

Sparkling Gems From The Greek

by Rick Renner

When the New Testament was being written, there were four primary Greek words to describe the concept of 'love': (1) eros, (2) stergo, (3) phileo, and (4) agape. These four words conveyed four different types of love.

(1) eros - "the sensual, carnal impulses to satisfy or gratify the sexual desires of the flesh"

- it describes "a self-satisfying, self-gratifying, self-seeking, self-pleasing type of sexual appetite.

(2) stergo - "the love that exists between parents and children, or the love that exists between members of a family"

(3) phileo - "affection"

- it carries the idea of two or more people who feel compatible, well-matched, well-suited, and complementary to each other. (i.e. the affability shared between two friends)

(4) agape - "the love of God"

The word agape is so filled with deep emotion and meaning that it is one of the most difficult words to translate in the New Testament. Trying to explain this word has baffled translators for centuries; nevertheless, I will now add my attempt to clarify the meaning of this powerful word.

Agape occurs when an individual sees, recognizes, understands, or appreciates the value of an object or a person, causing the viewer to behold this object or person in great esteem, awe, admiration, wonder, and sincere appreciation. Such great respect is awakened in the heart of the observer of the object or person he is beholding that he is compelled to love it. In fact, his love for that person or object is so strong that it is irresistible.

For example in John 3:16. Here love (agape) means when God looked upon the human race, He stood in awe of mankind, even though man was lost in sin. God admired man; He wondered at man; He held mankind in the highest appreciation. Even though mankind was held captive by Satan at

that moment, God looked upon the world and saw His own image in man. The human race was so precious to God and He loved man so deeply that His heart was stirred to reach out and do something to save him. In other words, God's love drove Him to action.

You see, agape is a love that loves so profoundly that it knows no limits or boundaries in how far, wide, high, and deep it will go to show that love to its recipient. If necessary, agape love will even sacrifice itself for the sake of that object or person it so deeply cherishes. Agape is the highest form of love - a self-sacrificial type of love that moves the lover to action.

Agape is a love that has no strings attached. It isn't looking for what it can get, but for what it can give. Its awe of the one who is loved is so deep that it is compelled to shower love upon that object or person regardless of the response. This is the profound love God has for the human race, for He loved man when he was still lost in sin with no ability to love Him back. God simply loved mankind without any thought or expectation of receiving love in return.

When you love with such a pure love that you expect nothing back in return, it is impossible for you to feel hurt or let down by the response of the recipients of your love. You don't love them for the purpose of getting something in return; you shower them with love simply because you love them. It is a love that has no strings attached, a love that loves simply and purely - the God-Kind of Love.

In an effort to personalize this definition, I (Pastor Vern) went through it and re-wrote it to have a personal application from GOD TOWARD US. (This version is not part of Rick Renner's Book)

Because of his Love, God sees, recognizes, understands, and appreciates the greatness of your value. It causes him to behold you in great esteem, awe, admiration, wonder, and sincere appreciation. Because of this great respect, he is compelled to love you. In fact, his love for you is so strong that you are irresistible.

For example in John 3:16. Here love (agape) means when God looked upon you, He stood in awe of you, even though you were lost in sin. God admired you; He wondered at you; He held you in the highest appreciation. Even though you were held captive by Satan at that moment, God looked upon you and saw His own image in you. You were so precious to God and He loved you so deeply that His heart was stirred to reach out and do something to save you. In other words, God's love drove Him to action.

You see, agape is a love that loves you so profoundly that it knows no limits or boundaries in how far, wide, high, and deep it will go to show itself to you. If necessary, agape love will even sacrifice itself for your sake because it so deeply cherishes you. Agape is the highest form of love - a self-sacrificial type of love that moves the lover to action.

Agape is a love that has no strings attached. It isn't looking for what it can get from you, but for what it can give to you. Its awe of you is so deep that it is compelled to shower itself upon you regardless of your response. This is the profound love God has for you, for He loved you when you were still lost in sin with no ability to love Him back. God simply loved you without any thought or expectation of receiving love in return.

God loves you with such a pure love that he expects nothing back in return, it is impossible for him to feel hurt or let down by your response. God doesn't love you for the purpose of getting something in return; God showers you with love simply because he loves you. His love has no strings attached, it's a love that loves simply and purely - the God-Kind of Love.

Also, in an effort to personalize this definition, I went through it and re-wrote it to have a personal application from US TOWARD GOD, since we are to Love / Agape Him with the same Love he Loves us. (This version is not part of Rick Renner's Book)

Because of our Love for God, we see, recognize, understand, and appreciate the greatness of God's value. It causes us to behold him in great esteem, awe, admiration, wonder, and sincere appreciation. Because of this great respect, we are compelled to love him. In fact, our love for him is so strong that he is irresistible.

For example in John 3:16. Here love (agape) means when we look upon him, We stand in awe of him,..... We admire him; we wonder at him; we hold him in the highest appreciation.He is so precious to us and we love him so deeply that our heart is stirred to reach out and do something (for him). In other words, our love drives us to action.

You see, agape is a love that loves God so profoundly that it knows no limits or boundaries in how far, wide, high, and deep it will go to show itself to him. If necessary, agape love will even sacrifice itself for his sake because it so deeply cherishes him. Agape is the highest form of love - a self-sacrificial type of love that moves the lover / us to action.

Agape is a love that has no strings attached. It isn't looking for what it can get from God, but for what it can give to him. Its awe of him is so deep that it is compelled to shower itself upon him regardless of his response. This is the profound love we have for God, We simply love him without any thought or expectation of receiving love in return.

We love God with such a pure love that we expect nothing back in return, it is impossible for us to feel hurt or let down by his response. We don't love God for the purpose of getting something in return; We shower him with love simply because we love him. Our love has no strings attached, it's a love that loves simply and purely - the God-Kind of Love.