

# Nine Connections Between God's Love, and Ours

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Today we are going to talk about God's love, and how it affects us as believers.

The most important thing here to understand is the heart of God. Though God is both a loving God and a just God, his first instinct is to lean heavily on love.

Let's state it simply...

For God so loved the Word that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believes in him might not perish but everlasting life. John 3:16

Jesus, though being in very nature God, did not come the first time to earth as a judge of sinners, when he could have, he came as a sacrifice to rescue people who were broken, to restore lowly sinners to himself.

God loves us.

Jesus, being one of the Godhead himself, sacrificed himself freely for the benefit of any who would believe.

- This God is the one who listened to the pleas of Hagar in the desert and heard her and showed compassion.
- This God is the one who provided a sacrifice so Abraham did not have to sacrifice his only son.
- This God is the one who heard the cries of the Hebrews in Egypt and sent a redeemer.
- This God is the one who listened to the prayers and songs of David.
- This God is the one who throughout those long years promised a Messiah, a savior.
- This God is the one who sent his Son to be that savior.
- God is love.

To be clear, God's heart for each and every person today is to shower you with his love. To provide you with an excellent inheritance that will have ramifications for your whole life. He is open and wide to beginning a relationship with us that is primarily a relationship of love.

- God is the loving Father who runs after and finds the wayward son, or sheep.
- Jesus is like the bridegroom coming to wed his people, who are like a bride.

God is love.

The heart of our discussion today is what are the ramifications of that love on those who believe. If you are a believer God desires you to treat your brothers and sisters in Christ, other people, with love. Not with just any kind of love, but the same kind of love with which God loved us.

In the New Testament, the overwhelming majority of instances of the word "love" is the Greek word *agapē* (247 times of the 286 instances). This is the word we are going to talk about and distinguish from the other Greek words for love. Once this is complete, we will look to 1 John to help us understand what that *agapē* love means through the usages therein.

## What is Love?

Human Love / There are three words in the Greek language for "love" in the Bible.

Word 1 / **Storgē Love** / Affection love / I love pizza, I love grandpa's silly hat, I love comic books. Every human in the world demonstrates this kind of love, even those who are full on carnal in their behavior, living in the flesh. There's nothing wrong with it.

Example: Love one another with brotherly affection. Romans 12:10

The second word for love in this sentence is a combination of *storgē* and *phileō*, which makes it "brotherly affection."

Word 2 / **phileō love** / Familial love, brotherly love / I love my family, I love my friends. Every human in the world demonstrates this kind of love as well; it is a bit harder than *storgē* to live out but very do-able. It is what John MacArthur calls "the love of give and take." (MacArthur, *Saved Without a Doubt*)

Example: Love one another with brotherly affection. Romans 12:10

The first word for love in this sentence is at its root *phileō*, to love one another in a familial or brotherly way.

Word 3 / **Eros love** / Romantic love, erotic love / this kind of love is practiced by most human beings who have ever lived. This word is not used in the Greek New Testament, but is used in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. It is the romantic love, a love God invented, but is often twisted by man and represents also the selfish side of love, or lust. MacArthur calls this "the love of take."

These are the images that are brought to mind when we use the English word LOVE; this is not what God is talking about when he tells us to love one another — elements of these things, sure — but something else entirely.

## Agapē, Supernatural Love...

Then there is agape love, the most prominent word for love in the New Testament. Here is an example from the Gospel of John.

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13

While there are similarities to these other words for love with this agapē love, there are certain differences.

We know that it is different, for while "affection" and "brotherly love" are common among men, agape love is not a fruit of the flesh but a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The works of the flesh (Gal 5:19-21) mirror the Eros side -- what can I get -- which is the polar opposite from the agape love, a love that only gives and gives and gives.

So agape love is unique to the other loves; and while the other loves have divine origins, agape love is like unto the very heart of God. It is supernatural.

Since the love that we are talking about is a product of the Holy Spirit's indwelling, it is truly spiritual. It is what being spiritual looks like. Agapē love is the care for others innate in the Father, in the Son and in the Spirit. It is not innate in the human heart. To quote a friend of mine (Mr. Dunn, not the poet), human love is "God's love reflected in a dirty pool."

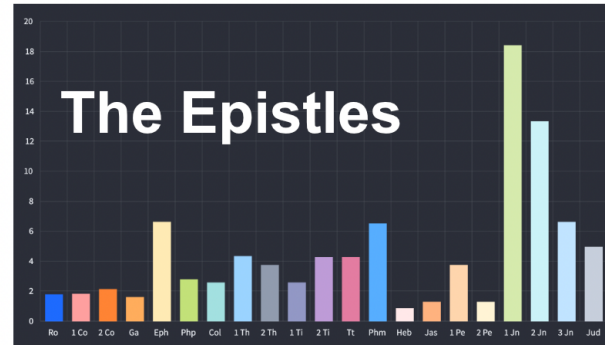
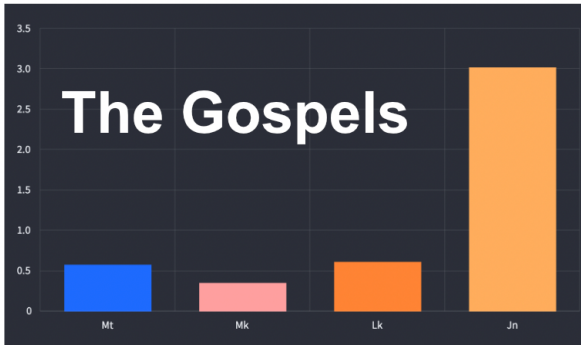
Without the surrender of our hearts to the Lord in salvation and without our submission to the Holy Spirit (and the putting off of the old self), this divine love doesn't shine through.

The human loves are human. Divine love is divine.

I mentioned this before, but we are to love our brothers with the same kind of love with which God loved us; while it does have aspects of affection and familial love, it is primarily an agapē love that is commanded.

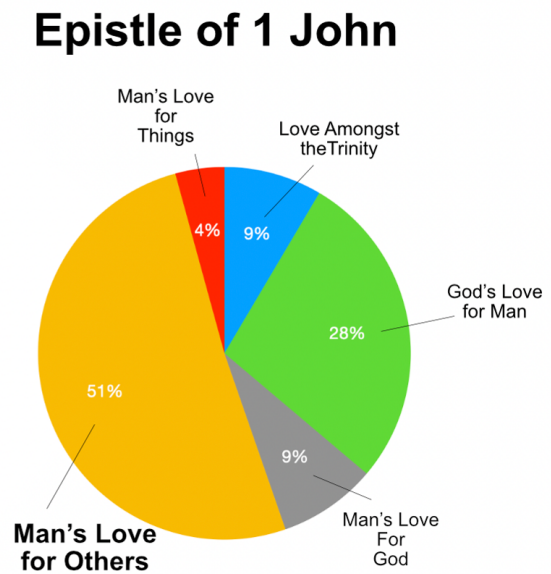
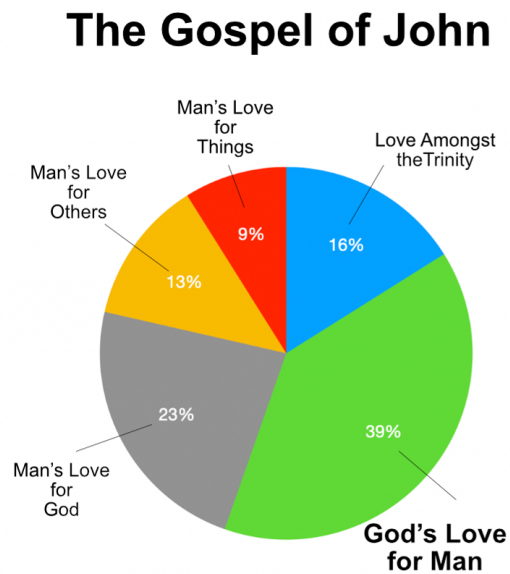
We are expected to love each other in the Body of Christ with this supernatural agape love. We cannot perfectly do this. We will sin (make mistakes), and it is crucial for our walk with Christ and our spiritual growth that we confess that sin to each other. Ah, but I'm ahead of myself.

When we examine this agape love it is important to examine the scriptures. The author that talks most about this kind of love is by far the Apostle John. It was a main theme of both his Gospel (with almost as many mentions of love in that one gospel as the other three gospels combined) and his Epistles (the same comparison is almost apropos).



Love in all forms, shown not by instances, but rather by density per 1000 words.

In the Gospel of John, the focus is placed on God's love for mankind, while in 1 John, that focus is directed in man's response to that love of God, focusing on the responsibility of us to love one another as believers. This focus represents over half of the discussions of love in the book (see below).



Percentage of Times "Love" in Book Refers to Different Categories

For our purposes, I would like to focus on the First Epistle of John and examine God's agape love for man and John's frank (and even chilling) comparisons with commands for believers to love one another in the same manner that God loved us. By the end of this article we will try to define agape love by what we learn.

## The Linkage of God's Love and the Love We Ought Have for Each Other

In the book of 1 John we will notice at least nine direct linkages between God's love and the expected love we should have for others. Here is that list of all nine connections.

- **\*God is Light** / "abiding in Light" means loving each other.
- **God is Lord** / obeying his word is love, not parts of his word, but the whole of it.
- **God is Father** / If we believe in him we are his children, act like it.
- **\*God is Sacrificial One** / Because Jesus laid down his life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for each other.
- **\*God is Manifestation of Love** / God shows his life through Jesus and his sacrifice, when we show God's love for each other we show what God is like.
- **God is our Model** / We should do what God does; we should act like God does.
- **\*God's Very Nature is Love** / If we know God, if God is in us, we will be lovers of each other.
- **God is Prime Lover** / We can only love him or each other if we abide in his life. He is the initiator, instigator and author of love. We are recipients.
- **If God is Our Father, then other believers are truly Brothers and Sisters** / Do we treat each other like true family or acquaintances?

For our purposes, we will examine four of them in more detail; those four are starred above, and shared below

## 1. God is Light / Walk in the Light

God walks in the Light (truth); he gave that truth to us through his Word. Therefore we "perfect" or complete the Love of God through keeping his Word. Not portions, not our choices of the word, but his Words.

This is the bright edge of love, the hard line of love, the blinding, holy, penetrating side of God's love. It floods our being and leaves us naked -- but God is a person who knows us already, so that is a good place to be.

Love = Keeping God's Commandments. The commandments in particular here are the ideas of loving the Lord our God with all our heart and loving our neighbor as ourselves. Honestly, these are two things none of us has ever accomplished for even one day.

Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. 1 John 2:4-6

This passage follows on the heels of 1 John 1:5-2:6. The points that are being made are as follows.

- God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. 1 John 1:5
- If we say we have fellowship (friendship) with him and walk (continuously) in darkness, we lie. 1 John 1:6
- If we walk (habitually) in the light, as he is in the light we have fellowship with God and fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:7
- If we say (habitually, tell others, speak out) we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth (light) is not in us. 1 John 1:8
- If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9
- If we say we have not sinned (perfect tense, this tense indicates a completed action that has ongoing results that are dangerous), we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. 1 John 1:10
- We shouldn't sin, but when we do we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ. 1 John 2:1
- We should have no fear in the sins done that are confessed, because Jesus is the propitiation (covering) for our sins, and the sins of the world. 1 John 2:2
- By keeping his commandments (personal effort to not sin, confession when we do) we know that we have come to know him. 1 John 2:3

- If we say "I know him" but do not keep his commandments, we are lying. 1 John 2:4
- But whoever keeps his commands, in him the love of God is perfected. 1 John 2:5
- A Brief Summary Statement; whoever says he abides in him (the Light) ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. 1 John 2:6

How do we walk in the Light? Let's boil the points above to a manageable size.

- We as believers attempt to walk a life without sin, to walk in him and through him. To live in his Spirit. We don't habitually, continuously sin.
- We as believers know theology and know "all have sinned" and we understand that we will sin and continue to periodically sin; we will sin and do sin; we hurt each other with our sin.
- We believers need to "walk in light" by admitting and confessing our sins to God and others who have been hurt by our sins, so as to restore fellowship.
- We know that when we do this Jesus himself is the propitiation or the means of our forgiveness.

This is walking in the Light of God. Walking honest with each other in the knowledge of our sin, not desiring it to be a part of our life, honest enough to admit it, kind enough to forgive it. If we bypass the acknowledgement of our sin, either in our very nature or in the acts of sin we inflict upon each other, we are not walking in the Light. We are denying the light.

## Confession

While the idea of "confessing" is uncomfortable for some of us, it is biblical. I have heard people say the idea of confessing is only "agreeing with God;" more internal and not a verbal "confession" as we might think (perhaps due to the English word "to confess"). But there are two main word groupings for "confess" in the Greek, and one is very verbal and vocal.

The first word for confess is the most common word, homolegeō. This word (and its noun counterpart) make up 21 of the 27 usages of "confess" in the ESV New Testament. It means "to be of one mind, to be of one-word, to agree with). To state that something is true. This is an "agreement" of sorts with doctrine and can be internal or external depending on the context.

But, the second word for confess in the NT is the word exomologeō. This word is responsible for the remaining six of those 27 usages of the word. It's meaning is obvious if you know a bit of Greek. An "exo" skeleton is an skeleton on the outside of something else. This confession, by the definition of the word is to "agree aloud", "to use your voice to confess."

Its usages can be broken into a group of two and then into a separate group of four.

Two of these usages picture all of creation one day "confessing" that Jesus is Lord (Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:11). These are scary but wonderful in that they recognize that one day Jesus being Lord will be obvious to all people.

The other four deal with people "outwardly proclaiming" their sin to others. Two of these occur in the gospels and two during what we might think of as the church age.

In the gospels,

- Matthew 3:6 and Mark 1:5 describe people who were going to John the Baptist by the Jordan river, "confessing their sins." This was the beginning of a revival of sorts and prepared the way for Jesus' ministry. This was an outward proclamation of their sins.

In the church,

- In Acts 19:18 we see in the wake of Paul's ministry that some Jewish non-believers attempted to cast out demons and were overpowered because these demons didn't recognize them (but knew Jesus and Paul). Fear spread through the town and people who were practicing "magical arts" repented and believed, and "confessed" and "divulged" their practices. They announced them out loud and repented.
- And finally, in James 5:16 we see James encouraging those who are "sick" to call for the elders of the church for prayer. This is likely not just physical ailment but spiritual also. James' cure for such was that believers "confess" their sins to one another and pray for one another. This is the *exo-mologeō*, an outward proclamation. This is not just the sick proclaiming their sins, this is a command for believers to be about the regular (present tense verb used here) practice of telling each other that they have sinned against each other. This is then accompanied by the idea of prayer. Pray for each other.

While we have these four passages that show people confessing their sins, and while one of them is a strong command, there are not vast groupings of passages on this external confession. Confession was a practice in Moses' law. David confessed his sins to the nation (Psalm 51). Daniel, one of the godliest men around, included confession in his prayers (Daniel 9:4-14). It is regularly encouraged and practiced in the Prophets. When we fail ourselves. In the New Testament, the new convert Zacchaeus spoke his sins aloud and vowed restitution (Luke 19:8).

Confession is not a negative thing, it is a very positive thing. No other thing, no other practice, brings such healing between God and man, and whether we like it or not, between brother and brother.

Our confession highlights the wonder of the goodness and mercy of God. When we come to confession, we meet not our Judge, but our Healer. In faith we turn from self-absorption, self-



preoccupation, pride, and self-reliance. We joyfully receive the forgiveness of God, by which the Spirit empowers us to turn from sin and to live in the light.

In confession we bring integrity and consistency into our lives. Through the witness of the Spirit, we recognize that our behavior is not congruent with what we believe and know to be true. And through confession, in thought, word, and deed, we are realigned in our walk with God.<sup>1</sup>

Here is the principle that we should live by. **Confess your own sins and let others know about them and ask for forgiveness; cover the sins of others by not talking about them or outing them.** Confession is for you and for others; it is selfless because it is painful to the self but it is healing to those around you like nothing else can be. If we enjoy outing the sins of others and repressing our own sins we are dastardly. We do not live in the light.

So to live in the Light is to admit the truths that are evident to all, to love others as God loves us and to recognize and forgive the sins that are confessed.

It's harder to forgive someone who doesn't admit their sins; God himself waits for you to confess your sins then brings forgiveness.

This is walking in the light. If we are not willing to do this, we are not walking in the light.

This is against our culture, I know. This is not my idea. It is scriptural.

But not only must there be that conviction of sin; there must be that confession of sin. “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13) You must be willing outwardly and openly to confess that sin and to lay that rotten pride in the dust and say, “It’s me, it’s me, it’s me, O God, standing in the need of prayer.” So many of us want to be peacocks strutting into heaven. There must be a confession of sin. You will never be saved unless you are willing to admit not only His Saviorhood, but also your sinnership.<sup>2</sup>

This is good not only for initial salvation, but the continuance of relationships or fellowship, between God and man and between brothers.

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon T. Smith, “Penitence,” in Dictionary of Christian Spirituality, ed. Glen G. Scorgie (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 662–663.

<sup>2</sup> Adrian Rogers, “What about Baptism?,” in Adrian Rogers Sermon Archive (Signal Hill, CA: Rogers Family Trust, 2017), Mk 1:1–11.

## 2. God as Sacrifice / Laying Down Our Life for Our Brothers

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 1 John 3:16

To understand love we look to God and model his attitudes and behavior. Here is a simple verse that is very difficult to live out. This is so much more than affection. This is so much more than familial love; this is the sacrifice of all we are for others, some of whom may not even deserve it.

This is otherworldly love. This is agape love.

What is the attitude of Jesus? Why was he willing to lay down his life for us?

Jesus didn't "act" humble, he was humble. He considered others greater than himself.

Consider Philippians 2:5-8;

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Notice Jesus' heart;

"emptying himself," "taking the form of a servant," and "humbled himself to the point of death." Philippians 2

Recognize Jesus' heart;

"For while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son..."  
Romans 5:10

See Jesus' heart; Jesus reveals not only his heart, but the Fathers;

All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."  
Matthew 11:27-30

Although Jesus was given all things, Jesus provides help for people because he is "gentle" and "lowly in heart."

I find very few people in leadership positions, even in small positions, that are uniquely "humble", considerate of others needs and wants above their own, "gentle and lowly in heart." These characteristics are anathema to some, if not in what they proclaim but in their actions and lifestyle.

A person with this kind of disposition toward others would be willing to "lay down their lives" for others.

Jesus did; we should. This is agape love.

There is another aspect here as well. The immediate context of 1 John 3:16 is followed by this;

But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. 1 John 3:17-18

Sacrificing our life means more than sacrificing parts of our earthly possessions for our fellow believers who have less of the "world's goods." While being in no means rich in this world's eyes I know that my family has been blessed by God. If we were to compare our wealth with all the believers who have ever lived throughout the earth and throughout history we are surely in the top 5% in means and goods. Are we not willing to provide for our brothers who have less?

I have been personally convicted about this and will try to find ways to make sure I am obeying the Lord in this. This is serious.

### 3. God as the Manifestation of Love / We Show God's Love When We Love Others

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have 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. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. 1 John 4:7-12

Key to understanding this passage is the idea of a manifestation. The Greek word for manifest above has the idea of "make known, reveal, show, make evident." The significance of this passage can be expressed in two statements (1) God made his love KNOWN to us by sending Jesus to the world to give his life for ours and (2) when we love each other like God loved us God abides in us and we make Him KNOWN to those around us.

We are pictures; we are the message God intends to send to people when we love each other aright. This is a profound responsibility.

The opposite then is true. When we don't love as we ought and we claim Christ, we are telling people that God would do the same. This is why repentance is so critical. We say to each other when we confess our sin "God is not like this and I should not be as well." When we deny our sin before others we deny the goodness of God.

J. Vernon McGee writes;

The point that John is making here is that no man has seen God at any time, but God today can manifest Himself through believers loving each other. Since the world in general is not seeing Jesus as He is presented in the Word of God, the only way it will know of God's love is through the lives of believers who represent Him. <sup>3</sup>

Remember the command part, "If God so loved us, we also ought love one another." Of significance is the "if"; signifying that we as believers don't automatically do this thing without effort and will, and "so" signifying to us the SAMENESS of type the love is; in the same manner.

God sacrifices himself for us / We ought to sacrifice ourselves for others.

Also in this passage is the idea of propitiation. To be a propitiation means that Jesus was the "appeasement" that God needed to forgive us. He was the necessary sacrifice for us.

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<sup>3</sup> J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Commentary, electronic ed., vol. 5 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 808.

Can we not act as sacrifices for others? Must we serve ourselves? Must we disrespect others in our selfishness or in our pride?

Both of those things, selfishness and pride, are of the flesh. They are of the devil. Yet we tend to allow them in our churches and consider them almost a positive factor.

We will not sacrifice ourselves for others if (1) we think too little of others or (2) think too much of ourselves.

God manifested means humility and lowliness manifested.

A lowly one will give his life gladly for anyone. And Jesus did.

## 4. God is Love / We are God's if We Abide in Love

So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. 1 John 4:16

The final connection between God's love and the love he intends for us to share is found here. Yes, please remember, we are only going to look at four of the nine direct connections of God's love and ours in the book of 1 John, but these four are good representatives of the rest. I will try to make a companion article regarding the other five, for they are also critical to understand the love God intends for us to have for others.

The context of this passage highlights the presence of the Spirit of God in the lives of believers (1 John 4:13). It also highlights the profession and confession of Jesus as Lord, agreeing with God's assessment that he was "sent by the Father," "His Son," and "Savior of the world." The belief in these aspects brings salvation, which brings the Spirit, which makes love possible.

We who believe in Jesus "have come to know" and "to believe" that Jesus was God's expression of love for us. Because of this fact we now better know God himself.

John's conclusion, as to what God is like, is "Love." His very nature is that of caring and sacrificing others at the expense of his own self. He's not looking to "get" anything from us, but he is looking "to give and give and give." This is agape love. This is his very nature.

God's very nature is love, love is defined by God. This is agape love.

God is love. And all He has done for us in His Son, as revealed in this Epistle, is love. And Christ is love. And there can be no real access to God as a union with Him in His holy will, no real communion with Him, but in the Spirit of love. Our entering into the Holiest is mere imagination, if we do not yield ourselves to the love of God in Christ, to be filled and used for the welfare and joy of our fellow-men.<sup>4</sup>

The love expressed in such beautiful terms in 1 Corinthians 13 expresses to us not the character of men but the very nature of God. It is a cliff we are incapable of climbing without God's work in our lives, our submission to his will, his humility lived out in our lives and our confession.

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<sup>4</sup>Mark Water, The New Encyclopedia of Christian Quotations (Alresford, Hampshire: John Hunt Publishers Ltd, 2000), 645.

## Two Clarifications

### 1. A Word About Hate

Since this word is oft contrasted in 1 John with the idea of love, we need to talk about it a bit.

The Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, or BDAG defines hate, this Greek word, which is the contrast of agape as "to hold in disfavor, to be disinclined to, to have relatively little regard for."

As love is not just emotion but an act of the will, so is hate. Hate doesn't have to be hateful (emotionally driven detest) to be hateful (to have little regard for others).

Hating is not only expressed in the emotional disgust of someone, it is also the neglecting of someone or the act of choosing favorites among the brothers. We are not simply to love those who love us (Luke 6:32), who doesn't do that, but to love those who do not regard you, or are your enemies (Luke 6:27).

This is the love of God; the dismissal of favoritism (Jude 16) and partiality (James 2:1ff) based on dress, position or riches, of teams and sides (1 Corinthians 1:10-17), and the equal treatment of all peoples, especially the believers. To judge people "in the flesh" is the work of hate not love, judging people by outward appearance and not the heart of the individual (2 Corinthians 5:12ff). Doing these things is not love but hate and is not the act of one who is walking in the light.

### 2. To Love Does Not Mean Becoming a Punching Bag

When you submit by loving others you are doing it of your own free will. That is the command. Our status in Christ is that of freedom - you are free and you are the spiritual equal of all others - not their servants (1 Corinthians 9:19). Servitude is not Christian. Protecting your freedoms is Christian (Galatians 5:1).

Submission needs to be mutual. If there is no mutual submission, there is only servitude. You are not called to servitude but submission. There is a difference.

Submitting to others is the FREE WILL submission of your heart and will to another.

Paul states that "...though I am free from all (he has freedom in Christ), I have made myself (personal willful decision) a servant of all, that I might win more of them." 1 Corinthians 9:19

You see both of these at work; the freedom that we have in Christ and the volitional choice to serve. If you are being forced to submit you are not submitting but being placed in servitude. This is not a good thing.

While some of this is expected, when it goes to far it can become abusive. A parent who is pushing around a child abusively is not worth submitting to. A government that abuses citizens is not worth submitting to.

This is God's design for government. The problem is, when government ceases to function by God's design, it yields up its authority. The same would be true in a family. God's design is that the father lead the family. When the father leads in a destructive and evil way, he yields up the right to exercise that God-given authority.<sup>5</sup>

This principle is in play in all of our relationships; between husband and wife, parent and child, church friend and church friend, employer and employee. While you are encouraged by God to lay down your life for others (by your own free will) you are not required to have anyone lay your life down for them. It's not a submission unless its your choice, its a subjugation. You have freedom in Christ.

Some of this "lording over" comes from a heart of becoming great or doing great things. The fleshly desire of the human heart is sometimes to become great. The methodology of finding greatness is "servanthood" and volitional becoming "slaves of all." This is not obtained by platitudes of service with our mouths but actual submission of others -- to consider ourselves less than everyone else. This is by the Spirit of God, because selfishness is of the "flesh." It is like God and it is from God.

This is the means of greatness.

I know many, many stories of people who were treated horribly by pastors and other authorities in churches, and as the stories come out what you hear from the leaders is not "we did something wrong, forgive us" it is "these people didn't listen to our leadership, so they are at fault." Sometimes that may be the case, but often there is something else going on that is being covered up.

This should not be.

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<sup>5</sup>When Government Rewards Evil and Punishes Good, John MacArthur



## A Definition of Love Generated from 1 John

Now the part you have all been waiting for. How do we distill all of this talk of love in 1 John and come up with a definition.

Agape love is love like unto the Love of God. It is more than simply a human affection or human familial love;

it is selfless, it is always in the light and honest and open, it is sacrificial and would rather suffer itself than cause someone else to suffer, to the very point of death.

It proceeds from the very nature of God, comes from his Spirit, and should be lived out by loving in the power and method of God all believers, and to some extent everyone.

We will fail to do and be this we need to live in the light and confess this to God and to those we hurt so as to restore fellowship between each other.

This is done not by always claiming our innocence, but recognizing our sin.

Because we consider ourselves less and others more.