



6/26/25

*I often find it really helpful to look up the original Greek words that the words in my bible were translated from, because they have so much meaning that our English words don't always capture. Like the word "love." The New Testament has 4 Greek words that are all translated "love." They are phileo (brotherly love), storge (familial love), eros (romantic love), and agape (sacrificial love).*

*Any person, whether saved or unsaved, can have phileo, storge, and eros love. But only those who are saved by Jesus can have agape love. It is a divine, supernatural kind of love that my mortal, natural self cannot muster. It is a love that extends to all people, regardless of how they treat me. It shows no partiality. As I consider it, I realize... it truly is only possible to have this kind of love from God Himself dwelling inside us. Isn't that the incredible goodness of God? He sent His Spirit to dwell in us, and because of that, we have that perfect, divine, supernatural love pouring in and through us all the time... Our only job is to let it flow as we humbly surrender ourselves to the Lord. I pray that you and I will never be deceived into thinking that our flesh has a better kind of love than what comes from God. Amen!!!*

*Blessings,  
Jonna*

*1 John 4:7-21*

*Jesus spoke of the greatest commandment in Mark 12:29-30, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second (greatest commandment) is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." I see a consistent thread of His teaching with the disciples whose letters compile so much of the New Testament. Just like Jesus, they all tie our love and devotion to God with our love and care for others. Peter wrote, "Clothe yourselves, all of you with humility TOWARD ONE ANOTHER" (1 Peter 5:5), and "Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8). Paul said in Galatians 5:13-15, right before he spoke of walking in the Spirit rather than the flesh, "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only*

*do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another." And now I see John speak of loving others as an outpouring of God's love for us. Loving ALL others sacrificially, including the ones that are hard to love, is truly impossible without the love of God pouring through me by the power of the Holy Spirit. Do I love like Jesus? O Lord, please make it so!*

*Vs. 7-8 ~ I love how John calls us "beloved." He models the very thing he's commanding us to do by the Spirit. He said, "Let us love one another." Yes, this is agape love. It is a sacrificial, death to self kind of love. It "comes from God." The evidence that I am born of God, crucified with Christ, and given new life in Christ... and that I KNOW God personally and through relationship with Him... IS that I love others.*

*"Anyone who does not love does not know God because God is love." I become like the one I know and love the most. I remember when my first grandson was a toddler. He would watch what his parents did or even what His Papa and Nana did, and he would try to model himself after us because he trusted us and he loved us. In the same way, because I love and trust the Lord, I will watch what He does and says through His word and seek to model myself after Him. The wonderful news is, I have the Holy Spirit pouring His love into my heart and transforming me as I seek to know Him more and more. I could not have this kind of divine love without the divine working in me. But if that love is not growing in me, do I truly know God?*

*Vs. 9-11 ~ The love of God was made manifest, revealed, through the Father and through Jesus. The Father sent His Son to be the replacement payment for our sins... to die on the cross for us and rise again, so that we could die to our sinful flesh and live through Him. To live through Him means that I will love through Him.*

*The love I have for God didn't start with me. It was God, loving me first by sending His Son to be my replacement payment because I could not save myself. I think the Father gets blamed for so many dads who did not love their kids well. People say they can't trust His love because they couldn't trust their dad's love. If that's what I'm looking for as my basis of understanding God's love, I'm looking in the wrong place. This is where I need to look ~ He gave His Son who willingly gave His life for me! I can't even comprehend the kind of love that would do that for me. I LOVE my kids so much. I would face any suffering rather than watch them suffer. The Father watched His beloved Son suffer a wrath that I will never understand because there was no hope for me if He didn't. That was while I was the walking dead, physically alive but spiritually dead, living in the corruption of my selfish desires that were hostile to Him.*

*If God loved us like that, we "also ought to love one another." This is really important. The basis of my love for others is not measured by how THEY treat me, but by how GOD treats me... with a sacrificial, sustaining, unfading, undying love that is not even measured by how well I love Him. Wow. O Lord, please change my heart to love like You love!*

*Vs. 12-13 ~ "No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us." This reminds me of what Peter said in 1 Peter 1:8-9, "Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls." The people Peter wrote to hadn't seen God just as I haven't seen God. But they loved Him and believed in Him and looked forward to the day that they WOULD see Him. John helps me to see that, though I can't see God, I CAN see the evidence that He is real and abiding in me. That evidence proves itself by my love toward others! His love is made perfect... matured... in me as I love others... because it's a supernatural, divine love that is only possible IF God abides in me.*

*When I received Jesus as my Savior, confessing Him as Lord, He sealed me with the Holy Spirit who abides in me. With His presence in my life, a whole treasure of hope is opened to me. The Holy Spirit is actively transforming me one degree of glory to the next as I keep my eyes on Him. The more I abide in the Lord and let His love abide in me, the more I am able to obey His command to love others.*

*Vs. 14-15 ~ What is one of the most important ways I can love others? Speak the gospel to them in love. Tell them how much God loves them... so much that He sent His Son to be the Savior of the world... so that ANYONE who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God who paid their debt will have God Himself dwelling in them, and they get to dwell in Him.*

*Vs. 16-19 ~ His love for me is where my confidence comes from. By abiding in Him and in His love, I don't have to fear judgment... because as Jesus is, I become. The closer I am to Jesus, the more I become like Him... and the struggles of this world become an opportunity for me to abide with Him more and experience a deeper understanding of His love in me. His perfect love in me casts out all fear of His punishment on me. It is when I am NOT abiding with Him that I let fear of His punishment consume me... because I'm constricting the flow of His love in my heart. I am not the source of love. I abide with the One who IS. I love BECAUSE God loved me first.*

*Vs. 20-21 ~ In Matthew 25:40, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it to Me." So... it is NOT possible for me to say that I love God while I hate my brother. There is no justification for hate. What is the bottom line of this passage? It is so clear... "Whoever loves God must also love his brother (and sister)."*

*In case I missed it, John said...*

*Vs. 7 ~ Love one another.*

*Vs. 11 ~ Love one another.*

*Vs. 12 ~ Love one another.*

*Vs. 16 ~ Whoever abides in love abides in God.*

*Vs. 17 ~ As He is, so also are we in the world (sacrificially loving).*

*Vs. 19 ~ We love because He first loved us.*

*Vs. 20 ~ Whoever does not love his brother... cannot love God.*

*Vs. 21 ~ Whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

*Point made. O Holy Spirit, please do this work in me. Give me the strength to refuse to love others according to their behavior toward me, but instead to love them according to YOUR love in me. I understand that this is a divine, supernatural love that can only come through You. I praise You for pouring this love into my heart. Please let me not constrict it, but let it flow freely through me.*