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# The Three Faces of Love, Part III (AGAPE: The Nature Of Love)

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## First Love

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***Sermon: First Love: The Three Faces of Love, Part III (AGAPE: The Nature Of Love)***

***Lesson Text***

1 John 4:6–13 (KJV)<sup>6</sup> We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. <sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. <sup>8</sup> He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. <sup>13</sup> Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

***Introduction***

Today we will conclude this 3-part miniseries on the three faces of love.

So far, we've learned that Eros is an erotic between a man and a woman and can be very good. It is a gift from God that allows us to communicate, procreate, and recreate.

However, because it comes from a place of our emotions, it can also become bad when we fail to care for each other; and become ugly when we fail to protect each other.

We've also learned that Phileo love is a brotherly love of friendship that comes from a place of affection and care. It must be called, chosen, and committed to, and is developed and maintained through the knitting together of one's souls.

It is, however, limited to those we have affectionate care for.

Today we will look at Agape love which is very different from Eros and Phileo – It has no bad or ugly side, nor does it have any limitations.

Matthew 5: <sup>43</sup> **Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. <sup>44</sup> But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;**

Eros requires us to have an emotional erotic love for a person, and Phileo requires us to have an affectionate care for a person; neither of which works when that person is or becomes an enemy.

Agape is a self-sacrificing love that moves one to look out for the well-being of others, no matter the personal cost.

Romans 5: <sup>8</sup> But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 4: Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. <sup>8</sup> He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

Agape love is the very nature of who God is. God does not merely love; He is love itself. God loves because that is His nature and the expression of His being.

He loves the unlovable, not because they deserve to be loved, but because it is His nature to love, and He must be true to His nature.

Agape love is not something that we feel, nor is it something that we learn or practice, it's something that we become when we allow God's nature to become our nature.

***Series and Sermon: First Love: The Three Faces of Love, Part III (AGAPE: The Nature Of Love)***

(What Love Is, What Love Does, How Love Changes)

### ***I. The Nature of AGAPE Love (What Love Is)***

1 John 4: <sup>8</sup> He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

First, we must allow Agape love to change our nature.

The reason why Eros and Phileo fails us is because of our nature.

Psalms 51: <sup>5</sup> Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Jeremiah 17: <sup>9</sup> The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Our iniquities and sins will eventually fail us when it comes to those we love. We fall in love, but we can fall out of love. We become best friends, but we can also become enemies.

1 John 1: <sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Eventually, in every relationship, someone is going to sin and fail the other. And it is at that point that our sinful nature will show up and fail us.

We must Allow Agape Love to change our nature because God's love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13: <sup>8</sup> Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.

It doesn't love because we deserve, it doesn't love because we've earned it, it doesn't love because we're so lovable, it loves because God is love.

And when the love of God is produced in us, we become love!

### ***II. The Sacrifice of AGAPE Love (What Love Does)***

1 John 4: <sup>9</sup> In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

Next, we must allow Agape love to change our behavior.

The second reason why Eros and Phileo fail us is because of our behavior.

When people fail us, we will respond to that failure. They betrayed you, but you responded with anger. They neglected you, but you responded with bitterness. They hurt you, but you responded with vengeance.

Our behavioral responses are built in through years of hurt and pain, years of frustration and disappointment, years of neglect and abandonment. And now we just can't take it any more.

We must Allow Agape Love to change our behavioral responses because God's love never changes.

Malachi 3: <sup>6</sup> For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Lamentations 3: <sup>22</sup> *It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.*

Psalms 23: <sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

### ***III. The Spirit of AGAPE Love (What Love Changes)***

1 John 4: <sup>13</sup> Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

Finally, we must allow Agape love to change our worship

The human spirit is what controls our soul; what we think, what we feel, and what we do.

Isaiah 64: <sup>6</sup> But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Our soul wants to worship the world!

1 John 2: <sup>16</sup> For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Luke 4: <sup>7</sup> If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. <sup>8</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto him, **Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.**

We must Allow Agape Love to change our Spirit so that we Worship God only!

John 4: <sup>23</sup> **But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.**

**Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: The Three Faces of Love, Part III (AGAPE: The Nature Of Love))**

**Lesson Text**

- 1 John 4:6–13

**Sermon Outline**

- I. *The Nature of AGAPE Love (What Love Is)***
- II. *The Sacrifice of AGAPE Love (What Love Does)***
- III. *The Spirit of AGAPE Love (What Love Changes)***

**Questions: (What was your main takeaway from this message?)**

**I. Getting to Know “Me”**

1. How would you define love in one sentence?
2. What is your favorite way to show someone you care?

**II. Into The Bible**

1. Read Peter’s growth from conditional *phileo* love in John 21:15-17, to a maturing understanding of God’s love revealed in Acts 10:34-35.
2. In the lesson text, 1 John 4:6-13, we see that love originates with God and is revealed through action, not just words. God loved first → sent His Son → and called believers to reflect that same love toward others. As Peter matures, his understanding begins to align with this truth... moving from personal affection to recognizing and participating in God’s love for all people.
  - a. From 1 John 4:7-11, how is God’s love described... and how is it demonstrated?
  - b. How do Acts 10:34-35 and 1 John 4:11-12 show that God’s love is meant to be extended to all people, not just those we *phileo*... naturally connect with?

**II. Life Application**

1. What is the difference between saying “God is loving” and “God is love?” Why is the second one more meaningful?
2. How does God’s love for us impact how we see other people?