

AGAPE

“Without agape you are nothing!”

1 Corinthians 13:2

Agape is the Greek word for the special love God calls us to love people with. (Greek is the language the New Testament was originally written in.) *Agape* is pronounced *ah-gah 'pay*.

Definition:

Agape could be defined as, **“the power to love and do good to someone even if we do not like him, and he may not like us.”** *Agape* loves people even when we do not like them. No matter how much they have wronged us, hurt us, or grieved us, we will not allow bitterness to invade our hearts, but will regard them with that unconquerable benevolence which seeks nothing but his highest good, (William Barclay). We will do the right and good thing for someone even if we do not feel like it. It is not a feeling of the heart which cannot be controlled, but a determination of the mind. It takes strength to love like this. It takes divine power. It is not natural. At the same time, this does not mean we just let people do as they like, just as a parent who really loves her child will not let the child simply do as she likes. Setting boundaries is appropriate.

THERE ARE FOUR GREEK WORDS FOR LOVE:

AGAPE

Divine
Gives
Spends

Other directed

Rises above feelings of
dislike
Self denying

EROS

Natural
Takes
Gets, thirsts
Seeks to possess

Craves

Desire

“I want”

PHILIA

Natural

Friendship

Buddies like David and
Jonathan

STORGE

Natural

Family love

Parents to children, children
to parents

Brothers and sisters

Basic Bible Passages:

1. I Corinthians 13:1-8 --Agape’s importance, and a description is given.
2. Matthew 5:43-48 --Jesus demands agape of his followers.
3. John 13:34, 35 --Other’s will know we are Christians by our agape.
4. Matthew 22:36-40 --Agape can be commanded. One cannot command feelings.

THINK! Can you love someone without feeling love for that person? (Yes, you can.)

THE MIRACLE OF AGAPE:

Do not waste your time bothering whether you “love” your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him. The worldly man treats certain people kindly because he likes them: The Christian, trying to treat everyone kindly, finds himself liking more and more people as he goes on—including people he could not even have imagined himself liking at the beginning.

(Advice from C.S. Lewis)

EXAMPLE:

A pastor was counseling a woman who wanted a divorce because she didn’t feel “in love” anymore. Keith explained that love is not a feeling, but an act of the will, and that a marriage is built on commitment, not a feeling of love. The results came later. She had never understood before that love was not a feeling or an option, but a commandment. No longer a slave to her “non-loving feelings”, she found that the feelings came after the obedience. When she began doing the loving thing, she began feeling love again for her husband.