

Love of God Project

Session 1: Defining Agape | Videos 1 - 4

Video Seminar Outline and Questions

Introduction:

Before we begin: How would you define the word 'Agape'? If you are not familiar with that word, then describe how you perceive God's love for you.

Session 1: Video 1

Common understanding of the term Agape

A. The "God-type" of love:

1. Volitional Love:
2. Loves because it is His nature to love:

B. How do the above views interpret God's love for us?

Discussion Questions

1. In what two ways has the church defined agape? Discuss.
2. Does the church's teaching of agape reflect your understanding of the term? Discuss.

Spiritual Exercises

1. Pray for the Holy Spirit to bring you clarity concerning agape.

For more information read, pages 81-84 in God's True Love by David Harwood

Session 1: Video 2

Reasons for defining Agape this way

A. Non-Hebraic Mindset:

B. A theological System:

Discussion Questions

1. List some reasons why agape has been defined according to “common understanding”.
2. In what ways has your God-image been influenced by your theological system?

Spiritual Exercise

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you become a Berean and to help you identify any way you have misunderstood “agape.”

For more information read, pages 85-87 in God’s True Love by David Harwood

Session 1: Video 3

How is Agape used in the Scriptures?

Biblical Definition:

- A. Agape used in 5 different ways. (John 3:16, 19 and 35; Luke 11:42-43):

- B. Agape as Emotion:
 - 1. Connected **to** other emotions (John 14:28):

 - 2. Contrasted **with** other emotions (Heb.1:9; Deut. 1:15-16):

- C. Agape as **Wholehearted, Devotional and Emotional Love for God** (Mark 12:30; Deut.10:12; Is. 5:1):

- D. Agape as **Parental Love** (Gen. 22:2; 25:28; Mark 1:11; John 17:24; 15:9; 1 Cor. 4:14):

- E. Agape as **Devoted Affection** (John 11:5; 11:36; Romans 11:28; 1 Sam. 20:17):

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the varying ways agape is used in John 3 and Luke 11. How are these uses different from the common understanding of agape presented in the previous videos?
2. What emotions did you see agape connected to and contrasted with?
3. How does God want us to love Him?
4. How did Jesus perceive God's love?
5. How did God give His love to Jesus?

Spiritual Exercise

1. Take time to ask God to reveal His love to you.
2. Please read Zephaniah 3:17:

The LORD your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.

Paraphrase this verse and then describe in your own words what God's love looks like here. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you experience God rejoicing over you. Can you remember a time when you were distraught and experienced God's love quieting your heart, your emotions?

3. Ask the Holy Spirit if there is a verse describing agape that He wants you to experience in a greater way. If so, write the verse out, and pray through it..
4. What did you struggle with the most in this video? Consider taking further time to study the Scriptures about this topic, and commit it to prayer.

For more information read, pages 88-94in God's True Love by David Harwood

B. Do we find this born out of Scripture? Quite the opposite!

1. Agape is an emotion that describes:

2. Agape is not:

Agape is an emotion that is stirred in the lover toward that which the lover finds worth loving.

Agape is REAL LOVE.

After hearing this teaching, compare what you have heard with what you wrote on the first page of this outline. Has your understanding of agape changed? If so, how?

Discussion Questions

1. What is the most important truth you learned in this lesson? Discuss.
2. Read the following verse about *agape* for the wrong things (Luke 11:43):

Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places.

What does the ability to *agape* the wrong things tell you about the nature of *agape*?

3. *Agape* in Scripture describes various aspects of human love. Consider your feelings for someone you really love. What aspects of love do you find within your own heart?

This exercise can give you an indication of the way God feels towards you. Take what you've written about your love for others and deliberately apply it to God's heart towards you. Write down one aspect of your love for others which stretches your faith about God's love for you. Why is it a struggle to believe?

4. What did you struggle with the most in this video? Consider taking further time to study the Scriptures about this topic, and commit it to prayer.

5. What have people agaped and why?

Spiritual Exercises

1. As we learned in the video, *agape* can be for the wrong reasons. Let's take a few minutes to ask the Holy Spirit if this is an issue in our own lives.
2. Please paraphrase, personalize and pray through Isaiah 30:18:

Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; He rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for Him!

3. Prayer of Renunciation: Break off any bondage from false understandings of agape and declare the truth of God's love.

For more information read, pages 97-106 in God's True Love by David Harwood