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ROMANS 13:8-12



Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 10. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. 11. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the woks of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

Come along with us on a quest. Where? For what? To the heart of God – to learn what true love is. We've prayed and worried and fretted and rejoiced over this article and now we ask you to come along, join us in the search for the greatest thing on earth – love.

We discovered right away that love is more enjoyable as an experience than as a word study but we mapped our way along a course that gave us a few new insights and ideas. We're on the trail to God's ultimate experience for mankind – to know pure Godly love.

FIRST DISCOVERY

LOVE IS BETTER AS AN EXPERIENCE THAN A WORD STUDY

The path we're taking is a narrow one. There are some barriers to jump over, a few knotty problems to deal with, a lot of places to get tangled up and bogged down. But the further along we get, the better the markings are and the leveler the ground is and the stronger we become from overcoming all the road blocks set up in the beginning.

We've merely roughed out a trail for you. By blazing this trail maybe we can make it a bit easier for you. You'll find you have to get through many of the rough spots and wrestle a few beasts yourself though. Sorry, that's how it has to be. We'll just beat the bush and throw a couple of punches to soften things up.

THE END OF OUR SEARCH

WILL BRING US TO THE NEW AGE

When we discover LOVE, we will have found the new age. We chose the scripture on the cover because we believe it's time to awaken out of our sleep and start moving. If we don't change and learn to love rather than condemn and judge then we're destined to die just as our forefathers. Its much easier to go the way of all flesh rather than seek glory, honor and immortality (Rom. 2:7). The greater a thing is the more sacrifice and hurt there is in obtaining it. The path to the greatest thing, "Love" is the hardest one you'll ever follow. But the rewards found along the way are greater than any you'll ever know. In fact, you'll never find complete fulfillment on any other road.



Paul says if we love our neighbor, we have fulfilled the law. He is plainly referring to all laws and rules, including the Ten Commandments, for he quotes four of them. (Rom. 13:9) He then goes on and says, "if there is any other commandment it is summed up in this saying, 'you shall love your neighbor as your self.'"

Jesus gave us a new commandment, "Love one another even as I have loved you (John 12:34)."

We must understand – Jesus has set us free. The commandment is to "Love your neighbor as yourself and we can only love ourselves when we realize that through Jesus Christ we have been forgiven. When we can really believe "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7)," then we are free to operate in the spirit of love.

Until then we will be bound by our own laws, traditions and commandments. We'll never be able to forgive and love others as long as we're all bound up ourselves. Only then will we know what it means to be merciful as our Father above is merciful (Luke 6:36).

WE ARE NOW SLAVES OF

LOVE

You are free! You are no longer bound by ordinances and commandments: touch not, taste not, handle not (Col. 2:21).

You are free from the law, but being now in Christ, you are a slave to love. You must see the difference.

Laws are good, but when we make them an end rather than a means to mature they bind us and keep us from growing. Your parents made rules for you when you were a child because they were trying to teach you principles of good conduct and behavior. Now that you're matured and grown up you no longer are subject to those rules because you've learned the principles behind them. You are ready to take on the responsibility of a family yourself. If you were still tied to your mothers apron strings and trying to raise a family of your own, you'd have some bad trouble.

It's because we place ourselves and others under laws that we get mad and even hate ourselves and others. "For the law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there is no violation (Rom. 4:15)." We fail to love because we set standards that can not be kept. What we must do it make our standard "LOVE". Because there is no law against love (Gal. 5:23).



Before you go any further you must settle this issue. **THE LAW IS FULFILLED THROUGH LOVE...WE ARE FREE FROM LEGALISM.** Really, even the command to "Love one another" cannot be a law. How can anyone legislate feelings or attitudes? It's impossible. No one can make a person love. That's like trying to make someone

like pickle and peanut butter sandwiches. If you don't like them, you don't and no law will make any difference at all. We love, not because we're commanded to, but because God first loved us (1 John 4:19).

If you're not convinced yet that living in love or being led by the Spirit (the same thing, because God is love) and trying to follow the law are two entirely different things we can only recommend our book, "Free to Live", to you. In it we've covered every aspect of the law vs. love question. If you can't resolve this issue you'll be constantly frustrated and miss the mark God has set for you. This is a tremendously important point.

Well, we can't keep stumbling around here. Let's keep going.

KINDS OF LOVE

WHICH ONE ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

There are four Greek words translated love in English: **EROS, STORGOS, PHILEO AND AGAPE.**

EROS is an erotic, pleasure seeking form of love. It is not found in the New Testament. The Hebrew word **DOD** can be found in the Old Testament. It has about the same meaning as **EROS**.

STORGOS is a love that is born out of family relationships. For example; you love your aunt simply because she is your mother's sister.

PHILEO is a give and take kind of love. It's participated in because a response is expected. When the response ceases, the **PHILEO** love stops. An example is a workers union; people join together to meet certain on the job needs. If the union did not do its duty no one would join. Most all social groups, including churches, are built on **PHILEO**.

AGAPE

AGAPE is a God-given love. It gives and gives without being motivated by a desire to receive a response. There is no earthly parallel or pattern for agape love except the one Jesus gave. "Greater love (agape) hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." If a person gives his life for someone else it is obvious he is not going to enjoy a response from that person.

Our goal is to become **AGAPE** lovers. Anything less is missing the mark. The other forms of love are good and wholesome in their place, but we're heading for the top.

**AGAPE is both
A FRUIT and A GIFT**



AGAPE is listed as both a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) and a gift of the Spirit to be sought for (1 Cor. 13). Therefore you can receive God's love in spurts, as the gift of the Holy Spirit, when you really need it and you can also grow into the full fruit of AGAPE love by abiding in the vine (Jesus).

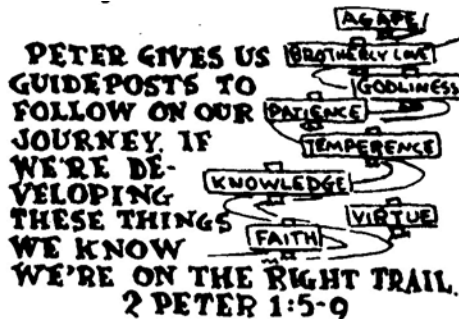
A GIFT is something that God gives with no requirements. It is unmerited favor.

A FRUIT is something that is produced from within by abiding in the vine (Jesus) and is manifest for all to see and enjoy.

AGAPE IS MORE THAN GIVING

We see from 1 Cor. 13:3 that AGAPE is more than just giving, though it includes it. "If I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love (AGAPE) it profits me nothing." True AGAPE comes from God and a list of its qualities can be read in 1 Cor. 13.

To be able to continually pour out love on others without being motivated by their reciprocation is a sign of Godliness. To have AGAPE, you must be led by the SPIRIT. For AGAPE comes from God. It is not a human type love that responds to our senses, but rather a heavenly love, knowing the end from the beginning.



Peter places AGAPE as our final goal in a seven-step progression to perfection. We start with the gift of faith and keep adding to it virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly love (PHILEO) and finally charity (AGAPE). It's as though God gives us the gift of faith for strength and encouragement, then He gives us little glimpses of our ultimate goal to keep us moving and not settling for anything short of it.

NEW CONCEPT

While in the process of preparing this article on love, we ran across an interesting new concept: in defining love we should look at it from two different viewpoints. First, from the point of view of the receiver of love and second, from the point of view of the giver of love.

Thus, as receivers of love (especially God's love) it is easy to get the idea that PHILEO is best because there are very few of us who want to love without response.

When we get right down to it, most everything we do is based on a desire to have some kind of response to our act. We do not believe there is anything wrong with this – the Bible takes it into account that it is the sixth step in a seven-step progression to perfection.

But Godly AGAPE love involves giving love without being motivated by desire to receive a response. We see then that Godly AGAPE love can only come from a perfectly mature Son of God. Right now, in our process of perfection, we are looking at love from the standpoint of receivers – and that's not all bad – but as we mature we will eventually look at love from the heavenly viewpoint as givers of AGAPE love.

Agape love is a higher form of love when viewed from the Godly or heavenly point of view. But, we admit that PHILEO (responsive love) is greater from our present earthly point of view. Who wants to love without response? Very few! But, in the future there will be some

Sons of God manifested who have experienced responsive love. They'll go on to develop a godly attitude and be capable of giving love without being motivated by response. However, remember that it is a progressive step and there is no need to be discouraged just because we aren't on the highest step yet.

CONCLUSIONS

Well, now we have seen the first big barrier to get over in our search for LOVE. We have also seen that there are different kinds of love in the original Greek texts of the New Testament that all are translated simply 'love' in our English texts. We'll have to get out our concordances to check what kinds of love the scriptures are talking about in each case that the work love is used. We've marked AGAPE with one color and PHILEO in another. Doing this will give you a lot of insight into both kinds of love.

We have seen further that the bible gives us guideposts so we can check our progress along our journey. We can know if we're headed in the right direction.

We now also know we are to seek the 'gift' of love and also abide in Jesus to develop the 'fruit' of love in ourselves.

We realize love (AGAPE) is a hard thing to understand because we are physical responsive beings. An Agape lover is responsive but he is not motivated by his desire for a response.

Continue with us as we try to learn of pure godly love. Let's not settle for anything less. Learning to love is the key to the third salvation. We have to awaken out of our sleep and realize we have much more to learn and experience in our Christian walk, for now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed.



1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-8



CHARITY (AGAPE) suffers long, and is kind; CHARITY envies not; CHARITY vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. CHARITY never faileth.