

since God's love is divine. Whatever He says is the only and right understanding of love—even if the world dissents.

Perhaps in our culture, in our intense and divided political environment, this point may be more important to stress at the moment. We constantly hear people say, "You are unloving." "You are so full of hate." "You're supposed to show love if you're a Christian, aren't you?" We certainly agree that we must show love, especially if we are Christians. In fact we would go even further in saying that we are not acting like Christ if we aren't showing love. In translation that means we are not Christians if we don't live and teach the love of God. Love is the foundation of Christianity because God is love. But the mere accusation of the absence of love doesn't mean it is true. Just because someone accuses another of hate doesn't actually mean that person is showing hate. This is because love is of God.

Something is only an act of love if it harmonizes with the will of God. Let us remember that our first priority in love is the Lord. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment" (Matt. 22:37-38). God also says, "This is love, that we walk according to His commandments" (2 John 6). The definition of love doesn't belong to us. Love is not a term that we can weaponize and use against another person just because our feelings are hurt. As much as a sinner may not like it, opposing sin is not unloving because true love comes from God. Before we accuse some one else of hate, we must be sure that whatever we are objecting to is genuinely opposed to the love of God. Consider these examples:

- When faithful members of the church plead with the erring to come home to their Lord (Gal. 6:1), is that loving or hateful? It may not be culturally appealing but it is an act of love to try and snatch our brethren from the clutches of Satan.
- When we teach that God-approved marriage is between one man and one woman (Matt. 19:3-9), are we saying that because we hate polygamists and homosexuals? No, not at all. Loving God means we are for His ways and against all others.
- When we stand against misbehavior, immorality and violence in our world, we aren't objecting because we hate people. We are not "unloving" and "hateful" just because the accusation is leveled against us—not if our love is guided by our allegiance to God.
- It is not an act of hate to disagree on a matter of opinion. In fact, love is what helps us remain as brethren in spite of our variance.

If God is love then following His lead produces loving actions. This is why the first and greatest commandment is to love God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength. Agape love is divine.

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July 19, 2020

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“What Is Love?” (Part 3)

David B. Smith

What is *agape* love?

1. Agape love is divine. “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:7-8). This limits the definition, identification and application. This also means that the love of God is uninfluenced by the rhetoric, wisdom or actions of people. We cannot decide subjectively what it is or is not. God's love is an objective reality. The only place to learn it is in the Bible. The only place to see it is in the work of God (Psa. 19:1-7), both in His Creation and in His redemptive plan. People might try to deny it. People might try to redefine it. But those efforts fail

Prayer List

James Anderson	Danny Curvin	Judy Lusk
Patricia Anthony	Tommie Grandfield	Tony Miller
Jim Bethune	Bill Greer	Lexi Owens
Nancy Birch	Fred Hafley	Carlos Shannon
Mike Bouldin	Kathy Hamilton	Janice Smith
Susie Hargis	Bessie Smithson	Isaac Cooper
Grayson Ledbetter	Diane Stacy	Loretta Leffew
John Webster		

Announcements

- **Combined Service:** Today is the first day that we will have a combined worship service since the middle of March. Several have urged the elders to consider this possibility, and our prayers are that this may be the first of all that follow. There are things that we can all do to help ensure the success of our meeting together. Social distancing and no physical contact significantly reduce the chance of passing the virus from one person to another, and it makes a number of our member more comfortable attending the service. Also, masks are not mandated but are certainly welcome as this too adds to the comfort of a number of our members.
- **Wednesday Evenings:** This is just a reminder that David is on YouTube and Facebook each Wednesday evening at six with a weekly lesson on the nature of God.
- **Reminders:** Our online worship service is still being posted to Facebook and YouTube each Sunday morning and, for anyone who wishes to do so, contributions can still be made using Venmo: NorthHamilton-ChurchOfChrist or can be mailed to P O Box 517, Soddy-Daisy, TN 37384

Our Sick and Recovering

- **Colleen Dennis** reports that her endoscopy on Wednesday showed no area of concern. She does await biopsy results on tissue samples that were sent to the lab.
- **JB Swafford** asks us to remember his aunt **Dot Bryant** who was hospitalized after a recent stroke. During this time it was found that she has inoperable brain cancer. She has been moved to a nursing home in Dunlap and no treatment is planned at this time.

Upcoming Birthdays and Anniversaries

The calendar for August is on the table in the foyer. Please check that your family's August birthdays and anniversaries are correct and included.

Birthdays

19 – Phyllis Wells, Savannah Qualls, Bobby Haynes
20 – Bob Newsom
21 – Norma Griffith
28 – Debbie Cooper
30 – David Walker
31 – Marilyn Everett

Anniversaries

26 – Doug & Sue Wright, Joe & Erica Anderson
28 – Kenny & Cindy Rose