

The Nature of Love, part 3

August 8, 2010

(slide 1)

Matt 5:14-16, NIV

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

(slide 2) One of the primary ways we are to shine is through our sincere love for brothers and sisters in Christ.

John 13:34-35, ESV

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

(slide 3) The Greek word (verb form) for this kind of love is AGAPAO.

AGAPAO – to **value** another person in such a way that you desire and **seek** their **utmost good** and wellbeing

(slide 4) AGAPAO or AGAPE (noun form) is not anchored in feelings of affection, but as we begin to sincerely value another person it will lead to appreciation, and appreciation will lead to affection.

→ This should be especially true of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Rom 12:9-10, HCSB

Love must be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Show family affection to one another with brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor.

(slide 5) This would be impossible if sincerely loving others was dependent on our capacity to love, but AGAPAO is produced by the Spirit and flows in our lives as we cooperate with Him.

1 Thess 4:9-10, HCSB

About brotherly love: you don't need me to write you because you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. ¹⁰ In fact, you are doing this toward all the brothers in the entire region of Macedonia. But we encourage you, brothers, to do so even more....

(slide 6) This is important to remember because AGAPE must be sincere... it cannot be faked.

Rom 12:9a, HCSB

Love must be without hypocrisy.

1 Peter 1:22, NRSV

Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart.

(slide 7) Learning to love with sincerity is the primary goal of the Christian life.

1 Tim 1:5, HCSB

Now the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.

(slide 8) So far we've come to understand that AGAPE is patient, which has two applications:

→ AGAPE enables us to be slow and careful in our response when someone provokes, annoys or angers us.

→ AGAPE enables us to be slow in giving up on one another.

(slide 9) And we've come to understand that AGAPE is kind, which also has two primary applications:

→ AGAPE expresses itself in acts of kindness: a smile, a kind word, an appropriate touch, service, a gift.

→ AGAPE expresses itself in the act of forgiving.

(slide 10) Today we will continue looking at the nature of AGAPE as we briefly consider two things AGAPE *does not do* and two things AGAPE *is not*.

- Read 1 Cor. 13:1-13

(slide 11) Remember, as we work our way through the various aspects of the nature of love, we are allowing the Word to be like a surgeon's scalpel to our heart.

Heb 4:12, HCSB

For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as to divide soul, spirit, joints, and marrow; it is a judge of the ideas and thoughts of the heart.

- Read Jer. 17:9-10

(slide 12) AGAPE does not envy.

ZELOO—to set one's heart on something that belongs to someone else; to be jealous of another

Acts 7:9, HCSB

"The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt...."

Gen 37:3-4, NIV

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. ⁴When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

→ We cannot truly AGPAO someone and envy them at the same time, because AGAPE wants the very best for another person.

→ What kinds of things can tempt us to envy or be jealous of someone else?

- Material possessions
- Life opportunities
- Physical appearance or abilities
- Knowledge
- Relationships
- Position

(slide 13) AGAPE does not boast.

PERPEREUOMAI—to praise oneself excessively; to brag

→ Boasting is rooted in personal insecurity, so it is intensely self-focused.

→ Boasting usually draws attention to a particular area of success (or perceived success) to compensate for other areas where we feel like we are failing.

→ Boasting can be expressed in words, but also in any behavior that draws attention to self... anything that shouts, "Look at me. I'm better, or more successful, or more spiritual than you."

→ Boasting is about elevating self at the expense of someone else, so it is the very opposite of AGAPE.

→ What kinds of things do we boast about?

- What I have accomplished
- What I have
- What I know
- Who I know
- What I'm going to do

(slide 14) AGAPE is not arrogant.

PHUSIOO—to inflate; to puff up; metaphorically, to be puffed up with pride or arrogant

- Arrogance might occasionally express itself in some manner of boasting, but is more often expressed through the subtleties of attitude.
- Arrogance is an inward conviction that I am superior to someone else... in general (racism, social class) or in relation to a particular area (knowledge, spirituality, wealth, any area of achievement).
- Arrogance is a high opinion of oneself in comparison with others, and it is completely counter to AGAPE and the example of humility we find in Jesus.
- Read Php. 2:1-8

(slide 15) AGAPE is not rude.

ASCHEMONEO—to act shamefully; to behave inconsiderately toward others

→ We could say it this way: AGAPE is considerate of the feelings of others and behaves accordingly.

1 Cor 7:36, NIV

If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married.

→ One of the things Alan is teaching us on Wednesday night is how to move in the gift of prophecy in a way that is considerate of others.

(slide 16) To recap what we are looking to the Spirit of God to address in our hearts and lives today:

- AGAPE is not jealous of other people, but rejoices in their good fortune.
- AGAPE does not boast or elevate one's self at the expense of others.
- AGAPE does not have an inflated opinion of self, but in sincere humility considers others as being more significant.
- AGAPE is considerate of the feelings of other and behaves accordingly.

As we, through the Word, are made aware of what love looks like—its attitude, what it does, what it doesn't do—we are being prepared to more effectively cooperate with the Spirit to daily remove the blockages to love from our life.

John 14:26, ESV

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”