

BIBLE LOVE

Int.

1. Aim: To give a description of Love as it is used in the Bible and explain how we are to practice it.
2. I Jn. 4:7-8 --- "**God is Love**" ASV
3. Word "love" is often misunderstood because we use it in so many ways
 - a. We love our wives, we love our children, we love our parents, we love our dogs or cats, we love our ball games, we love steak.
 - b. Ill. Love "I hate love"
 - c. The Greeks had several different words they used to express their feelings. It has often been said, "The Greeks had a word for it." In reference to "love" this is certainly true.
4. The Greeks had at least four different words that are translated by our English word "love".
 - a. Eros, Storge, Phileo, Agape
 - b. Only 3 are used in the NT - Eros is not found
 - c. Only 2 are used very often - Phileo, Agape
5. Plan of lesson
 - a. To look at the 4 words and their meaning
 - b. To show how they work

Discussion

I. WORDS FOR LOVE AS USED BY GREEKS

- A. EROS - A romantic or sexual love
 1. Noun = eros verb = erao
 2. Means love between a male and female
 - a. Sexual attraction
 - b. Passionate love which desires the other for itself
 - c. Heb. 13:4 - God made us for one another and this is one of the beauties of marriage.
 - d. Also in I Cor. 7:3,4 the Bible refers to the physical relation between husband and wife.

3. But this word eros does not occur in the N.T.
 - a. It had become so corrupted that the word had the idea of sexual immorality.
 - b. It was used in connection with fertility rites and Prostitution.
 - c. God through inspiration chose not to use such a word in the N.T.

4. Our English word "erotic" comes from this Greek word eros"
 - a. It has to do with anything that arouses sexual Desires - pornography
 - b. Many people in the world have this understanding of "love" in mind when they use the word ~ but that is only one word

B. STORGE - NATURAL OR FAMILY LOVE

1. This is a word used for family affection ~ blood bonds
 - a. Parents for children - Children for parents
 - b. Brothers and sisters for each other
 - c. Relatives love and feelings for each other
 - d. This is a natural feeling we ought to have for one another.
 - e. This kind of love is capable of loving the "unlovable" - Some have used the statement - that person has a face only a mother could love.
2. This is a blood bond that binds families together, and it is often strong.
3. A form of the word is used 3 times in the N.T.
 - a. Rm. 12:10 - "kindly affectioned" = the mutual love of parents and children; also of husbands and wives, loving affection, prone to love, loving tenderly; used chiefly of the reciprocal tenderness of parents and children. [Thayer p. 655]
 - b. II Tim. 3:2,3 and Rom. 1:31 "without natural affection" - This is the negative of the word

C. PHILEO = Friendship or emotional love

1. This is friendship usually between equals
2. It is basically an emotion that owes its existence to some worthy or admirable quality in the person who is loved.
3. Phileo can be translated by the word "cherish" or "delight". It means to look on someone with affectionate regard. It carries with it the idea of warmth or real affection.

4. This word or a form of it is used some 45 times in the N.T.
 - a. John 20:2 "...**the other disciple, whom Jesus loved,**"
 - b. Jn. 11:3 "...**Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.**" [Lazarus]
 - c. Jn. 11:36 "**Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!**"
 - d. Jas. 4:4 "**Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.**"
 - e. These uses of the word suggest the idea of affection or desire for someone or something.

D. AGAPE - DOING WHAT IS BEST

1. Meaning of the word
 - a. Agape has to do with the mind. This love is controlled by the will. It is not simply an emotion which rises in our hearts, it is a principle by which we deliberately live.
 - b. "The Love which springs from admiration and veneration, and which chooses its object with decision of will, and devotes a self-denying and compassionate devotion to it. Love in its fullest conceivable form." [Bullinger p. 469]
2. This word is used about 250 times in the N.T.
 - a. It was not used by the heathen writers. It occurs less than 20 times in the Septuagint and is found in no other writings prior to the N.T.
 - b. It was born in the bosom of revealed religion
 - c. It has more to do with the attitude of seeking after someone or something.
3. This word has two basic thrusts:
 - a. Seeking man's highest good
 - b. and Treating man as God would treat him.
4. Definition of Agape Love: "It is the willingness to seek another's pleasure or well-being at the sacrifice (if necessary) of one's own."
5. Jn. 3:16 God loved the world - God was willing to seek our well being at great sacrifice to himself. He gave his only begotten Son for our salvation. That is Agape Love.
6. I Cor. 13

7. Agape is the Divine Word for LOVE. Notice 4 characteristics:
- a. (1) Universal - obligation to all men on earth
 - b. (2) Not received from everyone - not necessary for love to be returned for it to be Agape love. God loved us while we were yet sinners.
 - c. (3) Does not depend upon the worth of each individual.
 - d. (4) Patterned for us after God's perfect love - I Jn. 4 I Cor. 13

II.

HOW LOVE WORKS

- A. These 4 words express the concept of love that is given in the Bible.
1. The first three: Eros, Storge, Phileo have these things in common:
 - a. They are subject to feelings
 - b. They are subject to emotions, whims
 - c. They are subject to external conditions.
 2. Agape is the bonding element of love that does the right thing
- B. Notice how Agape Love works with all these other words
1. Eros
 - a. If a marriage is based only on this type love then it will not last.
 - b. This type of love by itself is based only on physical attraction.
 - c. It lasts only until beauty fades, or someone more attractive comes along.
 - d. But if there is also the "Agape" love then the marriage will hold together when beauty has turned to wrinkles and passion has subsided.
 - e. Eph. 5:25 & 28
 2. Storge
 - a. If there is no "agape" love then the family will not stay together during the difficult times.
 - b. The natural affection for family will die if there is conflict and there is no stronger love than the blood bond.
 - c. Sometimes families become bitter enemies because the natural bond is not enough. Teens rebel, hatred results, mistreatment and murder.
 - d. Agape Love will hold a family together.
 - e. Rm. 1:31 & II Tim. 3:3 = we need natural affection

3. Phileo
 - a. Agape love holds a friendship intact
 - b. Emotions come and Go. Best friends today may be at odds tomorrow.
 - c. But agape love hangs in there and works to the best interest of all concerned.
 - d. Agape - the love that does the right thing !!

- C. Agape is the hub around which all other love relationships must be built if they are to endure the test of time.

- D. As a Christian this Agape love extends to:
 1. Our dearest person on earth - family
 2. Our brothers and sister in Christ
 3. Our neighbors
 4. Our enemy
 5. Even to all the world.

- E. Love in marriage: Involves all four words
 1. Eros - the physical attraction
 2. Storge - family affection for one another and for children
 3. Phileo - husband and wife ought to be best of friends - there ought to be this relation between all family members
 4. Agape love desires what is best for all in the family - seek the highest good for each other.

- F. We can "love" our enemy
 1. Jesus taught us to love our enemy - Mt. 5:43-44
 2. He is not commanding us to love our enemies in the same way that we love our family.
 3. The same word is used in English, but in Greek a different word is used which has a different meaning
 4. We express emotional love to each other by the word Phileo - this is love to family and other people that we like.
 5. The word used in Mt. 5:43-44 is Agape not Phileo. We can love our enemy with Agape love - that is a love that wills good to all men.

6. In this sense we can love the unlovable, we can love people whom we do not like.
7. Jesus never asked us to love our enemies in the sense of phileo love. He never loved his enemies in this way. But he did love them with Agape love.
8. Jn. 3:16 does not say that God loved the world with Phileo love - he hated sin and always will. But he did Have Agape love for the world.
9. We do not like and appreciate what our enemies are doing to us. We do not have phileo love for them. But we can certainly have Agape love for them in that:
 - a. We refuse to return evil for evil
 - b. We desire to see him turn from his evil to a better way of life.
 - c. We do all we can to bring about this change in him.

G. There are then Degrees of love

1. We are to love men in the world as our neighbors - Mt.22:39
2. We are to have a love for people in the church - brethren.
 - a. There is a special love which involves spiritual fellowship in Christ - A fellowship that we cannot extend to those outside of Christ
 - b. Jn. 13:34 **"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."**
 - c. Gal. 6:10 **"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."**
 - d. I Thes. 3:12 **"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:"**
3. We have a special love for family members

Conclusion

1. The Bible describes love with four words: eros, storge, phileo, Agape.
2. Bible love will be demonstrated
3. Love for God leads to obedience.
 - a. Jn. 14:15 **"If ye love me, keep my commandments"**
 - b. I Jn. 5:3 **"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."**
 - c. Only those who obey him love him
4. Love for our fellow man will be in deed - 1 John 3:18

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