

God Is Love; 1 John 4:7-9

I. A Mother's Love

- A. What comes to mind when you think of a mother's love for her children?
 1. Long nights waking up with the baby
 2. Long days taking care of the baby
 3. Some even sacrifice their careers to stay at home and raise them
 4. Some employers have very generous maternity leave policies
- B. It is right that we take a moment and we celebrate all that mother's sacrifice and do for their children
- C. But they are mothers more than just one day a year — while we remember their sacrifice today, let's not forget it tomorrow

II. Love

- A. There are three words used for love in the Greek
- B. Eros
 1. This is the passionate love that a husband and wife share for each other
 2. Esther 2:17 (ESV); the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she won grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.
 3. Septuagint
 - a) The old testament translated into Greek
 - b) Translated by Jewish scholars in the 3rd - 4th century BC
 - c) That timing puts the translation soon after Malachi was written
 - d) Malachi and Nehemiah run a close race as to which was the last book written in the Old Testament
- C. Phileo
 1. This Greek word refers to the relationship between two people
 2. Some scholars think that John used this interchangeably with "agape"
 3. John 21:15 (ESV); When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love [*agape*] me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love [*phileo*] you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."
- D. Agape
 1. This is a more intimate relationship
 2. It is used of a relationship between a husband and a wife (not passion but sacrifice)
 3. It is used of our relationship to God
 4. 1 John 4:7–9 (ESV); ⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.
 5. Agape is used 32 times from 1 John 4:7 - 1 John 5:3: that is only 17 verses! (46 times in the whole book)

III. Love One Another

- A. Sometimes we get so caught up in what it takes to be a Christian that we fail to see what God desires of us as Christians
- B. The mark of a disciple is love
 1. John 13:34–35 (ESV); ³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

2. Luke 10:25–29 (ESV); ²⁵ And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” ²⁷ And he answered, “You shall love **[agape]** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and **[agape]** your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁸ And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.” ²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”
 3. Jesus equates loving your neighbor with some very sacrificing behavior
 - a) Stopping to help a known enemy
 - b) Transporting that enemy to a place of healing
 - c) Paying for the enemies healing (present and future expenses)
 - d) I’m sure Jesus uses an extreme example to get his point across
 4. Matthew 5:43–45 (ESV); ⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love **[agape]** your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love **[agape]** your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.
- C. Anyone who does not practice this self-sacrificing love does not know God (1 John 4:8)
1. We need to place more emphasis on our behavior towards one another
 2. 1 John 4:20–21 (ESV); ²⁰ If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.
 3. We spend our time trying to get ahead by stepping on people
 4. We place more value on things than we do on people
 - a) British Knight and Nike (Jordan) tennis shoes
 - b) We would rather purchase something for ourselves than help someone
 - c) A couple weeks ago I mentioned the 8 levels of Charity (love) by Rabbi Moses Ben Maisom but only gave you the highest — here they are
 - (1) Giving unwillingly
 - (2) Giving inadequately (but with gladness)
 - (3) Giving to a poor person only after being asked
 - (4) Giving to a poor person before being asked
 - (5) Giving without knowing who you are giving to but the poor person knows you are giving to him — coins tied to their robes trailing behind them
 - (6) Giving knowing who you are giving to but the poor person doesn’t know who is giving to him — putting coins in the doorways of the poor
 - (7) Giving without knowing who you are giving to and the poor person does not know who is giving — the “anonymous fund” in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem
 - (8) “The greatest level, above which there is no greater, is to support a fellow Jew by endowing him with a gift or loan, or entering into a partnership with him, or finding employment for him, in order to strengthen his hand until he need no longer be dependent upon others” ¹
 - d) These is an example of sacrificial love
 - e) God values our lives (eternal) even more than his own son’s suffering

¹ "Maimonides' Eight Levels of Charity - Mishneh Torah, Laws of Charity, 10:7–14." *Mishneh Torah, Laws of Charity, 10:7–14 - Chassidic Thought*. Chabad.org, n.d. Web. 10 May 2017. <http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/45907/jewish/Eight-Levels-of-Charity.htm>.

- f) Yet, we put things above people constantly
 - g) Loving our neighbor comes right after loving God
 - 5. We tend to hold grudges and forget the “law” of forgiveness
 - 6. Matthew 6:14–15 (ESV); ¹⁴ For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
 - D. We spend a lot of time on loving God (and we should) but not near enough on loving others
 - E. We must be a people who love one another
- IV. The Love of God
- A. 1 John 4:9–10 (ESV); ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
 - B. Manifest — revealed, exposed, made visible
 - C. He destroyed all mankind (and the world, really) through the flood
 - D. He threatened to kill off Israel and start fresh with Moses
 - E. But in the end, He sacrificed His son for His creation
 - 1. Let that sink in for a minute
 - 2. God let Jesus suffer through horrific torture and mockery just so we could have eternal life
 - 3. Would you allow your child to suffer for someone else’s mistakes?
 - 4. John 3:16 (ESV); “For God so loved **[agape]** the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
 - F. This love stands as our example
 - G. Ephesians 5:1–2 (ESV); ¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
- V. God Is Love
- A. A self sacrificing love that looks to our best interest
 - B. Therefore, we should love one another as God loves us
 - C. By the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus the Christ