

Chapter 1. Defining Love

Several Problems

1. Theological

“Love is God” or “God is Love”?

1 John 3-4 To know God is to know love.

Always from God to us not vice-versa. ie. revelation.

To know love is to know a Person – in – relationship.

If problem 1 is being overcome the other problems will be eased.

2. Cultural.

‘Love’ is defined and expressed differently in different cultures. eg hugs, kisses.

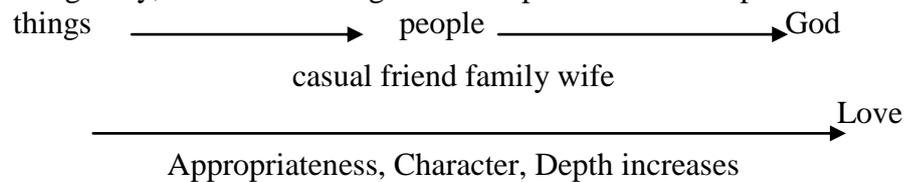
3. Linguistic.

Greek – 4 words?

English – 1 word?

diversity of meaning eg. love → food, dog, wife, God.

Viewed theologically, the true meaning of love depends on the recipient.



N.B. A basic problem: idolatry. This perversion of love always increases from left to right.

materalism hedonism infatuation religion.

C.S. Lewis – The Four Loves

1.1 Need Love

Motivated by sense of need.

1. Sexual Love.

‘I love you’

Greek eros (erotic)

- involves self satisfaction.
- is very powerful (S of Sol 8:6-7)
- is honourable in marriage.

(Heb 13:4 gamos)

eros not used in N.T. Why?

- paganism
- basic distortion of passions

for self or for other?

‘enjoy myself through you, or enjoy you’?

Purposes of sex (sexuality is wider)

- procreation (Ps 127:3ff)
- gratification (1 Cor 7:1ff)
- recreation (Prov 5:18ff)?
- communication (Gen 4:1)
- dedication (Matt 19:3ff)

In the N.T. the meaning of marriage and sex is transformed by the revelation of the reality of Christ and the Church (eg. Eph 5:22-33; 1 Cor 6:12-20).

1.2 Affectionate Love.

(‘I feel affection for you/like you’)

Greek: philia in N.T.

noun: philia x1

verb: phileo (‘I love’) x 25

noun: philos (‘friend’) x29 etc.

‘friendship’ ‘I love you because of what you are’

- brother, father, talented, shared interests, good will etc.

1.2.1 affection

kataphileo – affectionate (non-erotic)

(Luke 7:45; 15:20; Acts 20:37; 1 Thess 5:26 etc)

1.2.2 warm, spontaneous, easy.

Jesus for: Lazarus (Jn 11:35ff)

John (Jn 20:2)

N.B. John 11:35ff is a description of the Jews opinion of Jesus’ love.

Arguably, phileo and agape are synonyms in John’s Gospel. e.g. John 14:23, 16:27 etc.

The question is, does Jesus transform the meaning of friendship?

In John 15:13-15 where philos is used the love in mind will die for friends.

1.2.3 Philia is necessary.

Signs of affection are integral to daily life.

2. Gift Love.

Motivated by the sense of need in others.

(What is the relationship between need and value?)

- 2.1 Compassionate love
 ('I have compassion for you')
 Greek: splagchnidzomai
 N.T. 12x
splagchna = intestines
 deep feeling, guts. Moved by needs of others.
 Jesus' feeling towards crowds (Mt 9:36; 14:14) Emotion in parables (Matt 18:27; Luke 10:33; 15:20)
 Compassion motivates
 - feeding (Matt 15:32; Mark 6:34; 8:2)
 - healing (Matt 9:36; 14:14; 20:34; Mark 9:22; Luke 7:13)
- 2.2 Unconditional love
 ('I love you anyway')
 Greek: agape
 Use (especially noun) peculiarly Christian.
- 2.2.1 Only word used in N.T. for God's love (except John 16:27)
 Unique: centred on need of loved not of lover
 : rises above feelings
 Unmerited : Deut 7:7-9; Ezek 16:1ff; John 3:16.
 : leads to giving, choice (Jerome)
 NB people can love in an ultimate sense
 Luke 6:32, 35; 2 Tim 4:10; 1 John 2:15-16 'the world'
 God's love is unique because creative – it is the source of the value of created object.
 God's love – precedes all possible merit and must be a free gift.
 God's feelings eg. compassion result from love not vice-versa.
 The world then does not 'impact' god.
 - he always acts cf. reacts.
 - that to which he relates has its origin in himself.
- 2.2.2 Agape is the only kind of love that can be commanded.
Agape is an act of will. A decision more than a feeling (John 15:12; 13:34-35; Eph 5:25 etc.)
 Jesus command is not optional.
Agape : giving not taking
 : actional (John 3:16; Eph 5:25b etc)

: depends on God's help (Rom 5:5; Col 3:14; Phil 1:19; 1 Thess 3:12, etc)

Conclusion:

John 21:15ff – agapao or phileo?

Is the question “Do you love him?” or (Consider: 2 Cor 5:14; 1 John 3:16, 4:19)

“Do you know (revelation) that he loves you?”

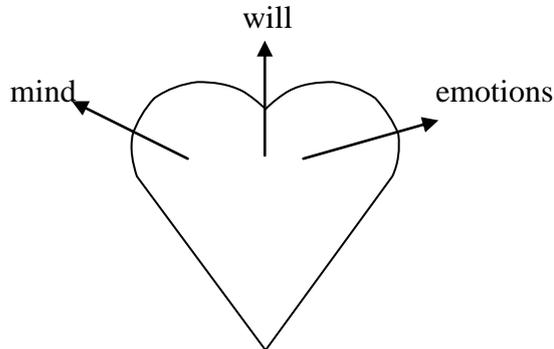
How is this related to the cross?

Chapter 2. The Nature of Love

Deut 6:4-5; Mark 12:28-34

1. With all you heart

‘from out of your whole heart’ = whole being



Prov 4:23

Heb 4:12-13

love= directing centre of life

(Jer 17:9)

1.1 To love with the heart is to love with the spirit.

Ezek 36:26 parallelism

Rom 1:21; Gal 4:6; 2 Tim 2:22

To love God from the heart, the heart must be born again.

=> new nature, born again/regeneration

empowerment of will to act according to the will of God (Rom 7:15-25). Then God pours his love into our hearts so we can love in return.

heart = spirit

?

1.2 To love with the heart is to love deeply.

How to deepen love for God ?

Eph 3:14ff; Phil 1:9; 1 Pet 4:8

2. With all your soul.

2.1 To love with the soul is to love genuinely.

soul = real self

Can stand for ‘person’ (Acts 2:41; 1 Pet 3:20 etc)

Can mean ‘life’ or vitality (Mark 10:45; Rom 11:3...)

Can be seat of emotions (Matt 21:28-38; Acts 2:43; Phil 1:27 etc)

True love does not boast or protest (1 Cor 13:4)

Parable of the 2 sons (Matt 21:28-31)

2.2 To love with the soul is to love unselfishly

Involves self-denial (Mark 8:34-37)

3. With all your mind.

Jesus' addition to Deuteronomy.

3.1 To love with the mind is to love positively and decisively.

Phil 2:1ff see v2

- like minded – same love – one accord – one mind

v5 same mind as Christ; 1 Peter 4:1

Renewal of the mind Rom 12:1

3.2 To love with the mind is to exercise the will

1 Pet 1:13; 4:1 cf. 12:12; Eph 4:23. – prepare the mind for action.

4. With all your strength.

4.1 To love with all your strength requires effort.

See 1 John 3:18; Gal 6:9-10

Love is not a feeling but doing

(‘The deed which meets the need’)

4.2 To love with all your strength is not easy.

Love costs. Jesus, apostles, revelation.

1 John 4:19-21; Matt 25:31ff.

Chapter 3. **Degrees of Love.**

1. Love your neighbour as yourself.

Mark 12:31 → Lev 19:18;

Matt 7:12 'Golden Rule'

James 2:8 'Royal Law'

Application: Church (James 2:8)
home (Eph 5:28-30)

1 John 4:20-21 no love for neighbour
no love for God

2 Questions.

a) How are we to approach law in the Christian life? (Rom 7-8)

b) Do we need a 'healthy self-love'? See Eph 5:29

2. Love your neighbour more than yourself.

Phil 2:3-4; Rom 12:9-10; John 15:13.

Their welfare treated as more important than ours.

3. Love as Christ loved.

John 13:34-35, 15:12-13 'as I have loved you.'

Pattern of Phil 2:5ff.

3.1 He emptied himself

What does this mean? (2 Cor 8:9)

3.2 He identified himself.

To what degree? (John 1:14)

cf. Hudson Taylor, Stuart Robinson etc.

3.3 He humbled himself.

No reputation, no family, no honour, no home etc. (John 1:11)

3.4 He gave himself.

(Mark 10:45; John 10:11,15,17; 15:13)

How can 3.1, 3.2, 3.2 be fulfilled in us?

Holiness is the power of love.