



## 4. Two Loves as Different as Night and Day

We have one word for “love” in English. It covers everything from what God is in heaven all the way down to the dismal depths of Hollywood immorality which they call “love.” Such a word is so loose and fuzzy that it means almost nothing anymore. Yet no word is more important to understand.

When the apostles wrote the New Testament, their language was richer than ours. *Eros* was the common everyday word for love, such as we use love in our daily life. It meant love of husband for wife and vice-versa, love of parents for children and vice-versa, love of friends for each other, love of the noble and beautiful. Spiritual *eros* was Plato’s great idea of an uplifting, spiritual love, the opposite of mere sensuality.

When the apostle John took his pen to write those glorious words, “God is love,” he could not say “God is *eros*.” He said, “God is *agape*.” When the philosophers of the apostles’ day heard this, they were annoyed. “Why not use our word, and say that ‘God is *eros*?’” they demanded. Thus began a contest that has gone on for nearly two thousand years between these two opposite ideas of love. Actually they are two ideas about God – as far apart as day and night. Every man, woman and child on earth will someday accept one or the other as his ideal of life.

### How *Agape*-love Shocks and Amazes Us

(In this portion of the lesson, we have used the word *agape* instead of love or charity as the King James Version gives it, because *agape* is the original word the apostles used.)

1. How useless are words to say if one does not have *agape* in his/her heart? 1 Corinthians 13:1

Answer: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not *agape*, I am become as \_\_\_\_\_, or a \_\_\_\_\_.”

2. How useless are your knowledge and your faith if you do not have *agape*? 1 Corinthians 13:2

Answer: “I am \_\_\_\_\_.”

3. If you give away all that you have to the poor and even die a martyr’s death without having *agape*, what good does it do you in the end? 1 Corinthians 13:3

Answer: “It profited me \_\_\_\_\_.”

4. Out of all professing Christians in the world, who only really knows God? 1 John 4:7, 8

Answer: “*Agape* is of \_\_\_\_\_; and every one that \_\_\_\_\_ (with *agape*) is born of God, and knows God. He that loves not (with *agape*) \_\_\_\_\_; for \_\_\_\_\_ *agape*.”

5. If one has *agape*, how unafraid and courageous will he be in the day of judgment? 1 John 4:17

Answer: “Herein is our *agape* made perfect, that we may have \_\_\_\_\_”

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6. Think of it! Walking boldly into the presence of God, past all the holy angels, with perfect confidence! This is amazing. What does **agape** do to our natural inborn fear of the judgment?

1 John 4:18

Answer: "There is no \_\_\_\_\_ in **agape**; but perfect **agape** \_\_\_\_\_."

7. Is it possible for a person to have **agape** and continue in transgressing God's holy law?

Romans 13:10

Answer: "**Agape** is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the law."

The apostle James says (James 2:10): "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." And John adds that the Lord's church in the last days will be distinguished by obedience to all God's commandments (Revelation 12:17; 14:12). This is shocking! Many people think they are true Christians, because they suppose they know how to love. But they will end up hearing the Lord say, Sorry, "I never knew you" (Matthew 7:22, 23). What they had was **eros** and not **agape**; and they never knew the difference.

## Jesus Warns Us: Don't Mistake **Eros** for **Agape**

8. What does natural-born human love, as possessed by all (including the heathen), enable us to do quite easily?

Matthew 5:46, 47

Answer: "If you love them \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ reward have you? Do not even the \_\_\_\_\_?" ". . . What do you more \_\_\_\_\_?"

9. But what does **agape** love enable us to do? Matthew 5:44

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

10. According to this, what does it mean to become "perfect"? Matthew 5:45-48

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

Love to man is the outward revealing of the love of God in the heart. It was to implant this love that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, "Love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12), we will love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is done. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts.

11. **Eros** is a love dependent on the beauty or goodness of its object. This is the "you-love-them-which-love-you" love. In complete contrast, what kind of people is **agape** directed to? Romans 5: 7, 8, 10

Answer: "God commends His **agape** toward us, in that, while we were yet \_\_\_\_\_, Christ \_\_\_\_\_." "When we were \_\_\_\_\_, we were \_\_\_\_\_."

12. **Eros** is a love that rests on a sense of need. A husband loves his wife because he needs her (and vice versa). Children love their parents because they need them (and vice versa). Two friends love each other because they need each other. Although this is not wrong, **agape** is in complete contrast. It does not rest on a sense of need. What was Jesus' motive in giving Himself for us?

2 Corinthians 8:8, 9

Answer: ". . . Though He was \_\_\_\_\_, yet for \_\_\_\_\_ He became \_\_\_\_\_."

13. Where do we see **agape** revealed most clearly? 1 John 4:9, 10

Answer: "Herein is **agape**, . . . that He loved us, and \_\_\_\_\_ the propitiation for our sins."

"Propitiation" means a sacrifice made to heal us of our enmity against God. The Father loves us, but not because of the great sacrifice. He provided it, because He loves us. Christ was the medium through which He could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world.

14. Does your heart say, "Thank You, Lord, for such love"? \_\_\_\_\_

"Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." 1 Peter 5:7 "Pray without ceasing" 1 Thessalonians 5:17

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