlike *storgē* and *phileō*, this love is not accessible to unbelievers.
- **True Love must permeate all we do.**
 - I Corinthians 16:14, *“Let all that you do be done in love.”*
- **True Love is the proof of genuine faith in God.**
 - John 13:35, *“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*
 - Galatians 5:22, *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love.”*
- **True Love is evidenced by obedience.**
 - In John 14:15 Jesus said, *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”*
 - John 14:21 the Messiah says, *“Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.”*
 - In John 14:23, 24, the Son of God commands, *“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word,”* *“Whoever does not love me does not keep my words.”*
 - In John 15:10, the incarnate Christ tell us, *“If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.”*
 - Romans 13:8 says, *“Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.”*
 - Romans 13:10 proclaims, *“Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”*
 - In I John 2:5, the disciple who Jesus loved tells us that, *“Whoever keeps [God’s] word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.”*
 - Later, in I John 3:18, we learn, *“Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”*
 - And in II John 1:6 we’re told very clearly, *“And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments;”*
- **True Love does the right thing even when it’s hard.**
 - Hebrews 12:6, *“For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”*
- **The greatest proof of True Love is that a person would sacrifice his/her life for his/her friends.**
 - John 15:13, *“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”*
 - Romans 5:8, *“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*
- **True Love has the best interest of others as its highest priority.**
 - Romans 12:10 doesn’t use the word *agapē*, but the principle is clear in the second part of the verse: *“Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”*
 - Romans 14:15 illustrates this for us more specifically when it says, *“For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love.”*
- **True Love never stops growing.**
 - Philippians 1:9, *“And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more.”*