



Love

Love is a strong feeling of personal affection and concern toward another. Love is the embodiment of soul function and concentration toward someone. Love is devotion after thought, esteem, and loyalty to the object of love. Attraction is merely a preliminary to love. Love excludes the object of that love from everyone else into a close intimate relationship.

Love can be a feeling of devotion or adoration toward God. Love can arise from kinship or close friendship. Love can be a feeling of warm personal attachment or deep affection, as for a parent, child, or friend. Love can be a profoundly tender, passionate affection for another person. Love can be a sexual attraction leading to intense desire and sexual passion.

Man is capable of love toward three objects: God, other people, and things. However, man's concepts and capacities for love are as variable as there are people on earth.

The believer's love is applied in three areas - toward God, toward the opposite sex, and toward others in friendship. The unbeliever can also love in all three areas. The source of the unbeliever's love is from the left lobe of the mentality of their soul and from their areas of strength in the old sin nature. There is nothing spiritual about the unbeliever's love. When the believer is not filled with the Holy Spirit, the love produced is human love. The believer imitates the unbeliever and human good is not acceptable to God. Rom. 8:8.

"and those who are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:8, NASB)

Thus, the love produced by the believer is a greater love because it is produced by the filling of the Holy Spirit and coupled with *epignosis* Bible doctrine in the believer's soul.

Greek Words for Love

Agape - Agapao

The Greek word ἀγάπη (agapē) is the noun form of the word, the verb form being *agapao*. *Agapao* love is produced by the filling of the Holy Spirit in the mentality of the soul only. When this love is produced, there is absence of mental attitude sins. It also respects the volition of individuals and also respects others' privacy and property.

Agapao love is unconditional and in accordance with the believer's own strength of character and is based on *epignosis* Bible doctrine resident in our souls. This type of unconditional mental attitude love is the basis of our peace, unity, acceptance, and forgiveness of fellow believers. *Agapao* love is commanded toward God and all believers. Gal. 5:22-23; Rom. 5:5; 1 John 4:7-10.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23, NASB)

"and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Romans 5:5, NASB)

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation



for our sins.” (1 John 4:7-10, NASB)

The first thing *agapao* love does through the filling of the Holy Spirit is to be directed back to God because the believer is the responder to God's *agapao* love. There it is given a stability and power. Then, when applied back to the human race, it has impact. The reason is this love is from God. You take the attitude of God toward the other believer. God loves all believers. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, thus producing *agapao* love, you have impact for Christ.

Agapao love is a deep and abiding respect for another based entirely in your own character and spiritual advance. *Agapao* love commands our intentions and directs our daily decisions. *Agapao* love is used to describe God's love for man in John 3:16 and Romans 5:8.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16, NASB)

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8, NASB)

Agapao love is used to describe man's love for God in Matthew 22:37 and 1 John 2:5.

“And He said to him, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.” (Matthew 22:37, NASB)

“but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:” (1 John 2:5, NASB)

Agapao love is used to describe man's love for his fellow man in Matthew 22:39 and Romans 13:10.

“The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’” (Matthew 22:39, NASB)

“Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” (Romans 13:10, NASB)

Agapao love is used to describe strong personal desires for some things and is used in a negative sense in John 3:19 and John 12:43.

“This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.” (John 3:19, NASB)

“for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.” (John 12:43, NASB)

Philos - Phileo

The Greek word φίλος (*philos*) is the noun form of the word, the verb form being φιλέω (*phileō*). *Phileo* love is intimate and personal affection and preference toward other people or things that we may have. *Phileo* love is produced by the believer who is filled of the Holy Spirit and is applying *epignosis* Bible doctrine from the right lobe of their soul. This is total soul love. The source of *phileo* love is the application of Bible doctrine to the believer's relationships with others.

There is a difference between *agapao* and *phileo*. *Agapao* is specialized, unconditional, and always mental and depends on the filling of the Holy Spirit. *Phileo* love is general, personal, and total soul love that comes through a knowledge of Bible doctrine to certain members of the human race and the Godhead. John 20:15-17.

“Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I



will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" (John 20:15-17, NASB)

Phileo love is used to describe man's love for others in Matthew 10:37 and Titus 3:15.

"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." (Matthew 10:37, NASB)

"All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all." (Titus 3:15, NASB)

Phileo love is used to describe God's love for God the Son in John 5:20.

"For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel." (John 5:20, NASB)

Phileo love is used to describe God the Father's love for our Lord's disciples in John 16:27.

"for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father." (John 16:27, NASB)

Phileo love is used to describe man's love in a negative sense for other things in Matthew 6:5 and Revelation 22:15.

"When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full." (Matthew 6:5, NASB)

"Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying." (Revelation 22:15, NASB)

Phileo love is also used as a compound word φιλαδελφία (philadelphia) composed of the "phileo" (love) and "adelphos" (brother). Hence it's meaning is "brotherly love" or love for other believers and is found in Romans 12:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:9, Hebrews 13:1, and 1 Peter 1:22.

"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;" (Romans 12:10, NASB)

"Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;" (1 Thessalonians 4:9, NASB)

"Let love of the brethren continue." (Hebrews 13:1, NASB)

"Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart," (1 Peter 1:22, NASB)

Eros

The noun form έρος (eros) is love is directed toward the opposite sex and refers to passionate, sexual type of love. This love exists between husband and wife in marriage.

Storgos

The noun form στόργος (storgos) is the relationship love that parents have for their children and their children toward their parents. Children are not capable of returning this love until their teens. *Storgos* is



used in a negative sense in Romans 1:31 and 2 Timothy 3:3.

“without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;” (Romans 1:31, NASB)

“unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,” (2 Timothy 3:3, NASB)

God’s Love for Mankind

God is perfect. God’s love is perfect and absolute. Therefore, His divine love is perfect. His love is unconditional. In John 3:16, “loved the world” when used for believers, refers to all believers whether mature, immature, spiritual, or carnal.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16, NASB)

God can love every believer with maximum love regardless of spiritual status because of positional truth, propitiation, and God’s perfect attribute of love. Grace depends upon the character of the one initiating the love. God’s love is maximum after the point of propitiation to every believer. The believer is in union with Jesus Christ. Therefore, because of propitiation, God can love the believer with maximum divine love. Eph. 1:6; 1 John 3:2. See category on [God’s Love](#).

“to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.” (Ephesians 1:6, NASB)

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.” (1 John 3:2, NASB)

The Believer’s Love for God

No member of the human race can love God until they come to the Cross. The unbeliever does not have the equipment to love God. He must have the Holy Spirit and a human spirit to be able to love God.

Mankind’s pre-salvation love for God is an attraction love with a response of positive volition to the Gospel. The positive unbeliever is attracted to the Savior. John 3:16.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16, NASB)

At the point of salvation, man’s love for God is a positional love. When you make a one-time decision to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, it is a mental attitude *agapao* love. This is a mental attitude love with no Bible doctrine yet in the right lobe of the soul. Rom. 8:28.

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28, NASB)

The believer’s post-salvation love for God when they are filled with the Holy Spirit is *agapao* love and is a knowing mental attitude love. It comes from the filling of the Holy Spirit and produces the fruit of the Holy Spirit. As the believer grows spiritually, soul love or rapport love for God grows which is *phileo* love. 1 John 4:19

“We love, because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19, NASB)

There are two issues in loving God in the Christian walk. You must ask yourself whether you are filled with the Holy Spirit (in fellowship) and whether you consistently learning Bible doctrine through the grace apparatus for perception and therefore growing spiritually. God is the initiator. The believer is the



responder. Consequently, the believer filled with the Holy Spirit and growing spiritually begins to reflect the love of the Father.

If your spiritual life is functioning, you will be relaxed when thinking about God, being around your spouse, and being around people in general. The great enemy to proper love response to God is false doctrine, emotionalism, legalism, and religion. Both legalism and emotionalism disorient the believer to the grace of God and distort their love toward God.

The great hindrance to a personal *phileo* love relationship with God, resulting in unconditional *agapao* love toward others, is the existence of false doctrine and ignorance of God's Truth. This ignorance of Bible doctrine is the reason why so many Christians today are involved in systems of false spirituality such as legalism and emotionalism.

The believer's love for God is based spiritual growth. Therefore, knowledge of Bible doctrine keeps down scar tissue formation on the soul and erects the edification complex inside the soul composed of *epignosis* Bible doctrine or full knowledge. However, when the believer is negative to doctrine, they have no capacity to love. Persistent negative volition to doctrine results in scar tissue buildup. 2 Tim. 3:2-4.

"For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God," (2 Timothy 3:2-4, NASB)

The believer negative to Bible doctrine has a frantic search for happiness. In pursuit of happiness, more scar tissue is produced, more frustration, and more unhappiness. Therefore, the believer becomes a slave to the details of life and is a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God.

The Believer's Unconditional Love for Others

The believer's right relationship with others is based on first having a right love relationship with God that will serve as the motivation for love relationships with people.

God's unconditional love for the new believer is developed in the maturing believer from intake and application of the Word of God. The believer's love for other people when filled with the Holy Spirit is *agapao* love and is a mental attitude love. As the believer grows spiritually, this *agapao* love matures and is based on the Bible doctrine in their soul. Only then are they able to have an unconditional *agapao* love for people that are obnoxious and even enemies of the believer. This love is commanded of the believer. John 3:16; James 2:8

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16, NASB)

"If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,' you are doing well." (James 2:8, NASB)

The believer under the control of the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit or divine good. The filling of the Holy Spirit can never be earned or deserved. It is always received following salvation on the grace basis of confession of known sins to God the Father with resultant filling of the Holy Spirit. Unconditional *agapao* love is produced by the filling of the Spirit. This unconditional *agape* love is the greatest and the most important of the fruit of the Spirit! Gal. 5:22-23; 1 John 1:9.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-



control; against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23, NASB)

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9, NASB)

Agapao love or unconditional love from the filling of the Spirit is a mental attitude love that is free from arrogance, jealousy, hatred, envy, bitterness, self-pity, and all the other mental attitude sins. It is God's will for believers to remain filled with the Holy Spirit. Eph. 5:18; Rom. 5:5.

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,” (Ephesians 5:18, NASB)

“and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” (Romans 5:5, NASB)

It is God's will for believers to love one another with unconditional *agapao* love. This mental attitude love depends upon the strength of character of the subject and not the attractiveness of the object. This *agapao* love is from the source of God and is the basis for human unconditional love. 1 John 4:10-11.

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (1 John 4:10-11, NASB)

Unconditional *agapao* love cannot be produced by the unbeliever or the believer out of fellowship. As believers in Jesus Christ, we are commanded in the Word of God to love one another with unconditional love. Nowhere in the Bible does it state that we must form and maintain personal love relationships with all other Christians. Nowhere in the Bible does it state that we must understand them, approve of the way they look or dress, or what they think, or where they go, or what they say. That is their business.

Unconditional love from the filling of the Holy Spirit results in a relaxed mental attitude toward everyone in our periphery. There may be compatibility and rapport in the soul as far as friendship love or romantic love is concerned, but this is not necessarily unconditional *agapao* love. For friendship and romance to be strong and lasting, they must be based on the virtue of unconditional *agapao* love.

The dynamics of love is evident in the love of one believer for another which glorifies God, not man, because this love is made perfect through the filling of the Holy Spirit. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit and have mental attitude *agapao* love, your impact for Christ changes, but not necessarily your personality. 1 John 4:17.

“By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.” (1 John 4:17, NASB)

The Believer's Love for Close Friends

Phileo love is a more mature and stronger love than *agapao* love. It is a soul love or rapport love. *Phileo* love is a personal love, therefore, *phileo* love depends on the mature function of *agapao* love for stability.

Remember that for both *agapao* love and *phileo* love, the level of their love for others is determined by their own spiritual growth and can only function when filled with the Holy Spirit. Love in friendship, whether *agapao* or *phileo*, is based on your own level of spiritual maturity.

Phileo love characteristics include; affections of grace compassion, gracious disposition leading to generosity, kindness, gracious mental attitude, no vain illusions concerning self, meekness, humility, courtesy, gentleness, being considerate, relaxed mental attitude, patience under pressure, endurance, and



mastery of the details of life. Col. 3:12-13.

“So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.” (Colossians 3:12-13, NASB)

Phileo love is a personal love and is therefore a love one has for another because of their characteristics and attractiveness to you. You love God with a personal *phileo* love because He is perfect in all of His attributes, because He sent His Son to take on the form of man and go to the Cross to be your substitute and be judged for your sins, because of His grace provision to live the spiritual life, because you now have an eternal future with Him forever, and because of the unmerited grace blessings He has bestowed on you. John 16:27.

“for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father.” (John 16:27, NASB)

You love close friends with a personal *phileo* love because of what they are, how they think, and the Bible doctrine evident in their soul. Husbands and wives love their spouse with a personal *phileo* love because of the soul chemistry between them. You love other believers with a personal *phileo* love because of their strength of character and the spiritual maturity you find in them.

In Hebrews 13:1-2, “Let love of the brethren continue” is the present active imperative of φιλαδελφία (philadelphia) and means fraternal love, brotherly love. Keep on learning Bible doctrine daily, for this is your capacity for love. So to fulfill this verse, we need a maximum knowledge of Bible doctrine and freedom from scar tissue of the soul.

“Let love of the brethren continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.” (Hebrews 13:1-2, NASB)

Having love for people that you have close relationships with is *phileo* love or rapport love. This comes through a maximum knowledge of Bible doctrine and while filled with the Holy Spirit. Confessing sin biblically puts you into fellowship. The filling of the Holy Spirit and learning Bible doctrine produces *agape* love. But spiritual maturity with maximum Bible doctrine in the soul also produces rapport or *phileo* love. *Agapao* love in the believer must precede *phileo* or rapport love. Why? Because *phileo* or rapport love is based on unconditional *agapao* love. Rapport love or *phileo* love is a personal love and cannot exist when there are mental attitude sins. It also depend on the unconditional *agapao* love for stability.

Bible doctrine is the Word of God, the voice of the Holy Spirit, and the mind of Christ. The intake and application of Bible doctrine is the basis of development of personal *phileo* love for God. This personal love is your motivation for everything in the spiritual life. Heb. 4:12; Heb. 3:7; 1 Cor. 2:16.

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12, NASB)

“Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,” (Hebrews 3:7, NASB)

“For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 2:16, NASB)

For *phileo* love between believers, this is two people thinking doctrine. You build your life around



doctrine. You both love doctrine. You talk about doctrine. You even do your kidding around doctrine. Doctrine is your life. This rapport is built around Bible doctrine rather than compatibility of old sin natures. Behind this personal rapport love is thinking. You still have a relaxed mental attitude. As one grows spiritually, their capacity grows toward God, family, and friends. See category on [Friendship Love \(Rapport Love\)](#).

The Need For Both Agapao Love and Phileo Love

During our Lord's third post-resurrection appearance to His disciplines on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, He posed three questions to Peter to demonstrate the importance of the proper love as the motivation for the teaching ministry ahead of them. Peter needed to understand the place of divine enablement in the sense of spiritual gifts. He also needed a strong personal love for Jesus Christ as his motivation.

The First Dialogue

In John 21:15, our Lord asks Simon Peter whether he has a mental attitude love ἀγαπάω (agapaō) toward Him. "Do you love Me" is the present active indicative of ἀγαπάω (agapaō) and refers to mental attitude love. This is a very broad term indicating an absence of mental attitude sins. Unbelievers can have this love at times. This is the same love that God has for unbelievers in John 3:16. God never has *phileō* or rapport love for the world of unbelief. John 3:19.

"So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs."'" (John 21:15, NASB)

"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil." (John 3:19, NASB)

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16, NASB)

In John 21:15, "more than these" refers directly to the other disciples and indirectly to the details of life of money, success, pleasure, social life, friends, loved ones, health, status symbols, sex, and material things. Peter didn't appreciate this comparison. He needed more than *agapao* love to put the Lord first. *Phileo* love is a total soul love. Peter and the other disciples present were being taught a lesson about the importance of *agapao* love!

Peter answered, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love φιλέω (*phileō*) You." Peter was hurt because the Lord didn't use the word *phileō* or rapport love with him. Our Lord's command to "Tend My lambs" is the present active imperative of βόσκω (*boskō*) plus ἀρνίον (*arnion*) and refers to teaching the little lambs or new immature (babe) believers in basic Bible doctrine. Peter is commanded to teach according to the Hermeneutical principles of Isagogics, Categories and Exegesis (ICE). See category on [Hermeneutics](#).

Like the wife who asks her husband, "Do you love me?" And he says, "Yes, I love you (mental attitude love)." But she wants rapport love or soul love, demonstrative love, affectionate love, intimate love, exclusive love! She wants to hear of his *phileō* love for her!

Agapao love or mental attitude love is acquired on a temporary basis through the filling of the Holy Spirit and on a more permanent basis with the building of the edification complex of the soul. Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22; 1 John 2:5.

"and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through



the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” (Romans 5:5, NASB)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,” (Galatians 5:22, NASB)

“but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:” (1 John 2:5, NASB)

At salvation, the believer passes the point of propitiation and thus comes under maximum divine *agapao* love. Positional truth guarantees that God will have *agapao* love for every believer with the same amount of love that He has for His Son, Jesus Christ. 1 John 3:2; Eph. 1:6.

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.” (1 John 3:2, NASB)

“to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.” (Ephesians 1:6, NASB)

Therefore, God can love every believer with a maximum love regardless of whether the believer is in a state of spirituality (filled with the Holy Spirit) or carnal (soul controlled by the old sin nature).

The Second Dialogue

In John 21:16, our Lord asks Simon Peter a second time “do you love Me?” and is the present active indicative of ἀγαπάω (*agapaō*) and refers to a mental attitude love toward Him. He answered, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love φιλέω (*phileō*) You.” “You know” is οἶδα (*oida*) and is a perfect used as a present and means Peter loved our Lord in the past and continues to love Him.

“He said to him again a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Shepherd My sheep.”” (John 21:16, NASB)

Instead of βόσκω (*boskō*) plus ἀρνίον (*arnion*), He uses ποιμαίνω (*poimainō*) plus προβάτιον (*probation*). “Shepherd My sheep” is a pastor-shepherd communicating doctrine to hard-headed sheep. This refers to feeding the growing, yet somewhat immature (adolescent) believers in basic and some advanced Bible doctrine.

Some sheep are led easily. The shepherd doesn’t need the staff to clobber them to keep them in line. Others are hard-headed and need to be wacked on the behind in exhortation from the teaching of the Word of God.

Peter’s earlier three denials during our Lord’s trials indicated he did not have a relaxed mental attitude and had no functioning *agapao* love. Peter was in carnality and filled with fear. Matt. 26:69-75.

“Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him and said, “You too were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.”” (Matthew 26:69-70, NASB)

“And again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man.”” (Matthew 26:72, NASB)

“Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know the man!” And immediately a rooster crowed.” (Matthew 26:74, NASB)

Jesus implied that Peter’s *agapao* love was not sufficiently developed in his soul. He needed more Bible doctrine. By repeating the question to Peter, our Lord is warning us that the words “I love you” formed in the mind are not sufficient. To say “I love you” and not mean it is love without essence and just words



without meaning. Peter had previously declared his love in words, but words are no stronger than the spiritual character of the person who utters them.

Third Dialogue

In John 21:17, our Lord asks Simon Peter a third time whether he has a personal φιλέω (phileō) love toward Him. Peter was grieved. “Grieved” is the aorist passive indicative of λυπέω (lupeō) and means to be upset, to be distressed, mental anguish. Peter had already said twice that he had phileo love for our Lord. Our Lord then turns around and says, do you really? Peter answered, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love φιλέω (phileō) You.”

“He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Tend My sheep.” (John 21:17, NASB)

Peter had been asked three questions by our Lord. His failure in the three denials earlier had not changed his mental attitude. He has confessed his sins to God the Father and had moved on in his spiritual life. He has seen the resurrected Christ.

For the third dialogue, our Lord’s command was to “Tend My sheep” and is the present active imperative of βόσκω (boskō) plus ποβάτιον (probation) and means to promote by teaching in every way the spiritual welfare of the more mature (adult) believers in advanced Bible doctrine. Such mature believers are a pleasure to teach. 1 Peter 5:2

“shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;” (1 Peter 5:2, NASB)

By application, in marriage, how can a husband know he is really loved by his wife when she really gets upset with him? Conversely, how can a wife know she is really loved by her husband when he really gets upset with her?

Merely the absence of mental attitude sins toward your husband, wife, or children is not enough. There must be a capacity to love, a capacity to express your love in words, a capacity to express your love by your actions, your passion for your spouse, your rapport of consideration, your physical love. In a marriage between two mature believers means they both have a capacity to express their love without being asked, based on the soul love the *phileo* love in their soul. This is the highest form of relationship that two believers can have in life.

The capacity to love is based on *epignosis* Bible doctrine in the soul. You get the teaching of Bible doctrine through the power of the filling of the Holy Spirit and the grace apparatus for perception. The conclusion is that the most valuable time you spend each day is when you are being fed spiritually.

Tend my lambs - the new believer. Shepherd my sheep - the growing or adolescent believer. Tend my sheep - mature believers. Thus, our capacity to love grows, pastor to congregation and congregation to pastor. Consequently, the pastor-teacher wishes to protect his sheep from legalism and false doctrine.