

God's Definition of Agape Love
1 Cor. 13:1-7

"THE grace of charity, or love, of which so much is most admirably spoken in this chapter, is absolutely essential to true godliness. So essential is it that, if we have everything beside, but have not charity, it profiteth us nothing. The absence of charity is absolutely fatal to vital godliness; so saith the Holy Ghost in this chapter. When, then, you read the apostle's high encomiums [praise] of charity, do not say, "This is a fancy virtue to which certain special saints have attained, and we are bound to admire them for it, but we need not imitate them." Far from it. This charity is the common, everyday livery of the people of God. It is not the prerogative of a few; it must be the possession of all. Do not, therefore, however lofty the model may be, look up to it as though you could not reach it: you must reach it. It is put before you not only as a thing greatly desirable, but as absolutely needful..." Spurgeon

- I. Perhaps one of the biggest things we find lacking in the church today, is a true expression of God's agape love toward one another because of the difficulty we find in putting it into practice. We are commanded to love one another for this very reason; we are without excuse. if we consider ourselves disciples of Jesus Christ, then we must, though his divine power, make every effort to add to our faith a genuine expression of his agape love toward one another.

1 Cor. 13:1-3

2 Peter 1:5-7

2 Timothy 1:7

Gal. 6:22

John 13:34-35 *"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."*

- II. God's agape love is seen most powerfully in the self-sacrificing countenance of quiet patience and firm, unwavering kindness toward one another that is to rise above any valid or invalid reason to act otherwise. It requires us to die to self, so that Christ may be exalted in the negative circumstances that could easily justify our not wanting to be patient, kind or truthful.

1 Cor. 13:4a,6b

Ex. 34:5-7b

Romans 2:4

- III. God's agape love cannot act contrary to his nature. To behave in an unloving way, means that we behave in ways that are not Christlike. It is to walk in ways that the sinful nature desires over and above the Holy Spirit's desire to express his fruit of love through us. *"No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us"* (1 Jn. 4:12).

1 Cor. 13:4b-6

Gal. 5:16-17

- IV. God's agape love is meant to be a constant in our lives. It is an "always" love that gives us protection, trust, hope and perseverance through him. In turn, his love through us, offers to others that same protection, trust, hope and perseverance so that relationships are kept healthy and strong, marriages are kept healthy and strong, and the body of Christ is kept healthy and strong for his honor and glory.

1 Cor. 13:7