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Jesus loved us while we were sinful, ungodly and cared nothing for Him. He sought our welfare and good even when He didn’t feel like it. He came to give sinful people a relationship of friendship and goodwill with a holy God. He did this by paying the penalty of death that our sins deserved and thus secured life for us with Him.

God is not mad at you. He likes you! He loves you! Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matthew 11:28-29).

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To Love and Be Loved

Have you ever tried to work out in your own mind an understanding of mankind’s greatest need, that is, to love and be loved?

Almost everything it seems is more important in today’s society than learning the principles of love. We spend years going to school, learning skills so that we may prosper materially, yet so little energy is spent in understanding man’s greatest need which is to know love and to love.

In our English vocabulary we have only one word “love” that means many different things to different individuals. You may be in love with a person and later discover that their understanding of love is only sexuality and selfishness. It is no wonder that we are so confused. “Love” means many different things to many different people depending upon who you ask.

In the Bible there are many different Greek and Hebrew words that are translated into English as love. The basic words in Greek were Eros, Phileo and Agape.

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The Greek word EROS is not found in the Bible probably because of its pagan origin in Greek mythology. Although the word is not found the concept is alluded to in several passages

of Scripture. Genesis 2:24 states, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." 1 Corinthians 7:4-5 says, "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." This particular kind of love is to be shared only between two individuals in holy matrimony. Hebrews 13:4 states, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." This is saying that God has created sexuality, that it is good but only if it is used within the boundaries for which it was intended. It was intended to produce a "one flesh bonding" that would strengthen a marriage. It was intended for procreation as well. It is also intended to produce mutual pleasure in a committed marital relationship of faith and trust. The sexual union of becoming one is fulfilling and powerful if used in its proper context of the marriage covenant. If used outside of marriage it becomes one of the most ugly and heartbreaking experiences that could happen to people. Proverbs 6:32 says, "But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul." Again, I say, sexual love is given by God to be expressed only in a marriage covenant and was never intended to be shared with anyone outside of their own marriage. It is a love limited to two individuals, male and female within a marriage covenant of love and faithfulness.

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A second word used in Scripture is PHILEO. This word and its related forms are used around seventy-two times in the New Testament. It is a love of feelings. It delights to be in the presence of the ones it loves. It is friendship love, a love that comes and goes in intensity and feelings. It's the love we all like, a warm tender feeling of affection that delights to be in the presence of another. It will never sustain a marriage because it is somewhat conditional. It responds with delight to the warm tender caring nature of others. If that caring stops or unkindness is substituted it draws back and its feelings diminish.

The only love that can endure is God's love. It is called AGAPE. It causes freedom to those living within its boundaries. It is described in 1 John 5:3 and 2 John 1:6. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3). "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments." (2 John 1:6). AGAPE love always seeks the welfare and benefit of others. I cannot say I love someone and destroy them by my covetousness, lying, cheating, breaking up their family, etc. Love must stay within the boundaries of God's commandments in order to not hurt others or yourself. Jesus described this love in Matthew 7:12 when He said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Notice what Jesus said and didn't say. He didn't say, "Why don't people love me? Don't they know I'm hurting? What's wrong with those hypocrites?" No! instead He said, "Whatever you would want someone to do for you, do to them." You see, to be loved you must first love. "We love him (God),

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