

LOVE

- I. Words for "love" in original Biblical languages
 - A. Hebrew words
 1. Hebrew word *ahab* - spontaneous, impulsive love (250 times in OT)
 2. Hebrew word *hesed* - deliberate choice of affection and kindness
 3. Hebrew word *raham* - to have compassion, brotherly love
 - B. Greek words
 1. Greek word *eros* - get English word "erotic"
 - a. *Eros* was Greek god of love - sensual, sexual, impulsive
 - b. Plato defined this love as aspiring for and delighting in the value of its object; loving that which is lovable.
 - c. This Greek word not found in New Testament
 2. Greek word *philia* - get English words philosophy, philanthropy, philology, bibliophile, Philadelphia, Philip, etc.
 - a. Greeks used as love for friend, spouse, children
 - b. Ex. of NT usage: Matt. 10:37; Lk. 12:4; 14:12; Jn. 11:3,36
 3. Greek word *agape*
 - a. Seldom used in secular Greek literature
 - b. When used referred to selective desire for something or someone.
 - c. Greek OT (LXX) used over 300 times to refer to God's selective and exclusive love for Israelite people.
 - d. Predominant word for love in new covenant (over 250 occurrences in NT). Invested with new meaning.
 - e. Representative Biblical references employing *agape*
Matt. 5:43,44 - "love your enemies"
Matt. 22:36-40 - "great commandment...love God..."
Jn. 3:16 - "God so loved the world He gave His only Son"
Jn. 13:34; 15:12 - "new commandment...love one another.."
Jn. 17:26 - "love wherewith Thou loved Me may be in them"
Rom. 5:5 - "love of God poured out within our hearts"
Rom. 13:10 - "love is the fulfillment of the law"
I Cor 13:1-13 - "...the greatest of these is love"
II Cor. 5:14 - "the love of Christ controls us"
Gal. 5:6 - "faith working through love"
Gal. 5:22 - "fruit of the Spirit is love..."
I Jn. 4:7 - "everyone who loves is born of God"
- II. Divine basis of love
 - A. Character of God - "God is love" - I Jn. 4:8,16
 1. Essentially
 - a. Absolute and independent, unnecessitated
 - b. immutable and uncompromising
 - c. personal, relational, fundamental to triune Godhead
 - d. Self-giving; other-oriented; desires the best for all others, and the best is Himself.
 2. Comprehensively
 - a. All-encompassing expression of God's character
Rom. 13:9 - "summed up in 'you shall love your neighbor'"
Gal. 5:14 - "whole law summed up in 'love your neighbor'"
James 2:8 - "royal law...'you shall love your neighbor'"
 - b. Other attributes of God's character expressed in love
Exod. 20 - honor, respect, truth, loyalty, fidelity,....
I Cor 13 - patience, kindness, truth, eternity
Gal. 5:22 - joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness...
 - B. Expression of God's character
 1. Objectively
 - a. God's love is expressed by His grace - Eph. 2:4,5
 - b. God's grace realized in Jesus Christ - Jn. 1:17;3:16; Titus 3:4

- c. God's love expressed in redemption - Rom. 5:8; Gal. 2:20; I Jn. 4:10; Rev. 1:5
 - 2. Subjectively
 - a. God's character of love to be expressed in behavior of man
 - b. Requires regenerative presence of God's character
 - Jn. 17:26 - "love may be in them, as in Me"
 - Rom. 5:5 - "love of God shed in our hearts"
 - Gal. 5:22 - "the fruit of the Spirit is love"
 - I Jn. 4:7 - "everyone who loves is born of God"
 - c. Only God can express His character of love
 - (1) Love not a virtue, value, ideal, moral principle
 - (2) Love not a feeling, sentiment, impulse, passion
 - (3) Love not romance, benevolence, amicability
 - (4) Love not psychological predisposition, physical genetics, social habit
 - (5) Love expressed only as derived from God - *ek theos*
 - (6) Love is spiritual character of God in Christian
 - d. Love commanded of the Christian -Jn. 13:34; 15:12; Eph. 5:2
 - (1) Freedom in the receptivity of His character
 - (2) God is the dynamic of His own demands
- III. Practical features of the expression of God's love
 - A. Love is not defined by the act, but by the character of God within the act
 - B. Love precludes hypocrisy and play-acting.
 - C. Love is unselfish; not based on self-need or want.
 - D. Love is not conditioned on reciprocity or calculation of repayment.
 - E. Love doesn't care who gets the credit.
 - F. Love is active; not merely passive or theoretical; love doesn't loiter.
 - G. Love believes, trusts and expects God to overcome all things.
 - H. Love is directed toward people; not things, ideas, doctrines, principles...
 - I. Love of neighbor desires them to have everything you have, and more.
 - J. Love precludes resentment, covetousness, and judging another.
 - K. Love seeks to commend, not condemn.
 - L. Love is not conditioned on the lovability or action of the recipient.
 - M. Love is not fickle; it is unchanging and limitless
 - N. Love precludes despair at the loss or absence of the person loved
 - O. Love precludes favoritism and aversion.
 - P. Love does not engage in comparison.
 - Q. Love is not possessive, seeking to own or control another person.
 - R. Love does not find its identity or life in the one loved.
 - S. Love is the antidote to fear and paranoia - I Jn. 4:18
 - T. Love seeks the highest good of the other, with no thought of benefit to oneself.
 - U. Love involves self-denial, self-renunciation, personal sacrifice, humility
 - V. Love is willing to suffer slights, hurts, abuse.
 - W. Love builds others up, nurtures, edifies; it is constructive, not destructive
 - X. Love seeks to avoid grieving or offending another - Rom. 13:10; 14:15
 - Y. Love of one's enemy removes his relation of power - Matt. 5:40
 - Z. Love precludes partiality, preference, distinction, exclusivism; it is universal and equal
 - AA. Love does not take the situation into one's hand to resolve the problem.
 - BB. Love does not preclude confrontation, opposition and discipline - Heb. 12:6; it is not always capitulatory or soft ("tough love"); cf. Matt. 10:34; Lk. 12:49
 - CC. Love cannot be coerced or obliged by law or moral principle and program.
 - DD. Love is not retaliatory (Rom. 12:17); it turns the other cheek (Matt. 5:39)
 - EE. Love does not dictate performance standards or expectations to others
 - FF. Love prompts one to take the initiative to be the first to act - (Matt. 7:12)
 - GG. Love dissolves the emotional blocks which keep us from sensitivity to others
 - HH. Love does not demand its personal rights
 - II. Love excludes suspicion and mistrust
 - JJ. Love allows one to be free to be man as God intended man to be.