

Pursuing Love & The Great Commandment – Pt. 1

The Foundation of Love

I. Introductory Remarks.

Ephesians 3:17-18 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

1 Corinthians 14:1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

This message is the first in the series "Pursuing Love." As we will see in this message love is the primary quality or fruit that is to be preeminent about all else. It is something God wants us to pursue in every relationship we are involved in.

The Greek word for pursue is "**DIOKO**", which is the same word Paul used in Philippians where he said, "*I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me*". It is a strong word that denotes to pursue without hostility and to seek eagerly after. In the next few weeks we will see how God wants us to pursue love in our marriages, our relationships with our children, the household of God and with unbelievers as well.

In this message will begin by defining the various Greek words that are used for love and how love is to be the preeminent quality or fruit in all that we do as Christians.

These definitions will help us to understand the foundation for which love is pursued with God and in all of our other relationships. Love for God and one another must be at the very foundation of all that we do as Christians. Without it we are only making noise and commotion and we are nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:1-2 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

II. Defining Love.

Before we can really fully understand what it means to pursue love with God and all the other relationships He has established in our lives, we must first have some good

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working definitions as to what love is. It's important to understand that the Greek language has more than one word for love.

1. The Agape or Christian Love.

Agape and agapao are used to describe the attitude of God toward His Son; the human race and to all those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the most important type of love, because all other expressions of love should flow out of true Christian love or agape love. Therefore we will discuss this in detail and just briefly discuss the other expressions of love that are involved in our relationship to God.

The love of the Father in Jesus: This shows that God's love is a wonderful love of intimacy and unity.

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

The love of God expressed to those who believe: This shows that in order for us to come into the fullness of His love, there must be a response on our part.

John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

Love can only be known from the action it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son. This is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects. *Quote from Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.*

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Christian love or agape love has God for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments.

John 14:15,21 "If you love Me, keep My commandments... "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

Christian love, whether exercised toward your mate, your children, the brethren or

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toward men in general, is not an impulse from the feelings. It does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Christian love seeks the welfare of all and works no ill to any. It seeks opportunity to do good to all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith. (See *Romans 15:2, 13:8-10, Galatians 6:10, 1 Corinthians 13 and Colossians 3:12-14.*)

In summary, Christian love or agape love expresses the deep and constant love of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects, producing and fostering a reverential love in them toward the giver, and a practical love towards those who are partakers of the same, and a desire to help others to seek the Giver. It is an unselfish love, ready to serve. This is the kind of love God wants us to pursue with all of our hearts, mind, soul and body.

2. Philadelphia or Brotherly Love.

The second kind of love I want to mention is simply called brotherly love. It is a love for the brethren, a fraternal kind of love that simply shows kindness towards one another.

1 Thessalonians 4:9 *But concerning brotherly love (philadelphia) you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love (agape) one another...*

3. Phileo or Affectionate Love.

Phileo love is an affection that is expressed between friends and individuals. It expresses sentiment or feeling. This is the kind of love Jesus had for his beloved disciple, John. It is the kind of love that is often expressed between a husband and wife.

John 20:2 *Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to **the other disciple, whom Jesus loved**, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."*

This is also the kind of love Peter displayed to Jesus when Jesus asked him whether he loved him or not.

John 21:15 *So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."*

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It is God's desire that we all learn how to be affectionate towards one another in a real and proper way.

Romans 12:10 *Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another...*

III. The Preeminence of Love.

What I really want us to see in this message is that God's ultimate desire for our lives above all else is that we would truly learn how to love Him and one another more than any other facet of our life in Him. This is more important than fulfilling our calling, being exercised in gifts and ministries or anything. Without love we are nothing. Love is the glue that holds everything together.

Colossians 3:14 *But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.*

Of the three essential ingredients in our relationship to God, the Bible says love is the greatest. It's greater than our faith, because our faith works by love.

1 Corinthians 13:13 *And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

Galatians 5:6 *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*

If we are lacking in faith and desire for other things that are important to kingdom life, could it be that our love is what is really lacking? Think about it?

To love God with all our heart, soul and mind is the first and great commandment. The second is to love our neighbor as ourselves. This is the royal law of which James speaks of as well.

Matthew 22:37-40 *Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' "This is the first and great commandment. "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*

IV. Concluding Remarks

In this message I have simply tried to give you a foundation as to what love is, so that you can know what it truly means to love God with all your heart, mind and soul

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and what it will mean to love the people that God has placed in your life. Next week we shall discover what it means to love God and how we go about doing that.