

BIBLE STUDY SERIES:

TRUSTING THE FATHER LOVES

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LOVES

INTENTION:

Who and what do you “love”; and what kind of “love” is it?

Our goal is to exist and be as Love (*Agape* Love).

This encompasses the *Agape* Loving of the Lord your God with all your being (filters and restrictions removed); and then to *Agape* Loving others the same way—oh, and that includes *Agape* Loving yourself!

I. TOPIC:

We want to look at Loves.

I use the word love as a plural: loves. This is because there are different variations of love in life. For the Bible, there are [over 35 variations in both the Hebrew and Greek Lexicons](#). However, we will focus on a few Greek variants with a better understanding of what God's Love is as Agape Love: [G25](#), [G26](#), and [G27](#) as is defined in [1 Corinthians 13:4-8a](#).

That this kind of Love exists is a proof that God exists, because: God = Love ([1 John 4:16b](#)); and therefore: Love = God. Without Love, there is no God; and without God, there is no Love. This true nature of God's character as "Agape Love" is what we should strive to see, learn, and understand. When we see God through this Agape-Love-Reality, we open up so many more dimensions in our relationship with Him; and trust Him even more in each aspect of our daily lives. This trust helps in your ability to Agape Love Him back, in lieu of loving other things over God.

This Agape Love that the Lord demonstrates to us is one that is fully unconditional. He doesn't love us because we love Him or that we live right; He loves us because He cannot not love us. Yet, in this world, we tend to treat love with conditions: that I can only love if I'm treated with respect or without hurt. Furthermore, we tend to water-down love by using the same word for so many variations of love—we say "I love" to mom, dad, brother, sister, spouse, dog, cat, an outfit, a movie, a musician, artwork, nature, the food we eat, and more. Yet, as we will see, there are really different forms of love to that one word. Let's make sure we use the correct one for the correct purpose.

Additionally, we need to view love as neutral—in that it can be used in a positive way or negative way. We can in essence love things that can lead us into destruction, not build up. These include loving money, career, humanitarian services, mission work, outreach, or other things that can easily lead to a "look at me and how I'm loving" attitude. So, just because you can be doing something good like outreach work to feed the poor, it can be done in a selfish love, rather than a Love as for the Lord. We become "doing FOR the Lord" instead of "doing WITH the Lord".

Not all Bible translations distinguish between some of these types of love; including brotherly love ([G5360](#)), friendship / fondness love ([G5368](#)), and others. However, we will look at one translation that does make this distinction and helps us better understand Jesus's conversation with Peter:

II. READING: [John 21:15-19](#) (NTE) {PoG}

So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus spoke to Simon Peter.

'Simon, son of [{Jonah}](#),' he said, 'do you love [{G25}](#) me more than these?'

'Yes, Master,' he said. 'You know I'm your friend {I'm fond of you ([G5368](#))}.'

'Well, then,' he said, 'feed my lambs.'

16 'Simon, son of [{Jonah}](#),' said Jesus again, for a second time, 'do you love [{G25}](#) me?'

'Yes, Master,' he said. 'You know I'm your friend {I'm fond of you ([G5368](#))}.'

'Well, then,' he said, 'look after my sheep.'

17 'Simon, son of [{Jonah}](#),' said Jesus a third time, 'are you [{even}](#) my friend {fond of me ([G5368](#))}?' Peter was upset that on this third time Jesus asked, 'Are you [{even}](#) my friend {fond of me ([G5368](#))}?' 'Master,' he said, 'you know everything! You know I'm your friend {fond of you ([G5368](#))}!'

'Well, then,' said Jesus, 'feed my sheep.'

18 'I'm telling you the solemn truth,' he went on. 'When you were young, you put on your own clothes and went about wherever you wanted. But when you are old, you'll stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you up and take you where you don't want to go.'

19 He said this to indicate the sort of death by which Peter would bring God glory. And when he had said this, he added, 'Follow me!'

III. RELATED VERSES AND QUESTIONS:

- A. God is Love (the Lord = Love). And this is not just any variant of love, but that specific Agape Love. This is how He Loves us, and asks that we Love Him and others with. It is something we have the God-Given ability to do. It is His provision to us, in us, and out through us! How we perceive His Love (type of Love) for us is often how we love others. But when we have a complete understanding of His Love, we in turn can let that Love flow freely out from us. Knowing that He Loves us gives us the trust we desire to enable us to also Love.

1 John 4:7-19 (NTE) {PoG}

Beloved {G27}, let us love {G25} one another, because love {G26} is from God, and all who love {G25} are fathered by God and know God. 8 The one who does not love {G25} has not known God, because God is love {G26}. 9 This is how God's love {G26} has appeared among us: God sent his only son into the world, so that we should live through him. 10 Love {G26} consists in this: not that we loved {G25} God, but that he loved {G25} us and sent his son to be the sacrifice that would atone for our sins. 11 Beloved {G27}, if that's how God loved {G25} us, we ought to love {G25} one another in the same way. 12 Nobody has ever seen God. If we love {G25} one another, God abides in us and his love {G26} is completed in us. 13 That is how we know that we abide in him, and he in us, because he has given us a portion of his spirit. 14 And we have seen and bear witness that the father sent the son to be the world's saviour. 15 Anyone who confesses that Jesus is God's son, God abides in them and they abide in God. 16 And we have known and have believed the love {G26} which God has for us.

God is love {G26}; those who abide in love {G26} abide in God, and God abides in them. 17 This is what makes love {G26} complete for us, so that we may have boldness and confidence on the day of judgment, because just as he is, so are we within this world. 18 There is no fear in love {G26}; complete love {G26} drives out fear. Fear has to do with punishment, and anyone who is afraid has not been completed in love {G26}. 19 We love {G25}, because he first loved {G25} us.

Question: What are ways we can recognise this kind of Agape Love from the Lord?

Response:

- B. With the Lord being this Agape Love, They tell us They Love us in this Love. As God, They Love you as a human! And as a human, we can Love Them, others, and ourselves.

John 3:16-21 (NTE) {PoG}

This, you see, is how much God loved {G25} the world: enough to give his only, special son, so that everyone who believes in him should not be lost but should share in the life of God's new age. 17 After all, God didn't send the son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world could be saved by him.

18 'Anyone who believes in him is not condemned. But anyone who doesn't believe is condemned already, because they didn't believe in the name of God's only, special son. 19 And this is the condemnation: that light has come into the world, and people loved {G25} darkness rather than light, because what they were doing was evil. 20 For everyone who does evil hates the light; people like that don't come to the light, in case their deeds get shown up and reproved. 21 But people who do the truth come to the light, so that it can become clear that what they have done has been done in God.'

[John 13:34-35](#) (NTE) {PoG}

'I'm giving you a new commandment, and it's this: love {G25} one another {reciprocally / mutually}! Just as I have loved {G25} you, so you must love {G25} one another. 35 This is how everybody will know that you are my disciples, if you have love {G26} for each other {reciprocally / mutually}.'

[Romans 8:35-39](#) (NTE) {PoG}

Who shall separate us from the Messiah's love {G26}? Suffering, or hardship, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As the Bible says,

Because of you we are being killed all day long; we are regarded as sheep destined for slaughter.

37 No: in all these things we are completely victorious through the one who loved {G25} us. 38 I am persuaded, you see, that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor the present, nor the future, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love {G26} of God in King Jesus our Lord.

[Ephesians 2:4-7](#) (NTE) {PoG}

But when it comes to mercy, God is rich! He had such great love {G26} for us that 5 he took us at the very point where we were dead through our offences, and made us alive together with the king (yes, you are saved by sheer grace!). 6 He raised us up with him, and made us sit with him – in the heavenly places, in King Jesus! 7 This was so that in the ages to come he could show just how unbelievably rich his grace is, the kindness he has shown us in King Jesus.

Question: Do you feel the Lord Loves you so much, that He is not holding anything against you?

Response:

- C. The Lord even provides us with a definition of what Agape Love looks like. And even the importance of this kind of Love in all our actions—because “good” actions without Love is just prideful (catering to the flesh) and useless to me or others. A “clanging gong and clashing cymbal” being just a means to draw attention to oneself.

[1 Corinthians 13:1-8a](#) (NTE) {PoG}

If I speak in human languages, or even in those of angels, but do not have love {G26}, then I've become a clanging gong or else a clashing cymbal. 2 And if I should have prophetic gifts, and know all mysteries, all knowledge, too; have faith, to move the mountains, but have no love {G26}—I'm nothing. 3 If I give all my possessions to the poor, and, for pride's sake, my very body, but do not have love {G26}, it's useless to me.

4 Love's {G26} great-hearted {patiently endures}; {love (G26)} is kind, {love (G26)} knows no jealousy, {love (G26)} makes no fuss, {love (G26)} is not puffed up, 5 {love (G26)} has no shameless ways, {love} doesn't force its rightful claim, {love (G26)} doesn't rage or bear a grudge, 6 {love (G26)} doesn't cheer at others' harm, {love (G26)} rejoices, rather, in the truth. 7 {Love (G26)} bears all things, {love (G26)} believes all things, {love (G26)} hopes all things, {love (G26)} endures all things. 8 Love {G26} never fails.

Question: Is this how you see the Lord's Love towards you? Is this what you show yourself?

Response:

- D. When we stay connected to the vine that is Christ Jesus, we bear much fruit. And one of these Fruits of the Spirit is this exact kind of Love He requires of us. Thus, He gives us of Himself to be able to Love as He Loves.

[Galatians 5:22-25](#) (NTE) {PoG}

But the fruit of the spirit is love {G26}, joy, peace, great-heartedness, kindness, generosity, {faith}, 23 gentleness, self-control. There is no law that opposes things like that! 24 And those who belong to the Messiah, Jesus, crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the spirit, let's line up with the spirit.

Question: How can you let His Love manifest more in your life towards others (and even yourself)?

Response:

- E. We can share in so many varieties of love; expressing it for brothers and sisters ([G5360](#)), our children and spouses ([G5362](#) and [G5388](#)), others we have affection/friendship ([G5368](#)) for, showing hospitality love to stranger ([G5381](#) and [G5382](#)), and even loving goodness ([G5358](#)). But it should never be a love of something or someone more than a person's love for the Lord.

[Matthew 10:32-39](#) (NTE) {PoG}

'So: everyone who owns up in front of others to being on my side, I will own them before my father in heaven. 33 But anyone who disowns me in front of others, I will disown that person before my father in heaven.

34 'Don't think it's my job to bring peace on the earth. I didn't come to bring peace – I came to bring a sword! 35 I came to divide a man from his father, a daughter from her mother, and a daughter-in-law from her mother-in-law. 36 Yes, you'll find your enemies inside your own front door.

37 'If you love {G5368} your father or mother more than me, you don't deserve me. If you love {G5368} your son or daughter more than me, you don't deserve me. 38 Anyone who doesn't pick up their cross and follow after me doesn't deserve me. 39 If you find your {soul} you'll lose it, and if you lose your {soul} because of me you'll find it.

[Matthew 22:37-39](#) (NTE) {PoG}

'You must love {G25} the Lord your God', replied Jesus, 'with all your heart, with all your life, and with all your mind. 38 This is the first commandment, and it's the one that really matters. 39 The second is similar, and it's this: You must love {G25} your neighbour as yourself.

[Titus 1:8](#) (NTE) {PoG}

{Elders} must be hospitable {G5382}, a lover {G5358} of goodness, sensible, just, holy and self-controlled.

[Titus 2:4](#) (NTE) {PoG}

That way, {the elders} can give sensible instructions to the {the young} on how to love {G5362} their husbands and {love (G5388)} their children.

[Hebrews 13:1-2](#) (NTE) {PoG}

Let the family continue to care for one another. 2 Don't forget to be hospitable {G5381}; by that means, some people have entertained angels without realizing it.

[2 Peter 1:3-8](#) (NTE) {PoG}

God has bestowed upon us, through his divine power, everything that we need for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and virtue. 4 The result is that he has given us, through these things, his precious and wonderful promises; and the purpose of all this is so that you may run away from the corruption of lust that is in the world, and may become partakers of the divine nature. 5 So, because of this, you should strain every nerve to supplement {add / supply / furnish / present} your faith with virtue, and your virtue with knowledge, 6 and your knowledge with self-control, and your self-control with patience, and your patience with piety, 7 and your piety with family affection {G5360}, and your family affection {G5360} with love {G26}. 8 If you have these things in plentiful supply, you see, you will not be wasting your time, or failing to bear fruit, in relation to your knowledge of our Lord Jesus the Messiah.

Question: Can you discern the different kinds of love in your life and those around you?

Response:

- F. We must be careful though, as we can end up loving things in a way the Lord doesn't want for us. This is the love of self (G5367), pleasure (G5369), and money (G5365 and G5366) above loving (G5377) the Lord.

[1 Timothy 6:6-10](#) (NTE) {PoG}

If it's gain you want, though, there is plenty to be had in godliness – if it's combined with contentment. 7 We brought nothing into the world, after all, and we certainly can't take anything out. 8 If we have food and clothing, we should be satisfied with it. 9 People who want to be rich, by contrast, fall into temptation and a trap, into many foolish and dangerous lusts which drown people in devastation and destruction. 10 The love {G5365} of money, you see, is the root of all evil. Some people have been so eager to get rich that they have wandered away from the faith and have impaled themselves painfully in several ways.

[2 Timothy 3:1-7](#) (NTE) {PoG}

You need to know this: bad times are coming in the last days. 2 People will be in love {G5367} with themselves, you see, and {lovers (G5366) of} money too. They will be boastful, arrogant, abusive, haters of parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unfeeling, implacable, accusing, dissolute, savage, haters of the good, 4 traitors, reckless, puffed up, lovers {G5369} of pleasure rather than lovers {G5377} of God, 5 holding on to a pattern of godliness but denying its power. Avoid people like that! 6 This group, you see, includes those who worm their way into people's houses and ensnare foolish women who are overwhelmed with their sins and are pulled and pushed by all kinds of desires, 7 always learning but never able to arrive at the truth.

Question: Can you see examples of this in the world today? Do you see it in your own life?

Response:

IV. FURTHER THOUGHT:

A. [Galatians 5:5-6;13-14](#) (NTE) {PoG}

For we are waiting eagerly, by the spirit and by faith, for the hope of righteousness. 6 For in the Messiah, Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any power. What matters is faith, working through love {G26}.

13 When God called you, my dear family, he called you to make you free. But you mustn't use that freedom as an opportunity for the flesh. Rather, you must become each other's servants, through love {G26}. 14 For the whole law is summed up in one word, namely this: "Love {G25} your neighbour as yourself."

Thoughts: When looking at all the verses about love, it shows that LOVE is the pinnacle of all we be and do. When you carry on to [Galatians 5:22-25](#), we see that LOVE is the FIRST fruit of the Holy Spirit—being that LOVE is something the Spirit produces for us. In [1 Corinthians 13:1-8a](#) we saw that nothing matters without Love, with what Love looks like. And in [2 Peter 1:3-8](#), the build-up from faith culminates into LOVE—not just just brotherly / family love {G5360}, but to add into the final totality Love: Agape Love {G26}. This is how we are to exist—yes, to strive to love in these ways—but moreso, that when you discover that this Love exists in you (that you exist as Love), this Love flows effortlessly out from you: because just as God = Love, you also are Love. And too, not forgetting about Loving yourself with this same Love (not to be confused with [G5367](#)).

- *Refer also: Bible Study Lesson 031 – Our Responsibility (With the Lord)*

B. [Luke 3:21-22](#) (NTE) {PoG}

So it happened that, as all the people were being baptized, Jesus too was baptized, and was praying. The heaven was opened, 22 and the holy spirit descended in a bodily form, like a dove, upon him. There came a voice from heaven: 'You are my son, my dear {beloved (G27)} son! I'm delighted with you.'

[1 John 3:1-3](#) (NTE) {PoG}

Look at the remarkable love {G26} the father has given us – that we should be called God's children! That indeed is what we are. That's why the world doesn't know us, because it didn't know him. 2 Beloved {G27} ones, we are now, already, God's children; it hasn't yet been revealed what we are going to be. We know that when he is revealed we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 All who have this hope in him make themselves pure, just as he is pure.

Thoughts: Just as Jesus was beloved by God the Father, so are we beloved just the same. We must never think less of ourselves or define who we are (or the "love" we think to expect) based on our actions or inactions. We are Loved by Him because we are His children. And it is not just a "friendly" love, but God's genuine Agape Love.

C. [2 Corinthians 3:6](#) (NTE)

God has qualified us to be stewards of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit. The letter kills, you see, but the spirit gives life.

[Hebrews 8:10](#) (NTE)

This is the covenant I will establish, after those days with the house of Israel: my laws I will place in their minds, says the Lord, and write on their hearts; thus I shall be God for all of them; they'll be my people indeed.

[1 John 3:23](#) (NTE)

And this is his command, that we should believe in the name of his son Jesus the Messiah, and should love one another, just as he gave us the commandment.

Thoughts: Our commandment from the Lord is not Law or rule-following, it is Agape Love. The Law which is written on our hearts is this Agape Love—not the Law that was the “ministry of death, written and engraved on stones”. Only Love brings Life.

- Refer also: <https://cbadenhorst.blogspot.com/2018/07/the-law-written-on-our-heart-is-love.html>

D. [Genesis 1:26a](#) {PoG}

The Lord fashioned humanity in Their Image and Their Likeness...

Thoughts: Since God (the Lord: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Ghost / Holy Spirit) are that Agape Love ([1 John 4:16b](#)). And because we are Created in their exact Image and Likeness, we too are that same Agape Love.

For me, it has been a journey to come to that understanding (that Like Them, I too am Love).

If I were to ask the Lord why He Loves me (and anyone / everyone for that matter), Their only answer is: “that is Who I Am”. They cannot change the fact that they ARE Love. And being Love, and unchanging from that, Their Love has no determination on me (my actions, inactions, sins, holiness, or righteousness). They do not “only love me” because I am Born-Again... No! They Love me because They cannot do anything but Love me.

This is what and how Unconditional Love can exist from Them... because how can there be a “condition” where They don’t Love me? There is none, because the only “condition” that would change Them Loving me is if They were no longer Love. But, They are Love, can do nothing but exist as Love, and thus only Love.

And just as the Lord Loves us without us needing to Love Them (besides, They Loved us First); I don't need the other person to Love me for me to Love them.

This is what I have come to fully hold onto and embrace for myself and ALL people. And with that, realise that I too am Love. And in being Love myself, it truly has no conditions of what anyone else does—I cannot not Love, because I am Love too!

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