

A Study of God's Love (Agape)

"God is **love**" - 1 John 4:8 & 16. This word "**love**" is the greek word "**agape**"

Agape: The Greeks describe agape as an unconditional love and a great abundance of love. In ancient Greece the Greek people would have huge feasts of food where they would greatly overeat, but would always have leftovers. Agape is described as a "**love feast**" by the Greek as this kind of love is in an unimaginable abundance. "God is **agape**" - 1 John 4:8 & 16, and His love is unconditional and in great abundance. The word "**agape**" is used 116 times in the New Testament as the NT was originally written in Greek. It's important to note God and His Son Jesus Christ are the only givers of this perfect love known as agape, they are its only source.

Below are verses where the word "**love**" is substituted with the original Greek word "**agape**", so we can see agape in its context. Let's start with the words of Jesus:

*"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in **my agape**. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in **my agape**; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in **his agape**."* - John 15:9-10

*"Greater **agape** hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* - John 15:13

*"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have **agape** one to another."* - John 13:35

In these verses above Jesus shows that His love and God's love is agape. Jesus showed this agape for everyone when He gave His life for us in the second verse above. He also showed that His Father is agape as well. Let's continue:

*"But God commendeth **his agape** toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* - Romans 5:8

*"Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from **the agape of God**, which **is in Christ Jesus our Lord**."* - Romans 8:39

*"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and **the God of agape** and peace shall be with you. Greet one another with an holy kiss. All the saints salute you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and **the agape of God**, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."* - 2 Corinthians 13:11-14

*"But the fruit of **the Spirit is agape**, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."* - Galatians 5:22-23

*"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in **agape**, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know **the agape of Christ**, which passeth knowledge, **that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God**."* - Ephesians 3:17-19

*"Beloved, let us love one another: **for agape is of God**; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for **God is agape**. In this was manifested **the agape of God** toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. **Herein***

is agape, not that we 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 ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his agape is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the agape that God hath to us. God is agape; and he that dwelleth in agape dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our agape made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in agape; but perfect agape casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in agape.” - 1 John 4:7-18

God is trying to show us in the verses above that He wants us to dwell in His agape love. Agape is who God is as it is His foundational principle. We have to want to dwell in this love, and we need to ask God to give us this agape love as well. **“he that dwelleth in agape dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our agape made perfect,”** How important is it to have God’s agape?

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not agape, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not agape, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not agape, it profiteth me nothing. Agape suffereth long, and is kind; agape envieth not; agape vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Agape never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.... And now abideth faith, hope, agape, these three; but the greatest of these is agape.” - 1 Corinthians 13:1-8,13

God is showing us in 1 Corinthians chapter 13 that agape is more important than anything else. We can have all the knowledge of the bible, but if we don't have agape, then we are nothing. Why? Because God is looking to transform our hearts into a duplicate of His own heart. Does agape show up in other Christian principles?

“Owe no man anything, but to agape one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt agape thy neighbour as thyself. Agape worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore agape is the fulfilling of the law.” - Romans 13:8-10

Agape is not just who God is but it is also His law as shown in the verse above. 1 John 2:3 says, **“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.”** We know God by keeping the ten commandments because the ten commandments are agape, which is God’s character. God is not just calling us to accept that He is agape, but to love others with His agape as well. Next we are going to take a look at the word “agapao”.

Agapao: The act, or action of loving someone with agape. The word “agapao” is used 143 times in the New Testament.

Below are the verses we have looked at so far in this study where the word “love” or “loved” is substituted with the original Greek word “agape” or “agapao”:

“As the Father hath agapao me, so have I agapao you: continue ye in my agape. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my agape; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his agape.” - John 15:9-10

“Beloved, let us agapao one another: for agape is of God; and every one that agapao is born of God, and knoweth God. He that agapao not knoweth not God; for God is agape. In this was manifested the agape of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is agape, not that we agapao God, but that he agapao us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so agapao us, we ought also to agapao one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we agapao one another, God dwelleth in us, and his agape is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the agape that God hath to us. God is agape; and he that dwelleth in agape dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our agape made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in agape; but perfect agape casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in agape.” - 1 John 4:7-18

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Here we see that God is calling us not just to accept and ask for His agape, but He is also asking us to love each other with agape by using the word “agapao”. Let’s look at some more verses that show the action of loving someone with agape (agapao).

“But I say unto you, agapao your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;” - Matthew 5:44

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt agapao the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt agapao thy neighbour as thyself.” - Matthew 22:37-39

“If you agapao me, keep my commandments.” - John 14:15

“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who agapao Me. And he who agapao Me will be agapao by My Father, and I will agapao him and manifest Myself to him.” - John 14:21

“For God so agapao the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” - John 3:16

God is agape and agape is God. Agape is who God is and agape is what God is looking to transform our hearts into. Agape is the number one principle of God and it is in every teaching of Jesus. They both love all of humanity with this unconditional love feast, no matter how many immoral things we

have committed in our lives. This doesn't mean all are saved, but it's God's intentions to save all through His agape love. What a blessing it is to serve this God of such a perfect love!