

## How God Defines Love

**agapao** - verb (NT 25) - *love* - "the characteristic word of Christianity."

"Agape and agapao are used in the NT (a) to describe the attitude of God toward His Son, John 17:26; the human race, generally, John 3:16; Rom 5:8, and to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ particularly John 14:21; (b) to convey His will to His children concerning their attitude one toward another, John 13:34, and toward all men, 1 Thess 3:12; 1 Cor 16:14; 2 Peter 1:7; (c) to express the essential nature of God, 1 John 4:8.

"Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son, 1 John 4:9,10. But obviously this is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, Rom 5:8. It was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself, Cf. Deut 7:7,8.

"Love had its perfect expression among men in the Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Cor 5:14; Eph 2:4; 3:19; 5:2; Christian love is the fruit of His Spirit in the Christian, Gal 5:22.

"Christian love has God for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments, John 14:15,21,23; 15:10; 1 John 2:5; 5:3; 2 John 6. Self-will, that is, self-pleasing, is the negation of love to God.

"Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all, Rom 15:2, and works no ill to any, 13:8,9,10; love seeks opportunity to do good to 'all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith,' Gal 6:10. See further 1 Cor 13 and Col 3:12-14."

In respect of agapao as used of God, it expresses the deep and constant "love" and interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects, producing and fostering a reverential "love" in them towards the Giver, and a practical "love" towards those who are partakers of the same, and a desire to help others to seek the Giver.

Via Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Word

\* (the word *love* appears 179 times in the King James NT; in 157 of these occurrences it is derived from the Greek word *agapao*)

### 1 John 4:19-20

***"We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen." NIV***

