

## HOW GOD'S LOVE IS INTERTWINED WITH HIS WORD

When you make the decision to pray to the God of the Bible, many folks know they are praying to the God who created the world. Most also know He sent His Only Begotten Son to die on the cross as a sacrifice to save the human race. All humans who make a decision to ask Him in prayer are basing that request on His word. Is this God faithful? Does He answer prayer? Is He trustworthy? The answer to those questions are based on God's word. What follows is a short word study of the Greek and Hebrew words we see for love. We will review one from the Hebrew and one not seen or used in the Bible at all.

The first word we will look at is not used in the Bible. It is Greek and the apostles could have used it, but for whatever reason decided not to.<sup>1</sup> **Eros:** It is basically carnal and is all about you— What you can get; your needs and your wants. It is focused on itself. Maybe that explains why it was never used by the apostles.

The second word we'll look at is Hebrew. **Ahab** describes many exceptionally close, emotional bonds. Abraham loved Isaac (Genesis 22:2); Isaac loved Esau (Genesis 25:28); Israel loved Joseph more than his other children (Genesis 37:3). You also see the love of a husband for his wife: Isaac and Rebekah; Jacob and Rachel (see Genesis 24:67; 29:18). It's interesting that **Ahab** is used to describe the "love for your neighbor as yourself" that we see in Leviticus 19:18. **Ahab** even describes the Old Testament's call to loving the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:5).

We begin a short study of Greek with the third word, **Stergo:** It is a love that exists within a family, between children, grandparents, aunts and uncles. It even describes the love of a nation to a respected hero of that nation. It speaks of familial devotion.

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<sup>1</sup> < <https://www.bibleconnection.com/5-biblical-words-for-love> > I used my own Greek sources, but a link I also used is listed here, if you desire to read it.

The fourth we'll look at is **Phileo**. It speaks of the affection of a boyfriend and girlfriend and carries the idea of two people loving based on mutual satisfaction, and describes brotherly love between friends.

The fifth word is **Agape**. The focus is on others with no strings attached. What's interesting is that it's not frequently used in secular Greek texts of the time. *Eros* is used frequently with secular texts, but **Agape** not so much. **Agape** describes love between people but it describes the love of people for God (John 13:35; 1 John 2:15). It describes God's love for humanity and of Father God's love for Christ (Romans 5:8; John 17:26). I find this very interesting because it's the reason we can trust in God's love for us.

**Agape** occurs when an individual sees, recognizes, understands and appreciates the value of an object or a person, causing an object or person to be held in great esteem and admiration. When we see its use in John 3:16, we can understand that when God looked at the world—even with all mankind's failures, God looked upon the world and saw the image of Himself—Christ—in mankind and He reached out to save us. **Agape** loves so intensely that it will go as far to sacrifice everything. It is that God kind of love, expecting nothing in return. But it's not just a mental exercise. **Agape** takes action in love and demonstrates itself by that action. We see **Agape** in all members of the Godhead. In Galatians 5:22, the fruit of the Spirit is love.

The sixth word is **Agapao**. This word describes God's love; His unconditional and benevolent love. This word is used exclusively to describe the love seen among Christians. It is also used to describe the fact that love is of God. The connection to Christians is because those who love by God's love, are born by God because love is born of God (1 John 4:7-8).

The last, or seventh word is a combination of two words. So you have two root words in *phileo* and *adelphos*, meaning brother. When you combine these two roots, the word **Philadelphia** signifies loving someone like a brother or sister. This word does not describe the love God has for us, but rather the love of fraternal fondness. Because of the church at **Philadelphia**, we see almost a familial bond between the brethren because of Christ (Revelation 3:7-13). One source described it as a love between people that

can only be experienced because of Jesus, and without the Christ, we would normally not see this kind fondness or affection.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Prayer for the Nation***

Quite frequently we ask the question why God should answer prayer for America, or whatever nation you live in. When I looked at the word *Stergo* I was so surprised to see national pride within its meaning. *Stergo* is based on familial love and never used outside of it except in this understanding of love for a national hero. Now, America is specific in its understanding of brotherly patriotism.

I realize in today's America they never mention it because of socialism. But many years ago that's the only understanding Americans had. Before we allowed mass immigration it was easy to see each other as patriots and brothers. Unfortunately, that definition has faded. When you do research into early America, that's all you read about. So when you pray for your nation, view them as your family and it will become easier to expect an answer from Father God. It also makes sense that *Philadelphia* is named after that understanding. Early Americans all had that understanding of each other.

### ***Trust Based on a Word***

The two words *Agape* and *Agapao* become the crux of receiving an answer from God when we pray. Most of the time humans feel bad about some aspect of their personalities or their actions. So going to God in prayer can become riddled with guilt if you don't understand the word He uses to describe His love for you. There is no question in that word about His love. There is no desire to receive something from us; His love is pure and His response in answering your need is as well. Because of this, we can pray and expect an answer. Now, sometimes the answer is not what we are expecting. Sometimes we don't think it through. It is possible that we might not be safe if He did answer in the affirmative, giving us everything we want. But when we study how Father God views love, we can always believe that whatever answer He gives us, as we pray in faith, the best is what He will always give us. Don't allow anyone to make you feel inadequate when you pray to the

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

God of the Bible. None of us are adequate, but Jesus is and His blood covers us and it is His blood Father God sees when you pray. Believe and receive and know Father God is love:

1 John 4:7-12:

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us” (English Standard Version).

1 John 4:15-21:

“Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother” (English Standard Version).