

The Most Excellent Way

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Galatians 5:22-23 22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. It's no accident that Paul places love at the top of this list. Love is not only the first fruit of the Spirit; it is the one fruit that contains all the rest. All the other qualities are really different forms of the first one, love. Joy is love enjoying itself. Peace is love at rest. Patience is love that's willing to wait. Kindness is love's reaction to other people. Goodness is love making righteous decisions. Faithfulness is love keeping its word. Gentleness is love empathizing with others. Self-control is love resisting temptation.

The fruit of the Spirit is expressed in many diverse ways, but love is the key to them all. So the Love Chapter, 1 Corinthians 13, sets forth the quality of love that the Holy Spirit generates in us as He reproduces the character of Christ in us. If you have Christlike love, all of the other fruit of the Spirit become possible to you. Stedman

- I. The Bible's simple yet profound description of God, and therefore God's own description of himself, is "God is love." His love is the first attribute listed of the Holy Spirit's fruit in us. It is an attribute given to all believers to enable us to be salt and light to a sin sick, dying and angry world in desperate need of the love of the Savior.

1 Jn. 4:7-8

1 Jn. 4:16

- II. The four different Greek words that describe love are **phileo love**, **storge love**, **eros love** and **agape love**. Of the four, Scripture emphasizes agape love the most. Agape love is the only type of love that describes God's perfect, unchanging attribute of love. All the other types of love are a natural part of our creation. Agape love is supernatural and is given to all believers. It is the type of love the world does not know or understand. It's the type of love that must be expressed through us if we ever expect to live in ways that glorify our Savior in the church, in marriage and in our interactions with others (Matt. 22:37-39).

- a. **Phileo** love is a friendship love that exists between two or more individuals for the sake of shared kindness, affection and edification. Phileo love at its worst can produce cliques, and at its best can produce a bond between people that is not easily broken.

φιλέω philéō, to be a friend to (fond of an individual or an object)), i.e. have affection for denoting personal attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling; to treat affectionately or kindly, to welcome, befriend. Strong's Concordance

Revelation 3:19 Those whom I love (**phileo**) I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.

1 Corinthians 16:22 If anyone does not love (**phileo**) the LORD, let that person be cursed! Come, LORD!

b. **Storge love** is a love that exists within a family. It is a natural affection of the heart between family members. It is the kind of love that binds families together no matter what external forces come against it. Even when suffering and heartache come into their experience, storge love binds the family together and strengthens its ties.

Στοργή (Storgē) *This love has its basis in one's own nature. Storgē is a natural affection or natural obligation. It is a natural movement of the soul for husband, wife, child or dog [?]. It is a quiet, abiding feeling within a man that rests on something close to him and that he feels good about.* Wuest

2 Timothy 3:1-3 *But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves (**philautos**), lovers of money (**philsargyros**-silver), boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love (**astrogos** – w/o natural affection), unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good,*

Romans 12:10 *Be devoted (**philostorgos** – kindly affection) to one another in love (**philadelphia**) . Honor one another above yourselves.*

c. The word **Eros** is not found in Scripture. It is a romantic love as well a sensual love. It is a love that desires to possess.

Ερως (Eros) *This love is erotic love. Eros is a love of passion, an overmastering passion that seizes and absorbs itself into the mind. It is a love that is an emotional involvement based on body chemistry. The basic idea of this love is self-satisfaction. Though Eros is directed towards another, it actually has self in mind. For example: "I love you because you make me happy." Wuest*

d. **Agape love** is a self-sacrificing love that gives of oneself for the benefit and well-being of others. It is not a love of the worthy, and it is not a love that desires to possess or control. It is the type of love that God expressed to us through the gospel. It is the type of love we are commanded to add to our faith in increasing measure to keep us effective and productive in our knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:6-8).

ἀγάπη agape *Agapē is not kindled by the merit or worth of its object, but it originates in its own God-given nature. God is love. It delights in giving. This love keeps on loving even when the loved one is unresponsive, unkind, unlovable, and unworthy. It is unconditional love. Agapē desires only the good of the one loved. It is a consuming passion for the well-being of others.* Wuest

Jn. 3:16

Rom. 5:8,10

Rom. 3:10-12

1 Jn. 4:10

1 John 4:10 *This is love (**agape**): not that we loved (**agapao**) God, but that he loved (**agapo**) us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*