



I N T H I S I S

LOVE

1 JOHN 4:10

In this is love [noun ἀγάπη *agape*],
not that we loved [verb ἀγαπάω
agapao] God, but that He loved
[verb ἀγαπάω *agapao*] us and sent
His Son to be the propitiation for our
sins. 1 John 4:10



What is “agape” love?

- ἀγάπη (agape) is the Greek noun normally translated into English as “love” or “charity”
- Unconditional, benevolent love; a Heavenly Father’s (parental) love; God’s mercy toward man
- Pure love; seeks the highest and best for the other
- This is the type of love that says: “I will never leave you, I will never forsake you.”



What does love DO? Love...

- Shows up as promised
- Stands for righteousness
- Survives betrayal
- Serves always
- Seeks the Father
- Sticks it out
- Submits to the will of God



How can we understand *agape* ἀγάπη love?

“For God so loved [verb ἀγαπάω *agapao*] the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:16



Agape ἀγάπη love includes...

- A Giver
- A Receiver
- An Action
- A Gift
- A Desire
- A Purpose
- An Outcome



How is God's love described in the Old Testament/Tanakh?

- What is the Hebrew synonym for *agape* love?
- חֶסֶד *hesed*
- Definitions: lovingkindness, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, loyal loves, steadfast love
- חֶסֶד *hesed* appears 246 times in the Old Testament



- Psalm 59:16 “But as for me, I shall sing of Your strength; yes, I shall joyfully sing of Your lovingkindness in the **morning**, for You have been my stronghold.”
- Psalm 90:14 “O satisfy us in the **morning** with Your lovingkindness, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.”
- Psalm 92:2 “To declare Your lovingkindness in the **morning**, and Your faithfulness by night,”
- Psalm 143:8 “Let me hear Your lovingkindness in the **morning**; for I trust in You; teach me the way in which I should walk; for to You I lift up my soul.”
- Lamentations 3:22-23 “The Lord’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every **morning**; great is Your faithfulness.”



Hesed חֶסֶד appears in the Bible (Tanakh) first in Genesis 19:19 and lastly in Zechariah 7:9.

Hesed describes an emotion, links to salvation, binds the relationship between people and covenants with God. It moves toward action and endures throughout all time.

- Sylvia Schroeder

Hesed is not just a feeling, but an action. It “intervenes on behalf of loved ones and comes to their rescue.”

- Lois Tverberg



David expresses his confidence in God's lovingkindness (*hesed*) in Psalm 23:6, "Surely goodness and lovingkindness (*hesed*) will follow me all the days of my life..."

Micah 6:8 describes our duty before God. "He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you, But to do justice, to love kindness (*hesed*), and to walk humbly with your God?"

Zechariah speaks of the relationship with one another. "Thus has the Lord of hosts said, 'Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion (*hesed*) each to his brother" Zechariah 7:9



Hebrew Understanding of Love

Hesed is not a romantic, infatuation kind of love. It is a faithful, reliable love. *Hesed* is faithful. It is loyal. And *hesed* is love put to action.

Most importantly, *hesed* is the unfailing love God has for YOU.

Hesed is one of the most fundamental characteristics of God, consistent with what we know about His covenantal nature.

Hesed is “wrapping up in itself all the positive attributes of God: love, covenant faithfulness, mercy, grace, kindness, loyalty—in short, acts of devotion and lovingkindness that go beyond the requirements of duty.” (Darrell L. Bock)

- Avital Snow



Hesed: Lovingkindness in Hebrew

Hesed means tenderness and consideration towards others. Those are the key words capturing the essence of lovingkindness; it is always towards others. This is an outward expression, not one of self-seeking motivation.

Some translations use “steadfast love” or “covenant love.”

“*Hesed* is never merely an abstract feeling of goodwill, but always entails **practical action** on behalf of another.” - Will Kynes

How can we *tangibly* show our love to God and His people? *Hesed*. It is through a hesed kind of love that we worship Him and serve others. Through the abundance of *hesed* that God shows us, we can in turn be abundant in our expression of *hesed* love for others.

God’s love is predictable, tenacious, and unchanging.



Psalm 86



What if...

I know that God loves me

AND

I am struggling



A Prayer of David

Incline Your ear, O Lord, and
answer me; for I am afflicted and
needy. Psalm 86:1

*Only someone who is loved by the Lord could
approach Creator God like this



- In Psalm 86 we see a prayer of a man who has a proper perspective. While he finds himself in a difficult situation he remains confident that God hears and is able to save him. He's sure that even though his situation is dire, his God is bigger and desires to show mercy to those whom He loves.
- In Psalm 86 David uses a distinct structure to show what's central to his thinking. While the psalm starts and ends with references to his situation and his requests for salvation (v. 1-7 and v. 14-17), the center sections of the psalm are completely focused on the character of God (v. 8-10) and David's devotion to God (v. 11-13).
- The situation is difficult but He is confident in His God.

- David's life is in danger from a violent band sent to kill him (verses 2, 14), and he is on edge, depressed (verse 4). Even at the conclusion of the psalm the danger is still present. This is a prayer in the midst of a long-term crisis, the cry of a godly man to his God for help.
- It's a back-and-forth rhythm of prayer and praise, a faith that sees God's greatness and calls on Him for help in time of need.
- Perhaps the example of the psalmist's mixture of prayer combined with praise can help you find a pattern for conversing with God in the midst of your own struggle.

- Ralph F. Wilson



Preserve my soul, for I am a godly [devoted] man; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to You I cry all day long. Make glad the soul [nefesh נֶפֶשׁ] of Your servant, for to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul [nefesh נֶפֶשׁ].

Psalms 86:2-4

“make glad” = “give me some hope”



Psalm 25:1

A Psalm of David.

“To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul [nefesh נֶפֶשׁ].”



Petition 1: "Incline your ear, O Lord and answer me."

Reason: "For I am poor and needy." (Psalm 86:1)

Petition 2: "Preserve my soul."

Reason: "For I am godly." (86:2a)

Petition 3: "Save your servant."

Reason: "Who trusts in you -- you are my God." (86:2b)

Petition 4: "Be gracious to me, O Lord."

Reason: "For to you do I cry all the day." (86:3)

Petition 5: "Make glad the soul of your servant."

Reason: "For to you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. (86:4)

- Ralph F. Wilson



For You, Lord, are good, and ready to
forgive, and **abundant** in lovingkindness
[חֶסֶד *hesed*] to all who call upon You.
Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; and give
heed to the voice of my supplications!
In the day of my trouble [distress] I shall
call upon You, for You will answer me.

Psalms 86:5-7



David believes that God hears and answers prayers – In v. 1-7 there are 8 prayer requests. It may seem like David is trying to persuade God, but these verses reveal David's humble confidence in God. He is praying to God with confidence that He hears and responds.

David appeals to God based on their relationship – David emphasizes his relationship to God as His servant. He doesn't see God as a distant unreachable figure, but as his Lord who will care for those who are His own.

David is sure of the ways God relates to His people – In verse 5 David recounts the ways God relates to His people: God is good and forgiving and faithful in love.

- Matthew Breeden



There is no one like You among the gods, O Lord,
nor are there any works like Yours. All nations
whom You have made shall come and worship
before You, O Lord, and they shall glorify Your
name. For You are great and do wondrous
deeds; You alone are God. Psalm 86:8-10

All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all
the families of the nations will worship before You. For the
kingdom is the Lord's and He rules over the nations.

Psalm 22:27-28



A Redeemer and Deliverer

“Who is like You among the gods, O Lord? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders? You stretched out Your right hand, the earth swallowed them. In Your lovingkindness [חֶסֶד *hesed*] You have led the people whom You have redeemed; in Your strength You have guided them to Your holy habitation.” Exodus 15:11-13



Teach me Your way [path], O Lord; I will walk in
Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name.

Psalm 86:11

- How can I unite (reconnect) my heart to fear (honor) God's name?
- "Give me an undivided heart" (NIV, NRSV)
"Let my heart's one aim be to fear your name" (New Jerusalem Bible)
- This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord. 1 Corinthians 7:35



Our world rejects absolute truth. "Everything is relative," they say. This lie enables them to justify any thought, any action, any sin. But the Bible teaches that there is a "right way," a "true path." The broad way leads to destruction. But the Teacher is there to guide us with His still small voice.

- Ralph F. Wilson

- "'This is the way, walk in it,' when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left." Isaiah 30:21
- Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6



When life gets hard our spiritual growth and the praise of God may be the furthest things from our minds, but we should want them to be front and center. We should want to love and trust God so much that even in the struggles we are asking Him to hold us close and teach us.

- Matthew Breeden



I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with
all my heart, and will glorify Your name forever.

Psalms 86:12

WHY GIVE THANKS?

For Your lovingkindness [חֶסֶד *hesed*] toward me
is **great**, and You have delivered my soul
[nefesh נֶפֶשׁ] from the depths of Sheol [grave].

Psalms 86:13



O God, arrogant men have risen up
against me, and a band of violent men
have sought my life, and they have not
set You before them. Psalm 86:14

It is remarkable that the psalmist's thoughts don't
linger on his enemies. His heart turns again to the
Lord, the character of his God. – Ralph F. Wilson



But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and **abundant** in lovingkindness [חֶסֶד *hesed*] and truth.

Turn to me, and be gracious to me; Oh grant Your strength to Your servant, and save the son of Your handmaid.

Psalm 86:15-16

*David quotes Yahweh from Exodus 34:6-7



Yahweh describes Yahweh to Moses

Then the Lord passed by in front of him [Moses on Mount Sinai] and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness [חֶסֶד *hesed*] for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.” Exodus 34:6-7

*This event occurs about 400 years before the life of David



"Merciful" refers to God's compassion, the Father's deep love for His children.

"Gracious" depicts a heartfelt response by someone who has something to give to one who has a need. The New Testament word "grace" is similar -- God's favor, unmerited and undeserved.

"Slow to anger" Yahweh shows tremendous restraint when dealing with His wayward people. He doesn't lose His temper, but He does discipline His children when they need it.

"Steadfast love" (*hesed*) is that firm, stable, covenant love that continues even though we may fail Him. Beyond whatever discipline we receive at God's hand, His love continues steadfast and true.

"Faithfulness/Truth" carries the idea of firmness, certainty, rock-solid truth and trustworthiness. Paul writes to Timothy: "If we are faithless, He remains faithful - for He cannot deny Himself." 2 Timothy 2:13

- Ralph F. Wilson



Show me a sign for good, that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed, because You, O Lord, have helped me and comforted me.

Psalms 86:17

- David is hopeful that God will be praised as others see God's protection of His servant. - Matthew Breeden
- Throughout the psalm we turn from prayer to praise, back and forth. The psalm concludes with prayer, the psalmist's situation unresolved. – Ralph F. Wilson



- “But they, our fathers, acted arrogantly; they became stubborn and would not listen to Your commandments. They refused to listen, and did not remember Your wondrous deeds which You had performed among them; so they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But You are a God of forgiveness, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and **abounding in lovingkindness** [חֶסֶד *hesed*]; and You did not forsake them. Nehemiah 9:16-17
- The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and **abounding in lovingkindness** [חֶסֶד *hesed*]. Psalm 103:8
- The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and **great in lovingkindness** [חֶסֶד *hesed*]. Psalm 145:8



- And rend your heart and not your garments. Now return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, **abounding in lovingkindness** [חֶסֶד *hesed*] and relenting of evil. Joel 2:13
- He [Jonah] prayed to the Lord and said, “Please Lord, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and **abundant in lovingkindness** [חֶסֶד *hesed*], and one who relents concerning calamity.
Jonah 4:2



Discipleship Lessons in Prayer from the Psalmist

1. Come before the Lord with humility, as a servant before his master.
2. Come before the Lord with a united heart, having confessed your sins.
3. Pray continually as you walk with him through the day.
4. Mix your petitions with praise and thanksgiving, for that strengthens and vocalizes your faith as you are praying.
5. Remember the miracles your Lord has done so that you might mix faith in the limitless God with your petitions, so as not insult him with tiny-faith requests.
6. Know God's character so that you can pray with confidence according to what you have learned of His Person and values.
7. As you talk to the Lord and praise Him He strengthens you even in the midst of the struggle.

- Ralph F. Wilson



Who are we? What do we need?

- We are all sinful, naturally disobedient people who need forgiveness, direction and grace
- We need a Heavenly Father abundant in lovingkindness (*hesed*)
- We need a Savior willing to act on His unconditional love (*agape*) by paying the penalty for our sin
- We need a Holy Spirit to walk with us and guide us each day
- Psalm 86:5 “For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness (*hesed*) to all who call upon You.”
- Are we ready to call on the Lord today?

