



BIBLICAL ‘LOVE’ LANGUAGES

Love in Hebrew & Greek

Jesus tells us that the two most important jobs for a Christian is to Love God and Love others. To understand what that means, one must study the main Hebrew and Greek words used for the word ‘Love’ in the Bible. Love is key to our totally grasping and applying the Bible to our lives, and no reference makes this more implicit than ***1 John 4:8*** that tells us, “*God Is love.*” This is an enlightening study of the Bible languages and the use of the word ‘Love’ from these languages. May it enhance your understanding of what God wants you to do to Love Him and others.

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HOPE LOOKS UP BIBLE STUDY
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Lesson # 1: Why Study the Original Biblical Words of Love?

The question one might ask: "Why study the original languages of the Bible and their use of the words for 'Love'?" First, because the theme of Love is central to the Bible. Not only are the two greatest commandments to 1) Love God and 2) Love our neighbor as ourselves, but the idea of Love is found on almost every page of the Bible.

1 John 4:7-8 says,

"Dear friends, let us Love one another, for Love comes from God. Everyone who Loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not Love does not know God, because God is Love."

The problem comes when we realize that the Old Testament uses ten different Hebrew words for 'Love' to explain the various types of Love and the New Testament uses four Greek words to explain 'Love.' Also, some words for 'Love' used in the Hebrew Old Testament do not have equivalent Greek, New Testament words. The decisive factor in this discussion is that the English versions of the Old Testament and the New Testament use only the one English word for 'Love.' The richness of the meaning of 'Love' in the Bible is diminished and it is good for us to learn the various words for 'Love' in the Bible and what they explain to us.

The importance of Love in the Bible is shown in the parts of the Bible that talk the most about Love. We see how vital the understanding of Love is to our comprehension of what God wants His people to do. The word 'Love' shows up in the English Bible often, though the precise count varies from translation to translation because of an effort by some translators to further define what type of Love it is. The counts are:

New International Version	762 mentions
New American Standard Version	529 mentions
King James Version	419 mentions
New Revised Standard Version	791 mentions
Holman Christian Standard Version	766 mentions
English Standard Version	745 mentions

The count varies because some translations decided that 'Love' is the correct English word to communicate what the original Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic texts said. For example, the NIV translates sex acts in Genesis as "made Love" while the KJV and ESV use the word "knew" and the NASB uses the highly romantic, "had relations." These total counts include variations of the word 'Love' like 'Loved,' 'Lovely' and 'Loves.'

What books of the Bible focus on Love the most. The easiest way to do this is to take every mention of 'Love' in each book of the bible, and then divide it by the number of words in that book. This way, you can see which books have the highest concentration of verses on Love.

The clear winner is **1 John** which focuses on the word Love. When you read the book of **1 John** you understand why: because John is written to help Christians separate truth from lies, brothers from
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enemies, and light from darkness. In many of John's arguments, Love is the key to understanding the difference. John spells out that he believes is the best way to recognize true Christians, by their Love for one another. When it comes to the word Love, no book of the Bible tops **I John**. In fact, for every fifty words you read in **I John**, one of them is the word "Love."

The second most frequent use of the word Love in a Bible book is **II John**. It is only one chapter long, but it still mentions Love four times. This very short book of the bible explores the relationships between truth, Love and obedience.

It says about Love and truth, we should Love those who know the truth, because the truth 'abides' in them,

II John 1-2:

"To the lady chosen by God and to her children, whom I Love in the truth, and not I only, but also all who know the truth, because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever."

When two parties know the truth, Love comes naturally.

God the Father commanded that His children walk in truth,

II John 4:

"It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us."

When you know the truth, obedience comes naturally.

The commandment that God gave is not anything new: *"Love one another,"*

II John 1:5:

"And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning, I ask that we Love one another."

A sure sign of obedience to God is Love for His church, and a sure sign of Love is obedience to God,

II John 1 6:

"And this is Love; that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in Love."

The third most frequent use of Love in a Bible book is in **The Song of Solomon**, which is written about sexual Love. The first two books we looked at are about the Love that Christians have for each other and for God, but the Song of Solomon is a book about romantic, sexual Love. The Bible is not silent on that subject. In fact, this whole book speaks about that subject. The Song of Solomon explores the passion between a man and a woman. This song is an anthology of songs and has more of that Valentine's-Day Love than any other Bible Book. It is a passionate poem in which a bride and groom profess their Love and desire for one another. Historically, it has often been thought to be an analogy of the Love between Jesus and His Church. This will become much more sensible when we study the Hebrew word for Love used to speak about intimacy between a man and a woman and realize it is also used to speak of the intimacy between God and any one of His loving children.

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The Book which has the most mentions of Love but not the densest use of the word Love is the **Book of Psalms**. There are also some chapters of the Bible that focus essentially on Love: **Psalms 136**, where the phrase *"His Loves endures forever"* is one line of a series of two-liners where the first line talks about God's great acts in the history of Israel and is answered every time with the second line, *"His Loves endures forever."*

It is in the fourth chapter of **I John** where we learn that God is Love.

I John 4:10-11:

"This is Love: not that we Loved God, but that he Loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear Friends, since God so Loved us, we also ought to Love one another."

Of course, the great Love chapter of **I Corinthians 13**, where Paul explains that spiritual gifts are to be shared to encourage one another and build up the body of the Church and not tear it down. The gifts are to be exercised out of Love for one another, and not just to show how important you are. A different kind of Love is **Hosea 3** where the prophet Hosea is told to Love the wife who left him, just like God Loves the nation that left Him.

A study of Love in the Bible points out some key thoughts:

1. **Love is Between God and His People.** That Love shows up in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.
2. **God is Love.** He is also unchanging. We find out examples of God's Love throughout the Bible and notable examples of how we are to Love.

We are called to Love God and to Love others, but how do we understand what Love really is? We will study ten Hebrew and four Greek words for Love found in the Bible and allow them to help us understand what loving someone really means in all of its fullness.

The greatest examples of this Love are what God has done for His followers and especially what Jesus has done for all people. We will look at one teaching about the Love of God and Jesus for all people to set the tone for our study. It is the idea that Jesus is both the Lion and the Lamb that brings righteousness to all people. But the way Jesus brings and gives this Love is so different in each of these two settings that even the Jews felt they were talking about two different people. We will study the various types of Love for us to see all that God has in mind for us when the Bible says, "He Loves us."

- Sacrificial Love
- Romantic Love
- Devoted Love
- Unconditional Love
- Loving Kindness Love
- Brotherly Love of Friends and Companions
- Family Love

Let's explore how Jesus is Love and shows His Love for us as both "The Lamb" and "The Lion"

Isaiah 11:6-9

“The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra’s den, the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

Out of Love, God will restore the earth to a “Garden of Eden’ existence where he will reconcile nature, eliminate carnivorous animals, bring total peace to the land, and allow Christ to lead and love the earth as it should be led and loved. Here Jesus is seen as the loving Messiah who has lived His life as a suffering lamb when he came to this earth. The descriptions of the messiah were so different that the Hebrew scholars pictured two Messiah’s. One who would come as a Suffering Lamb that would die for the sins of humankind and they referred to this Messiah who was a Suffering Lamb as Messiah ben Joseph. The one coming as the Conquering Lion was called Messiah ben David. They could not see that the prophets were talking about a Messiah who would come twice, each time in a different role and for a different purpose. As the Suffering Lamb, it was prophesied that He would die for the sins of humankind. His image as the Conquering Lion had to wait until the time when He would pour out wrath on the enemies of God and then begin reigning over all the earth.

When Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God, died on the Cross. His spirit descended into Hades, the abode of the dead, where He made a proclamation,

1 Peter 3:19

“After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits—”

Perhaps He told them, *“The blood has been shed,”* or *“the perfect sacrifice has been given;”* but those chained in prison got the message; they were now forgiven and could go to heaven with Jesus. So, the Bible says,

Ephesians 4:8

“This is why it says, ‘When he ascended on high, he took many captives, and gave gifts to his people.’”

Ever since that time, when a believer dies, his spirit goes directly to Heaven. The Cross changed everything. This sacrificial, sympathetic Messiah Loves His followers with a loss of His life that allows them to find theirs.

The image of the conquering Lion was used in a way that reminds us of the Second Coming of Jesus. It is an act of Love that allows believers to be rescued and the forces of evil to be destroyed but it is presented and pictured as a source of power and authority. This conquering lion will come in Love and this is what the Lord says will happen:

Isaiah 31:4-5

“As a lion growls, a great lion over its prey, and though a whole band of shepherds is called together against it. It is not frightened by their shouts or disturbed by their clamors so the Lord Almighty will come down to do battle on Mount Zion and on its heights, like birds hovering overhead, the Lord Almighty will shield Jerusalem, he will shield it and deliver it, he will pass over it and will rescue it.”

Again, although it is an act of Love on the part of Jesus, the Scripture says,

Joel 3:15-16

“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon grow dark, and the stars lose their brightness. And the Lord roars from Zion and utters His voice over Jerusalem. And the heavens and the earth tremble. But the Lord is a refuge for His people and a stronghold to the sons of Israel.”

Through the ***Book of Revelation***, John uses the Lamb imagery when referring to the Messiah during the tribulation and the Second Coming of Jesus. It is the Lamb who is pictured as pouring out the wrath of God, ***Revelation 5:16-17***. It is the Lamb who wages war against the Antichrist and his forces, ***Revelation 17:14***.

Both are acts of Love, but the Love shown in complete sacrifice produces a far different effect on people than the Love shown by destroying and conquering evil. The glory that Jesus was denied as the suffering servant, the quiet Lamb of God, is revenged by the Conquering Lion who eliminates the enemies of God. They are both acts of Love by God, but we often want to interpret them quite differently. Our study will point out that the Holy Spirit used fourteen different original words to explain the word 'Love' in English because it needed more amplification and explanation us for understand.

The Next Lesson will focus on the study of the most frequently used Hebrew word for Love in the Bible ***“Ahab”*** and explain how that adds to our understanding of what God meant by Love in the Bible.

Lesson # 2: 'Ahab' - The Main Biblical Hebrew Word for Love

In the first lesson, we learned a real need exists to amplify and expand the English word of love by realizing it took ten Hebrew words and four Greek words to describe 'Love' in the Bible. We will begin our study of these 14 individual words with the most common Hebrew word translated 'Love' in the Bible— **'Ahab'** or **'Aheb'**.

In the English language, the word 'Love' encompasses everything from:

- To delight in a favorite food (*"I love ice cream"*)
- To enjoyment of a preferred pastime (*"I love to read"*),
- To affection for family members (*"I love my son"*),
- To passion for a sexual lover (*"I love my sweetheart."*)

The original languages in which the Bible was written often had distinct words to express these different nuances. The Bible uses a variety of Hebrew words, most frequently translated 'Love' and several Greek words for 'Love' in the New Testament.

In Hebrew, the word, 'Ahab' or frequently said 'Aheb' is a general word for love that means "to have an attraction or an attachment to" and is seen as something strong that people can only change with distance or removal. It is like a magnet drawing a metal nail to it.

It is used to describe a parent's attachment to a child, and not the other way around because children have their own agenda and dart off and ignore their parents many times. It can refer to a healthy attraction of a man and a woman, but twice in the Old Testament, it refers to an unhealthy attraction and desire for attachment that caused death and destruction.

The first was when Shechem, the son of a ruler in Samaria, saw Dinah, the daughter of Israel, was instantly attracted to her and raped her. This was such an unpleasant situation that her brothers, Simeon and Levi devised a plan that would allow them and their brothers to kill all the men in Shechem's tribe for this violation of their sister.

The second was when Ammon had a misdirected love for his half- sister Tamar. It was such an obsession and attraction that he became ill because of it. With help, he devised a plan where he could get her into his bedroom quarters and when it worked, he overwhelmed her and despite her cries of what a terrible result this would produce, he raped her. This was such an unpleasant situation that her full brother Absalom waited for the right situation and the right location, and then he killed his half-brother Ammon for this violation of their sister Tamar. Therefore, we need to see the word is not used just for the emotional expression of love, but it is to show the attraction and attachment in certain situations that produce either good or bad, based on the intent of the person who has this Ahab or Aheb in their heart.

The word is Hebrew and the European letter sounds are 'Ahab or Aheb'. We will only use the letter sounds in our study and not the actual Hebrew letters, consonants and vowel points.

This "Ahab" love can be between family members, where in Genesis God tells Abraham:

Genesis 22:2

"Then God said, take your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain, I will show you."

It can represent an attraction or attachment to items and objects:

Genesis 27:4

"Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like/love and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you the blessing before I die."

This phrase was translated as Love in the English Bibles until the last 150 years, when some versions substituted the word like, but the word is still Ahab. It can be a sexual attraction that is almost magnetic, as in:

Genesis 29:20

"So, Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her."

'Ahab', a Hebrew word for love is much like the English word 'Love' because it includes a wide range of subjects. But unlike the English word, it is always connected to attraction and/or attachment. We find that Samson was so attracted and attached to a Philistine woman, that he allowed himself to be manipulated by her and it made him blind to what she was doing.

Judges 14:16-17. NIV

16 Then Samson's wife threw herself on him, sobbing, "You hate me! You don't really love me. You've given my people a riddle, but you haven't told me the answer." "I haven't even explained it to my father or mother," he replied, "so why should I explain it to you?" 17 She cried the whole seven days of the feast. So, on the seventh day he finally told her, because she continued to press him. She in turn explained the riddle to her people.

His attraction first, and then attachment, did not fare any better with Delilah. It was a constant problem in their relationship which led to his downfall, capture and going to jail.

Antithesis of this word in Hebrew is the word 'sane' and it means to hate; but in Hebrew there is an identical word also transliterated as 'sane' and it means sleep. One of the ways sleeping is used in the Bible is a sense of a lack of attention or complacency which is opposite of 'Ahab' which means attentive and attached.

The word is used to describe the life-long bond that Jonathan, son of Saul, felt for his friend David. We see this spelled out in the Bible:

1 Samuel 18:1-4, NIV

1 After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. 2 From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family. 3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as

himself. 4 Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

Jonathan's totally unselfish treatment of David is a human example of the type of love God has for us. Jonathan put David's interests before his own. It is used 17 times to show the love of God, His attraction and attachment to His people. A good example is:

Isaiah 43:4 NIV

"Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life."

It is used 212 times in the Old Testament of the Bible, and it has several uses that seem contradictory to our present ideas and interpretations of love:

1. **It Can be Commanded.** God commands that His followers love Him and that they love their neighbor as their self. These are not wishes of God, they are commands of God and show us that 'ahab' is not an emotion or feeling that can be controlled by our wishes, but it is something God says we can obey and learn to have that attraction or attachment to what He commands. **Deuteronomy 11:13; Deuteronomy 10:12; and Deuteronomy 19:9** are three great examples.
2. **God's Attraction to His People.** It is used 14 times in the Book of Hosea to show how attached and attracted God is to His people. Listen to how God says He has this kind of love for His people Israel:

Hosea 14:4-7

"I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them. I will be like the dew to Israel, he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon, he will send down his roots; his young shoots will grow. His splendor will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon. People will dwell again in his shade. They will flourish like the grain; they will blossom like the vine, Israel's fame will be like the wine of Lebanon."

3. **God Promises Attachment to His People.** God promises that He has been attached and attracted to His people and He calls His people to love several things: wisdom, one another, Him, their enemies, and many other people and situations in their life.

I want to close our study with a close look at two situations where 'Ahab' is a strong part of the understanding of the passage. Let us take the story of Jacob, Leah and Rachel. The word used in **Genesis 29:30** for Jacob loving Rachel more than Leah is the word we are studying, 'ahab'; it speaks of the root thought of "I will give"—in the Hebrew (ahavah). However, his love for Leah was a love of obligation. Jacob had an ahab or ahavah—serving love for Rachel and an obligation love for Leah. It showed even in his great 'ahab—love' attraction and attention to his first son with Rachel, Joseph. It even pitted Joseph against his brothers. It was also strong with the second son he had with Rachel, Benjamin and was so strong that the brothers said if they did not take Benjamin back with them when they went to Egypt to get grain, that it would break their father's heart and kill him.

The second situation I would like to look at is the story of Jonathan, son of Saul and David. The nation of Israel was befuddled by some of the actions of the Judges that had ruled them, and they felt inferior to other nations in the area of leadership. They insisted to Samuel that they needed a king and God chose them a king. He looked regal, was tall, handsome but had some very troubling traits. Samuel, under the direction of God had already anointed David to be the next king of Israel when David and Saul met. David came to bring food and supplies to his brothers in the war against the Philistines and he saw the threatening behavior of Goliath. He persuaded King Saul to let him fight the battle with Goliath and he defeated him. It won the day for the Israelites, and they defeated the Philistines in that battle. David was summoned by Saul and when the talk had finished, Jonathan had become one spirit with David. This friendship was immediate, magnetic and lasted forever. ***1 Samuel 18:1-4.***

Jonathan was the oldest son of King Saul, and it would have been expected that he might see David as a threat to his kingship, but it seems Jonathan felt an immediate kinship with this young warrior. Neither had been willing to wait for King Saul to act when the Philistines were threatening. Both had trusted the Lord and gone on offense. It was a relationship built on ahab, a love of attraction and attachment. Some of the language here is hard for us to interpret because we have such a restricted way to define love and almost all love with any affection or attachment in our culture is considered somehow romantic. But listen to what the Bible says about these two young men. Jonathan became one in spirit with David! The Hebrew verb—'kashar'— means to link or to tie, and the phrase literally says that *"The spirit of Jonathan was tied to the spirit of David."* It does not say, "Jonathan tied his spirit to David's." This link was something that happened to them. The same verb that appears in Deuteronomy, when Moses told the children of Israel to

Deuteronomy 11:18

"Fix these words of mine in your hearts and mind, tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads."

Jonathan's soul was tied to David's just as the words of God were tied to the children of Israel, which tells us something about the holiness and depth of their friendship.

God Himself is in a friendship with each of us as believers. Abraham's relationship with God represents the old covenant.

James 2:23 tells us, *"He was called God's friend,"*

Jesus ushered in the new covenant centuries later.

John 15:15

"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know the master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made know to you."

Saul became intently jealous of David and tried in many ways to harm or kill him. Jonathan tried to make peace between the two men. But Saul told Jonathan in one of those peace-making missions of Jonathan's:

I Samuel 20:30-31

"You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse in your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you? As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom, will be established. Now send someone to bring him to me, for he must die!"

David and Jonathan arranged a way that Jonathan would tell David if his life was in danger, and he did. Jonathan told David by the distance of his arrows that he was not safe. But David could not bear to escape without a thank-you to his closest friend, the person he trusted with his very life. So, David emerged from his hiding place of safety. David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. They kissed each other and wept together, but David wept the most.

Jonathan said to David,

Samuel 20:41-42

"Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.'"

Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town. Two more incidents in the life of David show how strong of love 'Ahab' could be.

1. Jonathan and Saul were both killed in a battle with the Philistines and David lamented their deaths with a song of praise. Only at the end of the lament did David speak of Jonathan his friend instead of Jonathan the prince, and those verses are among the most heartbreaking and beautiful in all of Scripture:

II Samuel 1:25-27

"I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women. How the mighty have fallen! The weapons of war have perished!"

David used the Hebrew word for love, 'Ahab'. It was the same word used to describe God's love for us and Abraham's love for his son Isaac. David likened the friendship of Jonathan to God's biggest miracles, the wonders of God.

2. Long after losing his devoted friend, Jonathan, and becoming king himself, David never forgot the pledge they had made to each other. As king, David broke the norms of the day when he decided to honor the house of Saul, the man who had repeatedly tried to kill him. It was customary for new kings to wipe out the family and legacy of the king they were replacing.

Instead, we see mercy and a tangible reminder of the enduring covenant of friendship between Jonathan and David.

I Samuel 9:3-4

“David asked a servant of the house of Saul named Ziba ‘Is there no one still alive from the house of Saul to whom I can show God’s kindness!’ Ziba answered the king, ‘There is still a son of Jonathan; he is lame in both feet.’ ‘Where is he?’ the king asked. Ziba answered, ‘He is at the house of Makir son of Ammid in LoDebat.’”

David found out that when the boy was five and his father and grandfather had died, they were in a hurry to flee the palace and as the nurse picked him up, he fell and became disabled.

David had the man named Mephibosheth brought to the palace and he bowed in the presence of King David. The Scripture tells us how this part of the story goes,

II Samuel 9:6b-8

“David said, ‘Mephibosheth!’ At your service,’ he replied. ‘Don’t be afraid,’ David said to him, ‘for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.’ Mephibosheth bowed down and said, ‘what is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me!’”

We know what it was, it was the attraction and attachment of 'Ahab' the love that had David embrace Mephibosheth and restore him. The king not only gave Jonathan's son all the land that belonged to Saul, but in the verses that follow we also see David assigning servants to work that land so that it would bring great benefit to Mephibosheth. And yes, Mephibosheth joined King David's table, being treated like one of the royal sons. The covenant of David and Jonathan's friendship lasted a lifetime and beyond because the bond between them was 'Ahab-Love.'

This is one of the most common words in the bible for God's love for us.

The Next Lesson will study the Greek word 'Agapao', often called the Love Language of God.

Lesson # 3: 'Agapao' - The Love Language of God

We were able to look at the most common word for love in Hebrew, "Ahab" last week and today we will look at the verb form of the Greek word, 'Agape,' which means 'Unconditional Love.' It is 'Agapao' and it has often been called the Love language of God. In the Greek language the word means God-breathed unconditional love. Vine in his exegetical study of the 'Words of the Bible' says, 'Agapao' and the corresponding noun 'Agape' present the foundational word of Christianity. Since the Spirit of revelation has used them to express ideas previously unknown, inquiry into its use, whether in Greek literature or in the Septuagint, the earliest translation of the Old Testament into Greek, throws but little light upon its distinctive meaning in the New Testament. Vine also says, "In respect of 'Agapao,' as used of and by God, expresses the deep and constant 'Love' and interest of a Perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects, production and fostering a reverential 'love' in them towards the Giver, and a practical 'Love' towards those who are partakers of the same as well as a desire to help others to see the Giver."

In other words, the thoughts of 'Agapao' are so unique that they usher in an entirely different way to see God. We must see God through the eyes of this One who loves all His creation and reveres them so much that He gives His life for them. The New Testament reveals God deeply loves every person, even the most wicked.

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Paul said it as well:

Romans 5:8

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Using two key Greek words "Agapetos" and 'Agapao,' the New Testament reveals that God has a special love for believers. This is a special love, with the most common human application being the love of a groom for his bride who is responding to his love. The word 'Agapetos' means, 'dear beloved,' indicating a close relationship especially between a parent and a child or a bride and a groom. The word is translated 'beloved' several times in the New Testament: **Romans 1:7;** **Colossians 3:12.**

II Thessalonians 2:13

"But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as first fruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth."

Since this is such a key word used by God to explain Christianity, 'Agapao' it is essential that we see all that it added to our meaning of Christian love. Agapao is unconditional love and could be called preferential love because it is shaped and controlled by the giver of this love. It is not based on the

goodness of the one loved, or upon the natural goodness of the one offering it or even based on emotions. It is a benevolent love that always seeks the good of the one 'Beloved.' This type of love is exclusive to the Christian community because it flows directly from God and His love for people. John, the apostle who Jesus "Loved", which is 'Agapao' or 'Agape' Love, explains that directly in his letter in Scripture which says:

I John 4:7-8

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."

John says we are to offer 'Agapao' to Jesus, for He inspires us to be obedient,

John 14:15 *"If you love me, keep my commands."*

Jesus said those who love Him will want to please Him. They should want to please Him, not as a means of tapping into more blessings, but out of gratitude for what He has done in forgiving them of their sins. Unconditional love given should move us to give unconditional love back to God.

The desire to obey Jesus is a natural reaction from those who are recipients of His love.

John 14: 23-24a

"Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching."

Also, **John 14:21** and **II John 1:1-6** share the same thought. Unconditional love, 'Agapao' means those who do not obey Jesus do not love Him. It is the type of love that can only have one legitimate response to show that you have truly accepted it and that is by offering the same love back to the one who gave it to you.

'Agapao' love puts a strong emphasis on loving the way God would love, and we will look at some areas that it affects:

1. **Unconditional Love from God:** The New Testament says this 'Agapao' Love, Unconditional Love is learned from God. It is the motivation for all that Christians do:

Matthew 22:37-40

Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." "

A similar verse is found in **Mark 12:28-31**.

2. **Forgiveness:** The love that God offers to us, 'Agapao,' transcends our anger and our hatred, and it allows us to forgive those whom we otherwise would be unable to forgive:

Romans 12:19-21

Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Similar verses are found in **Matthew 5:44** and **Luke 6:27-28**.

What does it mean when God commands us to love (Agapao Love) one another? This teaching of Jesus came at the meal we call the Last Supper and became our model and formula for Christian Communion. It was the last time of teaching Jesus would do before He was arrested, tried, and killed. It had to be very important information and a strong teaching for each one of us.

Here is how it unfolded. At the Last Supper in the upper room, Jesus instructed His disciples to love one another. He said:

John 13:34-35

"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. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

What did He mean? Jesus wants His followers to care for each other on the deepest levels. A distinguishing feature of Christians should be their unconditional love for one another. Our love for one another flows out of the love for God, which is a result of God's love for us.

1 John 4:19 *"We are to love because he first loved us."*

John, one of the disciples of Jesus, wrote a lot about Agape love in the Bible. In fact, his writings are some of the clearest teachings that 'Agapao love'. What has come from God is so strong that it must guide and direct our lives as we live for Christ. He wrote: "In this is love, not that we have love God but that he loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Jesus wants all His followers to be led and directed not primarily by service, command, family, nationality, pledge, race interest, or anything else but by Agapao love.

Here is how it was lived out: when the Holy spirit appeared at Pentecost, people were gathered from all over the world, people from other nations with varied interests and backgrounds.

Acts 2:7b-11

"Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia. Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans and Arabs, we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues, speaking of the mighty deeds of God."

As soon as they were together in Christ, they began serving each other, pooling their resources, and giving to those in need,

Acts 2:42-47 'Agapao love' in action.

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had a need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

Jesus gave us a model of how to love one another. He loves unconditionally with 'Agapao Love.'

Romans 5:8

"But demonstrates his own love for us in this. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

He loves us sacrificially.

II Corinthians 5: 21

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

He taught us how to forgive and gave us the ability to do it.

Ephesians 4:32

"Be kind and compassionate to each other, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

This Love should be forever.

Romans 8:38-39

"For I am convinced that neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God through Christ gives us a Holy Love.

Hebrews 7:26

"Such a high priest truly meets our need-One who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens."

We are to give Unconditional Love just like that. Loving one another the way Christ loved us is only possible with the supernatural power of God.

II Peter 1:3-4

"His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

Our Biblical example of 'Agapao Love' is the love that Jesus had for his apostle John and the love that He asked John to give Him. In coming to take on a human body and live among us, experiencing all that earthly life entails, Christ showed us how to live while fully embracing both the spiritual and the physical elements of life. Jesus spoke many powerful truths to guide us to right living, but His relationships speak just as eloquently about His nature. He was God, and He had close friends. Friendships are part of the human experience. God created us for community, and Jesus was no exception when He walked among us in human flesh. Christ's ministry was spread through strong relationships, forged in both grace and persecution. Jesus built His life around those friendships and left us a model of connection that can blossom into an unbreakable bond. One very close friend of Jesus was the apostle, John. John was near to Jesus in His life, in His death, and in His resurrection, in a way that none of Jesus' other disciples were. The relationship of John and Jesus show us two things: how to be close to one another in a spiritual sense and how to walk with one another as 'Agapao loving' friends.

Jesus gave a clear roadmap for connecting with Jesus and being a faithful friend. He said,

John 15:12-15

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."

'Agapao Love' means we are to love others as Christ loved, selfless and sacrificially. Now, John may not have been the easiest man to love unconditionally at first. He was called along with his brother James, Sons of Thunder by Jesus. He was a bit of a hot head, fiery and full of zeal and sometimes a little too ready to call down the wrath of God on people who disagreed with them. Note what he told Jesus one day when the Apostles came back from a mission trip:

Mark 9:38-40

"Teacher," said John, "we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us." "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us."

He also called for God to rain down fire from heaven to destroy a Samaritan village that did not accept the teaching of Jesus and His disciples. **Luke 9:51-55**

What a contrast when John writes his great Bible book on 'Agapao Love,' **1 John**. This letter is a plea for Christian love, Agape love and forbearance, no matter what, and says that anyone who loves has been born of God. What a change the friendship of Jesus and His great teaching had on the life and teaching of John the apostle, the one who Jesus loved.

Agapao really is the language of God, and no one taught us more about how to love unconditionally and do it like God would than Jesus did while here on earth.

In our next lesson, we will take a close look at the base word that the New Testament uses most frequently for Love, 'Agape.'

Lesson # 4: 'Agape' - Unconditional Love

This lesson looks at the word that describes the Love that God wants each of us to have and to give, 'Agape' Love. It is the same Agape kind of Love which God has for us, and we are commanded to have for one another. Even our expression of Agape Love is but a pale example of God's Agape Love for us. Agape is pronounced (Uh-GAH-pay). It is the highest form of love in the Bible. This term defines God's immeasurable, incomparable love for people. It is the divine love that comes from God. Agape Love is perfect, unconditional, sacrificial, and pure.

Jesus Christ demonstrated this kind of divine love to His Father and to all humanity in the way He lived and died.

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

Love is one of the most powerful emotions humans can experience, and Agape Love even removes the emotional tie we often feel we must have to love. For Christian believers, love is the truest test of genuine faith. Through the Bible, we discover how to experience Agape Love in its many forms and to share that Agape Love with others as God intended.

The word was a common word in the Septuagint to interpret the Hebrew word, *rah-kham* and was used often in the New Testament but it was not used often in the secular writings of the time the Bible was written. It was just not a common thought or idea that people should have an unconditional love towards a god or each other, and the Greeks certainly did not believe that any of the gods had such a love for them. It was used to designate love between persons.

John 13:35

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."; or people for God,

1 John 2:15

"Do not love the world, or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them;"

God for Humanity, Romans 5:8

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

God for Christ, John 17:26

"I have made You known to them and will continue to make You known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

Jesus said that loving one another is not an option for the believer, it is a commandment. However, His commandment came with an example of how it is to be fulfilled.

John 13:34

"A new command I give you; Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another."

I Thessalonians 4:9

"Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other."

Let us look at some important teachings that come from the use of Agape Love that have set the direction for the Christian life:

1. Agape Love is a sign that we are Christians.

I John 5:1-2

"Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves (agape) the Father loves (agape) his child as well. This is how we know that we love (agape) the children of God; by loving (agape) God and keeping His commandments."

2. Agape Love should produce a tangible feeling of love in every group of Christians.

John 13:35

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love (agape) one another."

It cannot be different than this if all people are filled with God's Agape Love.

3. Agape Love inspires not only love for Jesus but also obedience to Him. Jesus said.

John 14:15 *"If you love (agape) me, keep my commands."*

Meaning, that those who love (Agape) Jesus will want to please Him. Agape Love will cause us to please God, not as a means of trying to earn anything, but out of gratitude for what He has done in giving us forgiveness and eternal life.

4. Agape Love will produce a desire to obey Jesus as a natural reaction for all His followers.

John 14:23

"Jesus replied, 'Anyone who loves (Agape) me will obey my teaching. My Father will love (agape) them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.'"

5. Agape Love will allow us to keep the two greatest commandments that God has ever given: Love of God and love for our neighbors.

Mark 12:29-31

The most important one, answered Jesus, is this: "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love (agape) the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love (agape) your neighbor as yourself. There are no commandments greater than these."

It is obvious from this passage that Agape Love should be the motivation for everything we do; love for God first, then love for everyone else. How different would our culture look if everyone really lived in this manner?

6. Agape Love means we are to love (Agape) our enemies. The love of God transcends our anger or hatred, it allows us to forgive those whom we otherwise would be unable to forgive. Jesus said:

Matthew 5:44

"But I tell you, love (Agape) your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven."

Paul teaches how this works, but does not use the word Agape.

Romans 12:19-20

"Do not take revenge my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge, I will repay, says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.'"

Agape Love was best lived in the life of Jesus Christ. God has not left us to wonder what He views as Agape Love. He has given us the clearest example in the life of His Son. The greatest example of Agape Love is Jesus Christ coming to earth in human flesh to die on a cross for our sin.

The New Testament has many areas where Agape Love is used to help create change.

Matthew 24:12 says,

"Because of the increase of wickedness, the love (agape) of many will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved."

Agape Love cannot live in the heart and life of the wicked. You cannot live wickedly and still have Agape Love for others.

Luke 11:42 says,

"Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue, and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love (agape) of God."

Obedience, if legalistic, is not a response to the Agape Love of God.

Luke 6:27 "Love (agape) your enemy"

Romans 13:8

"Do not be in debt to any person except to owe then Agape Love."

I Corinthians 2:9

"However, as it is written: 'What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived' the things God has prepared for those who Agape Love Him."

God will give in an unconditional loving way so much that our mind cannot conceive all He has for the believer. Agape Love is frequently used of God's love for us: **Ephesians 2:4; II Thessalonians 2:16** are

two more examples; the love of believers towards God: **James 1:12, I Peter 1:8** are two more examples; **I John 3:10 and III John 1**, where Christians are to Agape Love each other.

Agape Love can teach us many lessons in the stories of the Bible, and we see that it tells us several things:

1. Agape Love tells us that God has a relationship with humanity that is sealed by the way God loves even sinful men with Agape Love. God throughout the Old Testament has often intervened for those who belong to Him. People are not able to repay God for the sins that they have committed, but God's goodness and His Agape Love does not wait for them to make the first move toward forgiveness, but God came and gave Himself as a sacrifice so that the idea of repentance was now obvious. It was the free invitation of God to guilty humans to come to Him and live in His company. God is a king who invites not only the distinguished people to the wedding of His son, but also the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame. Jesus was a Sower who casts the good seed of the Word of God on all kinds of ground.
2. Agape Love tells us that the entire mission of Jesus was directed by the will of the Father, who is unwilling to lose even the least of His children. **Matthew 18:13**. Moved always by the desire of God, Jesus loved with the Father's love. Agape Love was the foundational inspiration of who He was and the great motive of even His smallest acts. How did the well-beloved son accomplish His work of love? Not by reigning in power over the people of God as a glorious Messiah, but by taking our illnesses upon Himself and bearing our infirmities. Jesus taught with authority, yet there was nothing in Him that did not resound of Agape Love. He was sent by the Agape Love of the Father and He lived that entirely:

Matthew 12:18-21

"Here is the servant whom I have chosen, the one I Agape Love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on Him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear His voice in the streets, A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick, He will not snuff out, till He has bought justice through to victory. In His name, the nations will put their hope."

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, desires to unite Himself to people through their response of love. Their worship and service will be made through acts of Agape Love. The lawyer in had asked,

Luke 10:25-27 *"What must I do to inherit eternal life?"*

This allowed Christ to return the question and the man answered that the Law said,

"You are to love the Lord God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind" and "Love your neighbor as yourself." "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

3. Agape Love means that the believer is to love like God, and it will demand that we carry our cross and follow the Lord. The disciple is a person completely emptied; their love poured out to God.
4. Agape Love reveals that the love of neighbor is essential to love like God. It in essence tells us that our behavior toward others should be summed up in Agape Love.

Agape Love is an active and effective love operating with a singular tenderness. The Sermon on the Mount stressed that it is marked by patience and gentleness. The parable of the Good Samaritan shows it to be attentive and tender, truly compassionate. Agape Love will be able to minister openly and unreservedly to a neighbor, but only from an utterly selfless heart. It would never occur to someone who clings to their comfort, peace, honor, or possessions to care for an injured person or to give their food and clothing away. They would never consent to give up their tunic, offer a cheek to be hit, or pardon without limit, **Matthew 18:21-35**. Agape Love means to give, oneself, to belong to one another, to belong to God in obedience and consecration, to belong to neighbor in service and compassion. Agape Love is a worship far surpassing burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Mark 12:33

“To love Him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor or as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

It is so much deeper and sacrificial than our English word love implies. We can have Agape Love in our Christian life, but most have settled for some English love version for applying the teaching of God to our lives.

1. Yes, we love our neighbor as ourselves unless it involves giving them things, we think we need, or caring for them if they are doing uncaring things, or even being a friend if we do not like them.
2. I would be lying if I said we have come close to applying the idea of giving Agape Love to our enemy. Our culture has defined love as being given to those who really deserve it. We must make exceptions and speak of the great sacrifice when we see unconditional love for our enemies in our present culture.
3. We accept the Agape Love of God for us but are often reluctant to give that same kind of love. We like to ask, “Isn’t a tithe plenty for giving?” “Why must I obey everything the Lord teaches, after all I am just human.” Why should I sacrifice for Jesus, didn’t He do that for me, and I just need to worship Him and thank Him for giving me eternal life?

Agape Love created a whole new dynamic for the Christian. That is why our Church fathers felt it needed another translation than the English word Love, and for centuries, they called Agape Love “Charity” in the English language.

Next lesson, we study the progression of love to charity, back to love.

Lesson # 5: 'Agape' - A Word Translated 'Charity' for Centuries

This lesson looks at an unusual occurrence with the word 'Agape' and its translation. The Greek word 'Agape' literally means God-given Unconditional Love and it is translated Love, however, many of our early Church Fathers did not think the English word Love in any of its meanings had one that would really work for Agape. In their minds Agape rose above the thought of Love in the English language. Agape was always unconditional, it was always helpful, and it was always God-given even to those who had Agape Love for others.

God, Author of Agape Love

Much of this had to do with the fact that God was the author of Agape Love, but it also reflected the fact that Jesus Christ was Divine and He lived out Agape Love. I want us to look at the role Christ played in the felt need of a stronger word than the English word Love when they began to interpret Agape.

The Divinity of Jesus is the central truth of the Bible. It is so fundamental that Christianity stands or fails on it. If Jesus was not God in the flesh, and therefore living and giving the same Agape Love as His Father, then His sacrifice for our sins was meaningless, and we have no hope. Satan has always been determined to convince all humans that Jesus was someone other than God in the flesh. In the time of Jesus, Satan created doubt as to the identity of Jesus. A few recognized Him as "the Prophet" or the Messiah who had been prophesied by Moses, **Deuteronomy 18:15-18**

John 6:14 says,

"After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, 'Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.'"

This praise of Jesus came after He had just fed the 5,000 men plus women and children.

But most were more ambivalent about his identity. Some believed He was simply a 'good man' **John 7:12**. Others believed He was a reincarnation of John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or 'one of the prophets' **Matthew 16:14**. Some claim He was an illegitimate child "*born of fornication*" **John 8:41**. A few even wrote Him off as a "*Samaritan with a demon.*" **John 8:48**.

Nothing has changed after 2,000 years. The Satanic attack continues to this day. Liberal theologians tend to dismiss Him as either a 'good man' who was self-deceived or a revolutionary who meant well but failed. The attempt to minimize Jesus hits all areas. Hollywood presented Him in the movie, "The Last Temptation of Christ," as a deluded soul who was wrestling with internal demons. And in "Jesus Christ Superstar" the Broadway stage presented a woman in Love with Him who sang over and over, "he's a man, He's just a man..."

One of the recent books about Jesus, is entitled "The Jesus Mysteries" and it goes to the extreme of claiming Jesus is nothing but a myth! These people claim Jesus was nothing but a figment of the disciples' imaginations. This even though there are few people in ancient history for which there is more written or more eyewitness evidence.

There is an irony in these attacks; they are evidence that Jesus really was God in the flesh. Why else would Satan motivate such attacks? There never has been similar attacks on Mohammed, Budha, or Krishna. Nor do we hear their names being used as a curse phrase. Why is it that worldwide the name of Jesus is used as a curse word? The only explanation is a supernatural one, namely, Satan is actively involved in motivating universal hatred of Jesus because he knows that Jesus is God.

The Divinity of Jesus is verified with strong Biblical Prophecy Scriptures. **I Peter 3:15** tells believers to make a defense of their faith and hope. It says:

I Peter 3:15

"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

Biblical Evidence of the Value of Agape Love

I want to share ten Biblical evidence points and a scripture for each one to show how essential the role of Jesus as Messiah and the Son of God is to our understanding the terrific value of Agape Love:

1. **The Clear Witness of Bible Prophecy** is that Jesus would be the Son of God. David states that God has declared to His Son that He is begotten and will one day rule over all the world. This is a clear statement that the Messiah-Jesus, will be of the same nature of God, begotten of the Father, and will relate to the Father as His Son. It also indicates that the Son existed before He became human flesh. The prophecy passage says:

Psalm 2:7-8

"I will proclaim the Lord's decree: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have become your father. Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession."

2. **The Witness of the Trinity**, where we see in **Genesis 1:1-3**, the Creation of all things as the work of God the Father and the Spirit of God through the spoken word of God. In **John 1** Jesus is revealed as the 'Word' and we are told that God created the world through Jesus, look at the tie between God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

Genesis 1:1-3

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God (the Trinity) said, "Let there be light," and there was light."

3. **The Witness of God the Father** as He defines the Divine role of Jesus as Messiah and His Son: God addresses David through Nathan and says:

II Samuel 7:12-14a

"When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish His kingdom. He is the one who will build a house in my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever, I will be His father, and He will be my Son."

4. **The Witness of Jesus**, Jesus accepted the name of Messiah when the time was right, and He called Himself the Son of Man. The Son of Man is the messianic title of **Daniel 7:13**.
Daniel 7:13-14.
"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days (God the Father) and was led into His presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all the nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."
5. **The Witness of the Angels** is very clear when an angel appeared to Joseph and said:
Matthew 1:20-21
"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."
6. **The Witness of Satan** and his demons, Satan recognizes the deity of Jesus in a backhanded way by tempting Him to prove His divinity:
Matthew 4:6 *"If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down."*
7. **The Witness of the Apostle Peter**, the most famous declaration of the divinity of Jesus when he said:
Matthew 16:16
"Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the son of the living God."
8. **The Witness of the Apostle John**, John declares that Jesus was God.
John 1:1-2
"In the beginning was the Word, And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning."
9. **The Witness of the Apostle Paul**, Paul preached Jesus as 'the Son of God',
Acts 9:20
"Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God."
10. **The Witness of the Book of Hebrews**, the writer of Hebrews immediately shares the great relationship between Jesus and the Father and how Jesus duplicates what the Father would do,
Hebrews 1:1-2
"In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom also He made the universe."

Word 'Charity' Used to Explain the Agape Love of God

The fact Jesus was the Son of God, begotten by the Father, and sent to earth by the Father to suffer as a sacrifice for us to show the Agape Love of the Father and the Son, was overwhelming to many

of our early church fathers and they wanted that unbelievable Love to stand out. Therefore, they chose the word 'Charity' to explain the Agape Love of God.

Let me share some of the thoughts of Ceslaus Spicq, the French theologian from his three-part trilogy, "Agape in the New Testament." Although he is all perfection, the God of the gospels could not be taken for a transcendent being, withdrawn into absolute and unapproachable solitude, isolated in a kind of insensible state. He has an only son whom he Loves uniquely, whom He delights in calling His beloved, **Matt. 3:17, Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22** etc. Yet He did not hesitate to send His son to deal with the leaders of His people, although these leaders had stubbornly refused the message of His servants the prophets, **Mark 12:6, Luke 20:13**.

God did not resign Himself to breaking with men and punishing their revolts, instead He guided them to repentance. These men God Loves so patiently and pursues so continually are characterized throughout the Gospels as, wicked, **Luke 11: 13**; unjust **Matthew 5:45**; and ungrateful **Luke 6:35**.

This amazing conception of God and of His relationship with humanity is the first revelation of the Gospels, the revelation of a God who Loves sinful men with a special kind of Agape Love called Charity.

Obviously, Jesus was the epitome of that Agape Love. He is a doctor bending over the sick to care for them. His mission is ever clear in the Scripture.

Luke 19:10 *"But the Son of Man has come to seek and save what is lost."*

These texts point out that the son's coming and his zeal for seeking out those who had strayed and were lost were due to the divine initiative. Moved always by His Father's desires, Jesus Loved with the Father's Love. Charity was the fundamental inspiration of His existence and the great motive of even His smallest acts. A tree is known by its fruits, and men, when they saw the divine Agape of Christ shining in His works, recognized that the kingdom of God was come.

It was clear in the study of Agape, how God uses it. We see that the God of Jesus Christ desires to unite Himself to people through their response of Love. Their worship and service will be made through manifestations of Charity.

They often would define how this Charity was to be seen. One wrote, Jesus made it absolutely clear that authentic Charity is both choice and renouncement; to choose is to sacrifice. Love of God outweighs all other attachments and, if necessary, dissolves them. Charity is a devouring flame.

Matthew 24:12

" Because of the increase of wickedness, the Agape Love of most will grow cold."

The strength of Charity is that it has the strength and sweeping force to consume everything in its path. This fire burns a way to the Kingdom of Heaven. They defined Charity for us: "Charity is neither passion nor ordinary liking. It is a sure and spiritual desire for good, rooted deep in the heart. The charitable man Loves those who are spiteful and unresponsive. He does good to those who do evil to him. It is a true way to *"Love your enemies."*

In God, the model of Agape, Charity appears as the most noble of Loves, a sovereign respect and delight in Christ and a desire for good to men. Its characteristics are gratuitousness and generosity.

For Jesus, the complete consecration to His Father's will commanded a life of humble service to people. In the same way, Christians will be able to Love neighbors only when they are entirely given to the service of God. Love of God is the source of fraternal Charity of the whole Gospel moral system.

Many of our Church fathers could not just translate Agape Love as Love in the English because they felt it spoke of more than the English word of Love could define. It might have been one phase of the English word Love, but there were so many other uses of the word Love that were the exact opposite of unconditional God-given Agape Love. They chose the word Charity.

When the Bible was translated, the average English person used the word Charity to mean, "Christian Love of one's fellows". It was the perfect word to define Agape and shape the word Charity to mean the Unconditional Love of God towards people: Christians towards Christians, or Christians towards their enemies. It fit well into the definitions that Agape was in the bible. However, the translation was still always 'Love.' However, over time the definition of Charity was that of an organization that was set up to provide help and money for those in need. In the life of the ordinary Christian, it came to mean the voluntary giving of time, or finances to those who were in need. The third use of the word in the more modern age was kindness and tolerance in how you might judge or not judge others.

Gone out of the definition entirely and now considered archaic was "Love of humankind", typically in a Christian context. So, when a word changed meaning, you had to change your word or use another word. There were no good words in English to speak of this Agape Love and so all the translations of the Bible after 1850 have Agape translated as Love.

Is there a message to us today in this study of ever-changing vocabulary? Yes, I think there is. We as believers need to always realize that the intention of God in the broad use of Agape was to change the way we relate to God; understand better how He relates to us and to see the ministry of Jesus through the eyes of Agape and offer this unconditional Love to both friend and foe. The more we model the Agape Love of God, the more we look and sound like the God we serve.

The next lesson will focus our study on the Greek word, 'Phileo' and it is pronounced 'FILL-le-o'. It was a common word for Love used by Jesus and his disciples.

Lesson # 6: 'Phileo'- One of the Common Biblical Words for Love"

So far in this study, we have been able to look at the most common Hebrew word for love, 'Ahab'; God's love language, 'Agapao'; 'Agape', unconditional love in the Bible; and the desire of the Church to set 'Agape' aside as a different thought than just the English word Love. This present study is on the Greek word, 'Phileo' and it is pronounced 'FILL-le-o'. It was a common word for Love used by Jesus, his disciples and is in most of the Books of the New Testament.

It originates from the Greek term 'Philos', a noun meaning 'Beloved Dear', literally a friend or someone dearly loved or prized in a personal, intimate way. It was frequently used for a trusted confidant who was held dear in a close bond of personal affection. We use a lot of phrases in English to designate this type of Love. We talk about a super-close friend, a life-long buddy, a soulmate of friends, my best friend, or I guess today, 'my bestie' and in the Church, we commonly call it 'Brotherly Love.' The key take-away is that 'Phileo' expresses an experience-based love. It is based on a reason for loving and that reason is the shared experiences, heartaches, times of joy and other personal events that have happened between two or more friends. The Greek term describes the powerful emotional bond seen in those deep friendships.

'Phileo' is the most general type of love in Scripture, encompassing love for fellow humans, care for them, respect for them, and compassion for people in need. The concept of brotherly love that unites all believes is unique to Christianity. Jesus said 'Phileo' would be an identifier of His followers.

John 13:35

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love (Phileo) one another."

The word was to signify friendship, fondness, affection, delight, and personal attachment. This word is based on feelings, a heart of love, that has been filled by experiences and shared events in each other's life. This is a strong contrast to 'Agape' Love that is a matter of commitment, even duty or benevolent care and is given regardless of any prior experiences. So, Jesus could teach and command His followers to 'Agape' Love your enemies, (give them unconditional love); but he would never tell them they must 'Phileo' their enemies, (because there were no shared experiences that would create brotherly love.

Jesus does command us to have 'Agape' Love.

Matthew 5:44-46a

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love (Agape Love) your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven."

Jesus did not command us to have 'Phileo' love for our enemies because 'Phileo' is based on feelings and feelings cannot be commanded. 'Phileo' is also the Greek word for 'kiss.'

Jesus asked Peter if he had unconditional 'Agape' love, but Peter responded that he had 'Phileo' or brotherly love. **John 21:15-19** Peter's love deepened as he continued to minister, and he wrote

much more about 'Agape' Love in *I Peter* and *II Peter*. We will discuss the example of Peter and Jesus and the use of 'Phileo' later in this session.

The word 'Phileo' was the Greek word that signified this about Love; it covers spontaneous natural affection, with the emphasis much more on feeling than on reason. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance defines 'Phileo' as, *"to be a friend to another. . .and also fond of an individual or object; having affection for in the idea of a mutual attachment, a matter of sentiment or feeling."* Norman Geisler says this type of love is mutualistic. It says, "I will give as long as I receive." It is often the basis of American law in the area of marriage and divorce. If one member of the married team is not meeting the needs of the other, then the court will grant the divorce. It has especially become the measuring rod since no-fault divorce has become the law of the American land. The idea of not pleasing the other person has become the norm for ending a relationship in America and it goes somewhat back to the reason for divorce in the book of Deuteronomy or the idea that the other person is not giving back the same amount of an item, emotion, or object that is expected, except in Deuteronomy only the males had that privilege. It makes many of our marriage and divorce laws like 'Phileo' Love.

It is often the basis of lawsuits, when business partners; investors, landlords and tenants; and other places of shared business feel the other person is not mutually doing what they should do to make the business arrangement work. It is never called brotherly love, but the same rationale is used to determine if it is legal in the business area or in a business deal. Jesus used the words, Agape and Phileo interchangeably only when He spoke about His relationship with the Father.

John 3:35,

"The Father loves (Agapao) the Son and has placed everything in his hands."

Two chapters later in John, Jesus says:

John 5:20

"For the Father loves (Phileo) the Son and shows Him all He does. Yes, and He will show you, even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed."

It is important that we look at the context before we just decide that Jesus used the words interchangeably. In the passage in **John 3**, Jesus is describing how the Father has trusted Jesus enough that He has allowed Him to have access to all the Father knows and that Jesus speaks for the Father and gives the Holy Spirit to those who really need the Spirit in their life. Jesus said that the Father loves the Son in that instance with unconditional love. He does not need to have a heavenly eraser to correct what Jesus said or need to change and alter in any way what Jesus does. He loves Jesus unconditionally and will glory in all that Jesus does.

The other passage in **John 5** is a response to an attack on Jesus for calling Himself God and saying that He was equal to God. He emphasizes the point that He has made by telling them that the Father Loves (Phileo) the Son and literally shows the Son what he is to do. He then says that the Father will continue to share with Jesus all that He is to do, and that brotherly affection, that mutual love for each other shows in all that is being done, and in all that Jesus will do. Jesus never saw the

two Greek words as interchangeable and chose the precise word that He needed to tell the story in the right way.

Phileo or Brotherly Love was stressed in the Greek culture and Aristotle even developed an elaborate system to show how to develop Phileo-Brotherly Love. The word was used twenty-five times in the New Testament, but God tells the Christian how to develop Agape Love and records Phileo-Love as the tender affection between people who are together, work together, worship together, or the things in life that we grow attached to. It is the tender affection that develops between people and objects. Twenty-five times it is used in the New Testament it is translated 'Love'-13 times; 'Loves'-6 times; 'Loved' 3 times; and 'Kiss' 3 times.

It is the response of the human spirit to what appeals as pleasurable and tender. The Greek culture made much of friendship, they used Phileo to speak of a friendly affection and in relationships it could be summed up as a friendship love. That is why Jesus could describe His relationship with the disciples as a Phileo Love. They cared for each other. Jesus firms up this thought in **John** where He says:

John 16:27

"No, the Father Himself Loves (Phileo) you because you have Loved (Phileo) me and have believed that I came from God."

The disciples had a love for the Lord Jesus which sprang from their joy in Him and He blessed them. The Father has a love of delight in the disciples, for He finds in each one the One in whom He takes delight, His son, the Lord Jesus. It is a mutual love, care, and delight in each other.

In summation, Phileo Love is the love that has tender affections for another, but it always expects a response. It is the 'friendship' type of love we need in a marriage to go with the romantic-eros love, because it makes us dear friends.

This type of love for another comes chiefly from one's heart and is an emotion and this contrasts to 'Agape Love' which is selfless and unconditional and originates more from our thinking. We might note that this distinction is somewhat arbitrary because the Agape Love actually comes from the Holy Spirit in us who activates our will and enables our mind to display selfless love. There is no natural way to have genuine selfless love other than by leaning on the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. Agape Love is not humanly possible except by divine enablement. It is predominately the love that the Bible uses to talk about our love towards God, while Phileo is rarely used in this way.

Phileo Love also has a meaning that is not as sweet as Brotherly Love; love between the disciples, Jesus and Father God; or the love of good friends. It also speaks about love in the sense of pleasure and so is used to talk about the hypocrites that find pleasure in the longest most ostentatious prayers they can give, and they love the attention it brings. "

Matthew 6:5

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love, Phileo to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.”

Another example of having the wrong kind of Phileo Love is found in **Luke** where Jesus said:

Luke 20:46

“Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love (Phileo) to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets.”

In fact, Jesus said many will be lost because they had Phileo Love for the wrong things.

Revelation 22:14-15,

“Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city; (He was speaking about Heaven) outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves Phileo and practices falsehood.”

The use of Phileo Love is at its height of wrong usage in the three times that it is translated 'Kiss' in the New Testament. Each one of them speak of the time when Judas Iscariot had instructed the Roman guard, *“Whomever I kiss (Phileo Love), He is the one, seize Hm and lead Him away under guard.”*

Sometimes in the New Testament, it is used just like we describe it in the Church as Brotherly Love:

Romans 12:10

“Be devoted to one another in love (Phileo). Honor one another in love (Phileo).”

Paul even commends the Thessalonian Church for the Brotherly Love they have in the Church.

I Thessalonians 4:9

“Now, about your Love (Phileo) for one another, we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to Love (Phileo) each other.”

The concept of brotherly affection that unites believers is very special to Christianity. As members of the Body of Christ, we are family in a very special sense. Christians are members of one family, the Body of Christ. God is our Father, and we are all brothers and sisters. We are to have a warm and devoted Phileo Love for one another that catches the interest and attention of the non-believers. Believers are family not in the conventional sense, but in a way that is distinguished by a Phileo Love that is not seen elsewhere. This unique expression of love can and should be so attractive that it draws others into the family of God.

Probably the most famous passage in the Bible that combines Agape and Phileo Love is the reinstatement of Peter by Jesus conducted along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had been raised from the dead and Peter had not been reinstated in fullness since he betrayed the Lord Jesus the night of Jesus' arrest. Jesus began the conversation by asking Peter.

John 21:15-17

“Simon son of John, do you love (Agape) me more than these?” And used either the disciples or the love of fishing and the Sea as the *“more than these.”* Peter answered him back, *“Yes, Lord,”* he said, *“you know that I Love (Phileo) you.”* It is interesting that Jesus asked if Peter loved Him with an unconditional love and he answered Jesus that he loved him with the devotion and affection of a close friend. Jesus gave him a task, *“Feed my lambs.”*

He then asked Peter a second time, *“Simon son of John, do you love (Agape) me?”* Peter answered, *“Yes, Lord, you know that I love (Phileo) you.”* Jesus gave him a second task, *“Take care of my sheep.”*

Then Jesus asked him a third time, and this is where the Greek words for love become much more helpful and inclusive. For this time Jesus asks, *“Simon son of John, do you love (Phileo) me.?”*

It is true that Jesus has asked three times and that matches the times that Peter had denied Jesus on the fateful night of the arrest of Christ. It is also true that Jesus may have been just using the two Greek words for Love interchangeably. But more likely, Jesus was using the word for Love that Peter had used because the reaction of Peter was one of hurt and remorse. Because when Jesus asks, *“Do you love (Phileo) me?”* Peter responds and says, *“Lord, you know all things, you know that I love (Phileo) you.”* It does not seem that Peter would object so much just because Jesus asks if he loves him a third time, it seems the change of the Greek word for Love to be the same one as Peter has used motivates Peter to appeal to the Divine knowledge of Jesus. *“Lord, he exclaims, you know everything, you know that I love you with deep love (Phileo).”* With that response, Jesus gave Peter a third task, *“Feed my sheep.”*

The focus of the next lesson is on the Biblical word for 'Love,' "Hasad," which stands for Loving Kindness.

Lesson # 7: 'Hasad' / 'Hesed' - The Biblical Word Meaning 'Lovingkindness'

This Lesson will look at the Hebrew word '*Hased*' or '*Hesed*' or '*Chesed*.' It is used 256 times in the Old Testament and is translated as several different words. More than one-half of the time it is used, it is in the *Psalms*. It occurs the first time in **Genesis 19:19** and the last time in **Zechariah 7:9**. It is frequently translated as faithfulness, goodness, mercy and love. These are all correct, but none express it perfectly.

It has a covenant meaning to it as well, and when Moses met God on Mount Sinai, God's own description of Himself included the attribute of "*Hased*."

Exodus 34:6-7a NASB95

Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin;"

It also has the meaning of 'Unfailing Love' as David writes in:

Psalm 69:15-16,

"Do not let the floodwaters engulf me or the depths swallow me up or the pit close its mouth over me. Answer me, Lord, out of the "lovingkindness" of your good love, in your great mercy turn to me."

When we come across lovingkindness in the Old Testament, it is usually suggesting 'Hased' as Covenant Love. Even though it is not a word or phrase we commonly use, Covenant Love, has a unique way of pointing to the enduring Love of God.

A clear understanding of the word shows: "Hased is never merely an abstract feeling of goodwill, but always entails 'practical action' on behalf of another." (Dr. Will Kynes) It is translated in the King James Version of the Bible: Mercy (149 times); Kindness (40); Lovingkindness (30); Goodness (12); Kindly (5); Merciful (4); Good (1); Goodness (1); Pity (1); Reproach (1); and wicked thing (1). Bible versions translate 'Hased' with many different words such as love, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, mercy, devotion, and favor. One word is often inadequate to embrace what all 'Hased' represents. Blended words using 'Love' as a foundation give a fuller understanding. These combinations add the depth that is needed. They are loyal-love, steadfast-love; faithful-love, lovingkindness, unfailing and loyal love, and they may come closer to the Hebrew intent. Many scholars feel 'loving kindness' is the best way to translate 'Hased.'

It is used as one of the names of God. 'Yahweh Hesed' is the God of forgiveness. It stands for His covenant love for us and the Hebrew people. The Hebrew word when it is not a name for God is usually translated as mercy, kindness, or loving kindness. When connected to God or Yahweh, it speaks of the wonderful attribute of God "The God of Forgiveness." When you pray the word of God, you are praying His words of truth into your situation. It is the same when you pray God's name, you are declaring the truth of who God is and you are proclaiming His power at work in your

life. So, when you pray to 'Yahweh Heseḏ', you are praying to the One who is full of mercy, lovingkindness and forgiveness.

What is the Meaning of God's Lovingkindness?

It is part of who God is. There are many places in Scripture that speak of the Lovingkindness of God. He delights in showing Lovingkindness.

Micah 7:18:

"Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever, but delight to "show mercy."

'Yahweh Heseḏ' is, 'the Self Existent One; I Am; He is; He always has been and always will be; One with no beginning and no end; and He adds another dimension to His name, He is full of forgiveness that has no end. Just think about that truth for a moment, God, the Self-Existent One, who was, and is, and always will be, is full of forgiveness and lovingkindness toward you.

What is the meaning of God's Lovingkindness? There are many places in Scripture that speak of the lovingkindness of God. He delights in showing lovingkindness to all. Besides ***Micah 7:18***, we see the same thought of God's lovingkindness in the Psalms.

Psalms 138:2

"I bow before your holy Temple as I worship, I praise your name for your 'unfailing love' and faithfulness; for our promises are backed by all the honor of your name."

Lovingkindness, as it relates to the character of God, is most often used to describe God's heart toward those who are His own. Lovingkindness is God's kindness and steadfast love for His children.

When we look at the name of God, 'Yahweh Heseḏ,' it is more than just lovingkindness. God's forgiveness is woven through His name too. So is His grace and love. We are so loved by God! It is so clear in what Micah says about 'Yahweh Heseḏ.' Who is like God? Did you notice this verse says that God delights to give us mercy? That is why He sent Jesus. God in His compassion for us knew that there was nothing that we could do to earn salvation. So, He had to give us the perfect gift of salvation through His Son Jesus. We do not deserve Him, but we do need to receive this life changing gift of eternal life.

Paul picks up on the idea that God has saved you by the gift of grace. You believed and accepted it, but you cannot take credit for this, grace is gift from God. We are saved by God's 'Heseḏ,' and there is nothing that we can do or stop doing that would ever be good enough to earn the love of God or His forgiveness. That is just a fact ever since the fall of man happened in the Garden of Eden. The grace of God is so clear in 'Yahweh Heseḏ' that He purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins. Salvation and the blessings of God are His gifts to us. Our reaction should be to just accept them and to repent of our sin. Powerful living flows from a heart that has repented of every known sin and received God's gift of forgiveness.

Covenants - God's Lovingkindness Expressed by His Agreed Promises with His People

I want to look at the main meanings of 'Hased.' One primary use is the interpretation of 'Lovingkindness'. This is the idea of faithful love in action and often in the Old Testament refers to God's lovingkindness expressed by His agreed promises with His people, we call them covenants. It speaks of God's loyalty to His covenant that is marked by the persistent and unconditional tenderness, kindness and mercy of God, where God seeks after man to give them love and mercy. This is especially clear in **Genesis 3**. We find that Adam and Eve have sinned, and they know they have offended God. They choose to hide from God and cover their bodies with leaves to hide their shame. But God shows His 'Hased', lovingkindness by shedding the blood of animals to provide fur outfits for Adam and Eve and truly cover their shame. This is the way that God is always loyal to His covenant and His love for His people. He keeps His promises, but He also does it with lovingkindness.

Most versions of the Bible also translate the word 'Hased' as mercy. This is somewhat confusing because the Hebrews also have a word just for mercy, 'Racham'. The two words, 'Hased' and 'Racham' are often used together in the Old Testament and each expresses a unique thought.

Isaiah 54:8

"In a surge of anger, I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness 'Hased' I will have compassion 'Racham,' I will bring you back."

We see that the covenant keeping God even though He had a reason to be angry moved back to His people and showed them compassion 'Racham' or mercy on His people.

Another example is Lamentations which reads:

Lamentations 3:32

"Though He brings grief, He will show compassion, (Racham) so great is His unfailing love (Hased)."

Compassion or mercy seems to be the action of God, but it is fueled by His 'Hased', His covenant-based love for His people.

A previous generation all learned the close of the **23rd Psalm** as *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."* But in a more literal translation like the NIV, you will see that it says, *"Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."* This makes the focus of God's covenant love for His people as the blessing, not just the mercy that He extends.

Hased Love of God Contrast with the Mercy or Compassion of the Lord

I want us to look one more time where the 'Hased' love of God is contrasted with the mercy or compassion of the Lord.

Psalms 103:13 says,

"As a father has compassion on His children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him."

The compassion of a good father is 'Racham' or mercy, but the compassion of God is Hased or a heartfelt response by someone who has something to give, to one who has a need, and God gives that to those who hold Him in awe and worship. To those who truly reverence God's holy name, the Lord is a father and acts as such. Those he pities, for in the very best of men the Lord sees much to pity, and when they are at their best state, they still need His compassion. This should keep all of us away from pride and at the same time should bring us the greatest comfort. Fathers feel for their children, especially when they are in pain, they would like to suffer in their stead, their sighs and groans cut them to their hearts. So, our heavenly Father is just as sensitive. We do not adore an uncaring God of an old, musty book, but we adore the living God, who is tenderness itself. He is at this very moment giving us compassion, for His pity never fails to flow and we never cease to need it.

We see that 'Hased' is combined to the Bible concept of covenant, and to the idea of grace extended by God when it was not deserved. God's 'Hased' is His persistent, unconditional tenderness, kindness, and mercy; a relationship in which God seeks after people with love and mercy.

Loyal Love, Dependable Kindness, Devoted Love

In summary, 'Hased' often has a flavor of not merely love, but loyal love; not merely kindness, but dependable kindness; not merely affection, but affection that has committed itself to devoted love. David speaks to Jonathan and appeals to Jonathan to treat him with 'devoted love.' David has reason to believe Jonathan will do so because Jonathan has promised in a 'covenant of Yahweh, God. Hence the covenant gives him reason to look for and depend upon 'Hased,' devoted love. So, with God and with us: love gives itself in covenant and gladly promises devoted love in that covenant, the covenant partner then rests in the security of that promise and may appeal to it. The real message of 'Hased' is that in confusion and trouble, you take yourself to the one person who has made a covenant with you. In David's disintegrating world there was yet one space of sanity, one refuge still intact, his covenant promising friend Jonathan. There as in any covenant, David could expect 'Hased.' It truly was promised loving kindness.

We see that the moral code of the Old Testament covenant was the word, 'Hased'. It was a trustworthiness or loyalty that characterized God and is set down in the middle of the Law where God declares that He will show 'Hased' to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments, **Exodus 20:6**. It is the steadfastness of love and compassion that God gave to His people and expected the same from them, **Jeremiah 16:5**. Micah spoke it most clearly when he wrote in,

Micah 6:8,

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy (Hased) and to walk humbly with your God."

God spelled out His holy and loving commitment when the Ten Commandments were given on Mt. Sinai and He calls Israel to the same kind of holy living and loving loyalty toward him and toward their neighbors.

Is 'Hased' the same as 'Agape'?

This leads to another question; Is 'Hased' the same as 'Agape'. Since they define God's love in the Old (Covenant) Testament and the New (Covenant) Testament. For the Christian, Agape Love is defined as an expression of divine grace which means it is undeserved and unmerited. In this unique Christian definition, Agape is a love humans cannot give themselves apart from God because Agape Love is the example Jesus set for us on the altar of the cross. The true expression of Agape Love flows from Christ in abundance to us and from us to the world. Just as the blood and water flowed from the side of Jesus at the Cross. For the Christian then, Agape Love is a higher order love than 'Hased' because Christ Himself divinely inspired it. 'Hased' is based on obedience, but 'Agape' is founded on unmerited grace. Agape Love, unconditional, self-sacrificial love is the standard of love Jesus commanded us to express in the human family when He said,

1 John 3:23 "This is my commandment to you: love one another as I have loved you."

The Story of Ruth & Boaz

One of the most beautiful love stories in the Old Testament uses the word 'Hased' three times in telling the story. It is the Book of Ruth. The story of Ruth and Boaz has the makings of a block buster movie: heartbreak, struggle, faith, hope, and redemption. Throw in a couple of unexpected plot twists and you are left with a beautiful example of God's masterful planning. He is the God of second chances not only in our spiritual lives, but in our earthly ones as well. Ruth and Boaz's story was not the common match we often see in ancient communities in the Bible. They were not a young couple born to have an arranged marriage designed to benefit their families. Instead, God was their ultimate Matchmaker, bringing them together after deep grief and loss. We all know someone who is suffered the loss of a spouse, whether through widowhood or divorce. Maybe that was you. That is where we met Ruth the first time.

Ruth was from Moab, an ancient kingdom just across the Dead Sea from the land of Israel, in modern day Jordan. She married a young man who had emigrated to Moab along with his mother, father, and brother. The father quickly died and after a time each boy married a young woman from Moab: Ruth and Orpah. Sadly, the mother Naomi, lost both sons and the three women were left with no protectors, or providers. Naomi heard good news from Israel and prepared to return home from Moab. Naomi stopped the procession back to Israel and said to her two daughters-in-law.

Ruth 1:8-9

"Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the Lord show you kindness (hesed), as you have shown kindness (hesed) to your dead husbands and to me. May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband."

Orpah took the advice of her mother-in-law and returned to Moab, but Ruth professed her loyalty to her mother-in-law and said she could never leave her. It is interesting to see how the covenant love of God is seen in the first use of 'Hesed'. May the Lord show you kindness and to see the second use of God reciprocating kindness 'Hesed' because of how she had lived and supported her husband.

The two women, Naomi and her daughter-in-law went to Israel and located there. They were desolate so Ruth told her mother-in-law Naomi she would go out into the fields and glean what was left over from the harvesting so they could survive. She stressed that she would work wherever she found favor with the landowner.

Ruth 2:3 *is interesting, it says,*

“As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek.”

The phrase, “as it turned out” in the Hebrew says, “her chance chanced.” What a coincidence that faithful, humble, hardworking Ruth just so happened to wind up in Boaz’s field. God is always working, even when we are unaware. Boaz was noticing this young woman, her work habits, her pleasantness, and gave her servant status in his field, a great advance from just being an impoverished gleaner. Boaz saw a woman of extraordinary courage and kindness and he also knew about Ruth’s conversion to the God of Israel. When Ruth returned home to her home that night, she had gathered an ephah of barley, about thirty pounds. Ruth ate and then gave all the rest of the grain to her mother-in-law. Naomi was shocked at this amount of grain and asked Ruth, “Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!” Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one who owned the field where she worked, his name was Boaz. Naomi again invokes the blessing of ‘Hesed’ and the great love of God when she said, “The Lord bless him!” Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “He has not stopped showing his kindness (Hesed) to the living and the dead.” She added,

Ruth 2:20 *“that man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers.”*

Naomi wanted Ruth to know how much God loved and blessed them and said the ‘Hesed,’ covenant love of God. His extended lovingkindness has been given to you, me, and our deceased, family. He is taking care of these two widows and doing what they could not do.

Naomi saw the magnificent work of Ruth, but she longed for Ruth to have a home of her own and a husband. So, she carefully explained to Ruth the custom of the guardian-redeemer and how Ruth could make it known to Boaz that she would like for him to exercise that and redeem her as his wife. Naomi explains that Ruth should go to the threshing floor after the day was done and all had gone to sleep, and she should uncover the feet of Boaz and lay down by his feet. She did and in the middle of the night something startled Boaz and he turned, and there was a woman lying at his feet. He asked her who she was, and she told him she was his servant Ruth and said,

Ruth 3:9

“Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family.”

The response of Boaz, an older man, was remarkable and God-directed. He acknowledged that God was involved and said to her using ‘Hesed;’

Ruth 3:10

"This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. And now my daughter, do not be afraid. I will do for you all you ask."

We see the great character and depth of understanding that Boaz had. He acknowledged her asking him to take her as a wife but described what she had done as 'Hesed' or Lovingkindness. He gives us a hint of what that meant to him. She did not chase after young men but saw Boaz as the right protector and husband for her. Far from making Ruth feel like she should be grateful, Boaz expressed gratitude to her. He thanked her for being interested in him. He made the kind assumption that she was the one with something to give to him. He called her a young woman of noble character. He did everything he could to build her up, and to buoy her sense of self-worth. He must have known how much bravery it took to literally grovel at someone's feet and ask for their help. Boaz was quick to erase any humiliation Ruth may have felt. Is it any wonder that this great couple was mentioned so often in the lineage of David and the lineage of Jesus Christ. They lived in the 'Hesed of God' Lovingkindness and they offered it to each other and those who came into their life. They received and gave 'Hesed', the lovingkindness of God.

Six Practical Ways We Can Experience 'Hased'

I want to close this teaching with six practical ways we can experience 'Hased, or Hesed or Chesed'

1. Read the Bible Daily
2. Pray and Worship Daily
3. Memorize the Bible
4. Meditate on the Lovingkindness of God to You
5. Be in Fellowship with Believers,
6. Start This at Dawn Each Day.

The focus of the next lesson is on the Biblical word for 'Love,' 'Yada' – Hebrew Word for Intimacy in Marriage and with God

Lesson # 8: 'Yada' – Hebrew Word for Intimacy in Marriage and with God

We are looking at the Hebrew word 'Yada' which is used 944 times in the Old Testament and is found in many Semitic languages in the Middle East. Like many Hebrew words, it has a variety of meanings and usages in the Bible. One of those ways it is used is to speak of the intimacy in a covenantal marriage relationship with your married mate or with God. This all flows from the primary usage of the word, which is 'know' and here to know and love.

This verb is used in all the expected ways, but most notably in,

Proverbs 1:7: *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."*

Since knowledge is typically obtained through the senses the mere act of observation appears to be equal with fearing God. Another notable usage of our verb is in the sense of creation of new life. When a man "knows" a woman, he is having sex with her, **Genesis 4:1** or **Judges 11:39**. This says a lot about what the Bible is teaching us about marriage and the process of learning and loving. The Word of God was often personified, so learning about the laws of nature was deemed equal to being in a marriage relationship with God our Creator.

The word also describes knowledge that is not so much just empirical knowledge but is much more experienced or sensed.

Ecclesiastes 8:5 says, "he who keeps the commandment will know no evil"

This verse refers to the experience of bad things, he will not know those, instead of just a head knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. It also applies to the knowledge gained when Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, it did not refer to the dangers of learning new facts or new science, because learning and science are held in the highest possible regard in the Bible, but rather the notion that chomping off the wrong fruit and eating it is going to make bad things happen to you.

The most common uses of this word in the Old Testament are knowledge coming from opinion; knowledge of God; a familiar spirit or sorcerer; a relative or kinsman; the place of knowledge and thought, and what is being known.

The first two times that 'Yada' is used in the Old Testament are:

Genesis 3:5 where Satan says,

"For God knows that when you eat of the fruit your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing god from evil."

This misquote by Satan speaks about the knowledge of God, not the knowledge about God. He is misusing the word to say they will be as intelligent as God, not know the intelligence of God. He makes it sound as if Aam and Eve can gain the deep knowledge of God. Just two verses later,

Genesis 3:7:

"Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and: made loincloths for themselves."

This is the 'only Yada' they could have like God. They now saw what only God saw before and knew they were naked.

'Yada' is not only the knowledge of God, but also knowing God. We see that in:

Psalm 9:16

"The Lord made himself known; He has executed judgement; the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands."

This is a very common usage of the word, 'Yada', literally it is speaking of the knowledge about God. The Lord has made Himself known and that is what we 'know' about God. It is the knowledge that God has given us about His Divinity and His Divine knowledge.

It can also speak of the knowledge that we are able to gain.

Isaiah 29:11-12 says,

"For you this whole vision is nothing, but words sealed, in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read and say, 'Read this, please,' they will answer, 'I can't; it is sealed.' Or if you give the scroll to someone who cannot read, and say, 'Read this, please,' they will answer, 'I don't know how to read.'"

This is 'Yada' speaking in a very general sense about knowledge in general. Knowledge is to be preferred because it leads to wisdom.

Job 19:14 speaks of knowledge being a relationship with friends and family. It says,

Job 19:14 *"My relatives have gone away; my closest friends have forgotten me."*

Those who knew Job best were his close friends; they had special knowledge of who Job was. So, the word is used to speak of personal or intimate knowledge of someone. It is in that setting that 'Yada' is used when referring to healthy and covenantal sex.

Genesis 4:1 says,

"Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, 'With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.'"

The word 'Yada' is used almost every time the bible refers to two people having sex, when the sex is understood to be healthy and in covenant. There are other Hebrew verbs that are used anytime there is an unhealthy or non-covenantal sexual exchange, like the time David 'lay' with Bathsheba, which uses the Hebrew word 'shakab'. In these unhealthy cases, the focus of the verb is not 'head or heart knowledge of each other,' but 'a physical or bodily exchange.'

Yada, A Covenant Relationship

I made a reference to it, but one last use of the word 'Yada' is that it often was used as a covenant term in the Bible. In English, the Hebrew word can indicate mental knowledge, that is, that a person 'understands' or 'knows something,' like '2+2=4'. But the concept of 'knowing' something or someone takes on a special meaning in the Hebrew and other Semitic languages. This specialized

meaning has to do with relationships, and primarily a relationship that is based upon the making of a covenant. We know this not only from the Bible but from other Ancient Near East literature.

In the translations of the Old Testament, many translators take this meaning of 'Yada' and translate it 'chosen'. This is true of the comment about Abraham in:

Genesis 19:18

"For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."

But why would the word 'Yada' or 'know' be used to denote a covenant relationship between two people? Because in the Ancient Near East, including Israel, a covenant between two people, like between a King and his people was a relationship that could not be broken and that if it were to be broken the result would be severe, (the curses of breaking the covenant) would be realized. That is why God valued marriage and hated divorce. It wasn't that God was so naïve that He thought everyone could always repair a broken marriage; it was that the covenant was being broken and would lessen the blessings He had intended. Almost always in the Old Testament when someone would 'know someone', it meant they would have a relationship with that person and usually a covenant relationship with them.

One last Bible reference would be **Psalms 139** where 'Yada' is found six times: verses 1, 2, 4, 14, and 23 (2). These six usages vary in meaning from, 'God knows everything' to 'I know how majestic your works are Lord.' David is affirming and acknowledging that God has all knowledge and that we can gain knowledge by our studying and applying the experiences we have with God and His Word.

This passage teaches us that God knows all, but we do not. Although we are called to seek the knowledge of God, we cannot know everything. There are mysteries that will always remain a mystery, and that is okay. But that does not mean we should stop seeking knowledge. What God wants us to know will be revealed to those who seek. God says knowledge is highly valuable and a lack of knowledge is a huge detriment to His people.

Hosea 4:6

"My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children."

We are to press on until we know the Lord, because He has rescued His people over and over in the Bible, but the greatest rescue came when God raised His own Son on the third day so that humans could live in the Presence of God when our days on earth are over.

God Wants Our Loyalty and Love

He wants us to have a relationship with Him. We must devote time to get to know God as much as we can. It is a life changer and life giver. Knowledge is power and pure power belongs to God. Seek it out and He will share it with you.

The base root of this word Yada is 'tent door' and 'eye'. It had the meaning of the eye moving back and forth, in and out like the tent door, and making a careful examination to produce knowledge and experience on an intimate level. So, Elihu says to Job, *"Do you know how the clouds hang poised, those wonders of him who has perfect knowledge?"* This intimate knowledge spoke of marital relations with a husband and wife, **Genesis 4:1**; but it leads to one more question; Do you know God? Do you love Him from that relationship of intimacy? This is not a casual sense of awareness, as suggested by the English idea of knowledge, but it is a close and intimate relationship. **Psalm 9:11** is a great example of this relationship,

Psalm 9:11 NEV

"And those knowing your character will trust in you for you will not leave those seeking Yahweh."

God certainly knows us in this manner.

I want to share part of a testimony from Fritze Meier Marisa of the Curt Landry Ministries on how that intimate love with God developed.

"As a young woman I grew up around the church. I attended church school, went to church camp, and my entire existence was centered around Church. But it was not centered around intimacy with God. Throughout my childhood, I learned how to memorize scripture, pray, and have daily devotions. I learned to talk the talk but when it came to walking intimately with the Lord, I did not really understand what that entailed. I longed for a spontaneous outburst now and again of a love walk with God, but it just seemed too silly for a staunch and crisp Heavenly Father. So, as an adult it was not hard to walk away from God. I made the cut and moved into a career in the arts. I over adopted that world and just as the prodigal son in the parable of Jesus, I would decide that it would be better to be a slave in my Father's house than to wallow in the mud of a pigpen. In a desperate cry for help, I chose to renounce my sins and to invite Jesus into my heart, understanding that I would once again be obligated to read the Word, memorize, obey, obey, obey. It was not an easy decision."

"Then, much to my surprise, what happened instead of a life of indentured servitude is this. . . My Father saw me from afar off! He met me where I was at, and in an extravagant act of love towards me, He came running down the road, yelling out, 'My daughter! My daughter! She has returned home! Kill My very best calf! Throw a party! Let's celebrate My beautiful extravagant daughter who has returned to Me!' The Father, who I had so longed to please through works, showed me the overabundance of His true heart for me in a spontaneous outburst of love and celebration."

"It has taken time, but over the last few years Father God has been removing the barriers that have stood in my way from truly walking in intimacy with Him. I understand now that walking in close relationship is a balancing act. I study the Scriptures now to better understand the One who ran to me—displaying His affection for the entire world to see. I spend time in prayer for the issues that break His heart, not out of obligation, but because I love what He loves."

I write in my journal to Him, I paint, dance, take pictures. I sing to Him; I plant gardens and walk with Him in His creation. I allow my right brained self to express 'Yada' with Him in my own

Author: Dr. Thomas Haney

unique ways. The more I do this, the more I long to read His Word and know Him more. It is a life of devotion, not a life of devotions. May you be encouraged today, strengthened in the knowledge that your Heavenly Father is an extravagant Papa who waits eagerly and expectantly to spend quality 'Yada' time with you." *Fritzemeier Marisa of the Curt Landry Ministries*

Do We Know the Heart of God?

Her testimony leads me to this question.

Psalm 44:21

"Will not God search for this closeness with us, for He knows the secrets of the heart."

Do we know God in this same manner? Do we know the heart of God?

1 John 2:3 says,

"And by this we may be sure that we know Him, if we keep His commandments."

But this above verse is being translated from a Western perspective, but if we translate it through the mind of the Hebrews, we get a slightly different perspective. *"And by this we may be sure that we have an intimate relationship with Him, if we preserve His direction."* The idea of 'knowing' in Ancient Hebrew thought is similar to our understanding of knowing but is more personal and intimate. We may say that we 'know' someone but simply mean we 'know of his or her existence, in Hebrew thought one can only 'know' someone if they have a personal and intimate relationship. In **Genesis 18:19** God says about Abraham, *'I know him'* meaning God has a very close relationship with Abraham. In **Genesis 4:1** the Bible says that Adam *'knew Eve his wife'* implying a very intimate sexual relationship.

The story of Adam and Eve is the first time in the Bible that 'Yada' is used of a personal intimate relationship of love. They had just lost their home and Adam had given Eve a new name. He had called her woman when she was first given to him, because she was taken from man, **Genesis 2:23**; After the loss of Eden, Adam gave his wife a new name'

Genesis 3:20

"Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all living."

Eve is the English form of her Hebrew name, "chava." This name was so appropriate. As the first woman on earth, she would be the mother of everyone else. Adam had sexual relationships with his wife, and she had a son. The King James Bible interpreted the word literally, Yada 'knew' and used it for physical intimacy, that relies on the language of knowledge. What does that mean to say that Adam and Eve 'knew' each other? 'Yada' is based on the kind of knowledge that you get by seeing and experiencing something. It stands in total contrast to simply learning about a topic, a person, or any object. It is the kind of knowledge that comes from living with and experiencing something. To know them in the 'Yada' sense of the word is to really see them, at every level and in every way. Adam and Eve did not just experience physical union; they experienced a deep mutual knowledge born of understanding who the other really was as a person.

Twice in their lives, Adam and Eve faced unthinkable sorrow. Twice, they reached for each other in response to that sorrow, once, after they had lost Eden, and again, after they had lost Cain and Abel. After those sons were gone, the Bible tells us that "Adam made love to his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth."

Genesis 4:25

"Adam made love to his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, "God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him."

What we see in the life of Adam and Eve is a pattern: of togetherness and then of rebuilding after terrible events that threatened to pull them apart and destroy them.

Thousands of years later, one of Adam and Eve's descendants would also be totally alone in a different garden, a painful parallel to Adam's early state. In the Garden of Gethsemane this Man whom Paul called 'the last Adam' **1 Corinthians 15:45**, was abandoned by His friends and family, despite begging for their support in His hour of need. That Man, Jesus, who was also fully God, would then go on to do what His forefather Adam could not do: '*crush the serpent*' to save humanity.

Adam and Eve fell far short of their potential, but their impact did not end with the Fall. We should view it not only as the story of original sin, but also as the birthplace of original human love. One thing's for sure: The story of Adam and Eve is not done teaching us yet. It definitely tells us that God wants that 'Yada' loving relationship between His created people and Himself, flowing both ways, and the Garden of Eden taught us it is not dependent on you always being perfect!

In our next lesson we will look at some less common, additional Hebrew and Greek words for Love.

Lesson # 9: Additional Greek & Hebrew Words for Love

Thank you for joining us for this teaching of Hope Loos Up. We are looking at all the remaining Greek words for 'Love' and seeing which were in the Bible and which were not used in the Bible. I have also taken two Hebrew words that have also been translated as 'Love' at certain places in the bible. As we have seen throughout our study, the Greek words primarily mean Love and speak about one unique aspect of Love; however, the Hebrew words, like our other Hebrew words have a variety of meanings and usages in the bible. But one usage of each of those Hebrew words is 'love.'

Greek Word for Love 'Philadelphia'

The first Greek word we are going to look at is '*Philadelphia*'. We saw that 'phileo' meant friendship love and comradery. But the plural compound word, 'Philostorgos' or 'Philadelphia' has a wider meaning. It is only used in:

*Romans 12:10, which says, “
“Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.”*

This word used only once in the New Testament meant, “*devoted in love.*” It takes the idea of 'phileo', friendship love and use it as a higher level of commitment.

Greek Word for Love 'Storge'

The second Greek work we will look at is the word, '*Storge*' which refers to familial love like that of a mother for her baby or a brother and sister for one another. It is not used in the New Testament, but the opposite or negative term, '*Astorgoi*' or unloving in a storge manner is found twice in the New Testament:

*I Timothy 3:3-5, which says,
“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God’s work, which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”*

So, the goal of Christian Teaching is to grow in a family-type love for each other.

Paul also uses the opposite of '*storge*' when he writes in **Romans 1** about those who have rejected God so often that God has given them over to a depraved mind. He says of them:

*Romans 1:29b-31
“They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful. They invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.”*

This Scripture tells us that God desires His people to have an endless love of a storge, 'Family-Type Love' for all because those who have none of this in their life have been left alone by God after He has left them to their depraved mind.

In both instances, Paul was not simply saying that people are unloving. He was saying people will lack the natural love or affection that family members should have for each other. A biblical example of 'Astorgos' (the absence of storge) is Cain murdering his brother Abel. A present-day example is mothers who consent to having their babies killed in the womb. Even in nature, mothers have a built-in predisposition to fiercely protect their offspring.

One interesting use of 'Phileo' - Brotherly Love and Agape Love (Unconditional Love) is the way the bible says they are needed for the two marriage partners. The Bible says 'phileo' is the love wives are to have for their husbands.

Titus 2:3-4 says,

"Older women are to teach the younger women how to love their husbands."

Husbands 'Agape Love' Your Wife vs Wives 'Phileo Love' Your Husbands

The Greek word in the phrase, 'love their husbands' is 'Phlandros', a combination of 'phileo' and 'aner'. So, while husbands are commanded to have 'Agape Love' for their wives, wives are commanded to have 'Phileo Love' for their husbands.

What is the difference? What is the implication of this in a marriage relationship? Is it that husbands do not want or need Agape? The reason or the difference is that the needs of husbands and wives are different. Most men, including myself, would say it can be very discouraging and trying at times being a husband, father, provider, spiritual leader, and all the other rules and responsibilities that fall on men's shoulders. What could be more encouraging for a husband than a wife who is also a best friend, regularly lavishing 'Phileo' on him? Conversely, what could be more discouraging for a husband than a wife who acts more like a mother reprimanding him?

But a wife needs the 'Agape Love' of her husband because she lives under some direction and authority from him. She needs him to treat her with the tender, sacrificial Agape Christ showed His Bride, the church. The temptation of being harsh and domineering can never be something that he feeds. How much more was that true when Paul wrote these letters and wives were not much more than property that the husband controlled. Other reasons that God commands 'Phileo' of a wife and 'Agape' of a husband will have to be found out after we pass from this life. But we know for certain that a husband needs his wife's 'Phileo', he needs her to be his best friend. A wife needs her husband's 'Agape'; she needs him to care for her as his most cherished treasure, and not as an object or employee who satisfies his needs. She needs him to love her sacrificially, as Christ loved the Church.

Greek Word for Love 'Eros'

The one Greek word for love not found in the New Testament is the word, 'Eros.' It is a love felt particularly within the body, it is a state of the heart, and it can be related to sex, but sex, and even procreating, can occur without eros involved. We might wonder why it is not mentioned in the Bible, sense the idea of a sexual relationship is mentioned often in the Old Testament. My personal belief is that the word had become so misused in the temple worship and practices of the New Testament times where prostitution was part of their worship, including specific orgies on specific days to

honor their gods and God just did not think the word could be redefined as a romantic and wholesome attraction between two Christians. This was not the practice of the Hebrews except when they were following the idolatrous practices of their neighbors and they still had the ability to see that God was directing their monogamous sex life.

'Eros Love' is the Greek word for sensual or romantic love. It originated from the mythological Greek god of love, sexual desire, physical attraction, and physical love, Eros, whose Roman counterpart was Cupid.

Love in the form of eros seeks its own interest and satisfaction, to possess the object of love. God is clear in the Bible that 'Eros Love' is reserved for marriage. Promiscuity of all types was rampant in ancient Greek culture and was one of the obstacles the apostle Paul had to battle when planting churches in the eastern Mediterranean. Paul warned his believers against succumbing to immorality.

1 Corinthians 7:8-9

"So, I say to those who are not married and to widows—it is better to stay unmarried, just as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should go ahead and marry. It is better to marry than to burn with lust."

Hebrew Word for Love 'Raham'

Two last Hebrew words for love also expand the meaning of love in the Old Testament. The first is 'Raham' and it has the idea of love and compassion. It is used to mean 'betroth,' so God writes in:

Hosea 2:19-20,

"I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness and you will acknowledge the Lord."

It was a stubborn love based on compassion. So, God tells the Israelites here, I will love you and give you hope, even for the most miserable, most rebellious, and most immoral people that you can be. It is used in the idea of dedicated love:

Psalms 18:1 *"I love You, O lord, my strength."*

It is often translated as compassion,

Psalms 112:4

"Light arises in the darkness for the upright; He is gracious and compassionate and righteous."

It is used the same way only with a negative connotation, in:

Hosea 1:6 when it says,

"Name her Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer have compassion on the house of Israel, that I would ever forgive them."

In a remarkably familiar passage, David uses 'Raham' as compassion when he says:

Psalms 103:13,

"Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion of those who fear Him."

So, we see that often in the Old Testament it spoke of the love or compassion that grew out of a relationship. This same thought is in:

Zechariah 7:9-10 which says,

“Thus has the Lord of hosts said, ‘Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.’”

The people you know and care for should be given compassionate love, so they are encouraged in all they must do.

Hebrew Word for Love ‘Davod’ or ‘Kavod.’

The last Hebrew word we will look at is ‘Davod’ or ‘Kavod.’ It had the idea of offering love and understanding even when it is hard, at the moment, to think that is the right thing to do. It is the times when your flesh or some would even say, common sense, would tell you to act differently than loving and understanding the offending person. The power of the Holy spirit makes expressing ‘Davod’ possible. God’s manifest presence and the power of the Holy Spirit within us are the ingredients that make ‘Davod’ or ‘Kovad’ possible. When used for God, it also spoke of His glory. And just before Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the First Temple, Ezekiel saw God’s ‘Kavod’ leave.

Ezekiel 11:22

“The glory of the lord went up from within the city and stopped above the mountain east of it. The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the exiles in Babylonia in the vision given by the Spirit of God.”

This glory of God was inescapable.

Exodus 40:34-35

“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”

It is the love of God that really directs our thoughts about love in the Old and New Testaments and that love is shown in some of the brightest light in the Book of Hosea. God had given His prophet Hosea the unenviable task of taking a wife from among the active prostitutes of his day. He did and God used each one of the children as an illustration of what the fractured relationship between Israel God was doing to the country. But the marriage of Hosea and Gomer takes a turn for the worse and in:

Hosea 3:1 says,

“The Lord said to me, ‘Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods. . .”

While still married to Hosea, Gomer had run into the arms of another man, returning to her promiscuous ways. God knew this would happen, but I wonder if Hosea did also. He married a

woman who was openly flaunting her sexual sin, but had Hosea hoped his love and attention would change his wife's heart from that point forward? While Gomer was unfaithful to her husband, as the people of Israel were unfaithful to the Lord, Hosea made the difficult choice to abide in God's plan. The text does not tell us that Gomer had abandoned her adulterous ways at this point. Hosea was not instructed to wait until she became organized. Instead, God told Hosea to go redeem his wife while she was still living in sin.

As a picture of how God redeemed Israel, and as He does for us, Hosea went and brought his wife back. Whether it was out of prostitution or some other type of slavery, Gomer's husband redeemed her, paying the price to buy her freedom. But God did not tell Hosea just to carry out a transaction and bring her home. Oh, He specifically told Hosea to *'show your love to your wife.'* **Hosea 3:1**. The prophet took Gomer home and told her to be faithful, pledging that he would do the same for her.

Here is the thing, we all want to be Hosea in this story, but we are really Gomer. We desire to be the hero, but on a spiritual level we are always going to be the one who needs to be rescued. It is easy to point the finger elsewhere, but what we usually need is a mirror. God's boundless love for us is limitless, meaning He is always pursuing us and calling for us to abandon our selfish wanderings. Think of all the beautiful stories stitched through the Old Testament as a tapestry of forgiveness and mercy every time Israel rejected God's principles and plans, fell into tragic circumstances, begged for His redemption, and saw it delivered.

Psalm 139:16 tell us,

"All the days ordained for me were written in God's book before one of them came to be."

Jesus chose to go to the cross for you, knowing everything about your life, every good and bad choice you would make, every regret you would ever have, and all the times you would choose something-or someone-other than Him.

Ephesians 2:4-5

"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions, it is by grace you have been saved."

Love, grace, mercy. These are not just things God gives us. They are who He is.

First John 4:8 states simply: *"God is love."*

I John goes on to remind us this is not a conditional deal.

I John 4:10

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

We do not have to show up and make our case to get God's attention or affection. We could never convince a judge or jury we are worthy of God's love and thank goodness we do not have to! No, the bible makes it clear that God's love flows to us without reservation or bargaining.

Thank you for being a part of this study. I pray it has expanded your concept of 'Love' and especially God's Love for you.