

The Fifth Love

Many, many years ago I read a book called “The Fifth Wave.” I can’t remember what it was about except that every fifth wave or breaker rolling into the seashore was supposed to be bigger than the previous four or the next four. I believe it had to do with surfing and trying to catch the biggest waves. Every time I’ve gone to the seashore since then I’ve always counted and observed the wave characteristics, but I’ve never been able to verify this claim of any specialness of the fifth wave. Because I like to body surf, I still hope to find the “wave formula” and always try to find the very best one to catch and ride into shore.

In the Scripture, in the New Testament, we find a fifth love, which is very real and very special, and if we grab onto it we are guaranteed a wonderful ride to the very shore of Heaven. In the English language we have but one word for “love” to express a number of mental, emotional, spiritual conditions. In Greek, as many of us have learned, there are four different words which express more distinctly four kinds of conditions which in the English we lump into one word “love.” These are as follows:

1. Eros – This is an erotic, sensual or sexual love.
2. Phileo – A friendship love which consists of kind feelings, or natural affection. This is the kind of love Peter said he had for Jesus when Jesus repeatedly asked Peter if he loved Him as told in John 21:15-17.
3. Storage – A filial love, the kind one finds within a family, such as a mother for her child.
4. Agapao – Strong’s concordance simply translates this as a verb to love (in a special or moral sense). This is not God’s love as is evidenced in John 3:19 as

opposed to Luke 11:43 where it is used clearly to describe anything but a God's love.

- 4a. Agape – This is the noun love, as compared with the verb agapeo, to love. I call this 4a because it is very similar in meaning to its root agapeo. Strong's translation is "affection or benevolence, a love feast, charity, dear, love."

In studying Scripture there is nothing special in any of these translated definitions to qualify them to represent God's love. Neither in the Hebrew translations of the word is there any special meaning of sufficient power to qualify it as God's love. Thus there is a fifth love, God's love, the definition of which we find most complete in 1Corinthians 13. Here the Holy Spirit actually coins a new meaning to the noun agape as being God's love. God's love flows into and through the hearts of His sons and daughters, a love lavished on others without a thought as to whether or not they are worthy. It comes from the nature of the lover, not from the attractiveness in the beloved. It is a commitment not a feeling. It is the seed of this fifth love, which God tucks into the new heart He gives to everyone who is born again. As a true Christian grows in faith, this seed germinates and grows within the heart. I call this Agape, with a capital "A" because it is God's love. It's Agape, the noun, meaning God's love.

The four categories of love listed above, are earthly perceptions of love. Actually, from an heavenly perspective there is only one real love, God's love, Agape. The others are merely human emotions having little or no spiritual quality and certainly nor eternal durability. They all will die with the flesh. Only Agape is eternal, Agape is what God wants in Heaven. It is the love He has for us, and which He wants us to have for Him as well as for His other children. The whole purpose of creation was to create an environment wherein those created in His image would be free to or not to have fellowship with Him, and with Agape being the underlying goal of that relationship. Agape as it grows must become Sovereign in the heart, in the intellect, and in the will.

Now let us examine just what Agape is as the Holy Spirit has revealed it to us in 1Corinthians 13.

1. Agape – Suffers long – Even though wronged, it is patient, silent and forgiving.
2. Agape – Is kind – It seeks no triumph in obstinacy, but only the triumph of grace. It seeks to be kind beyond any normal impulse to do so. It tries to say words and perform acts that will make life happier for those with problems.
3. Agape – Envy not – How can it when it only desires the best for others?
4. Agape – Wants not itself – It never brags, for it knows that what ever is good is the works of God and His grace in us.
5. Agape – Is not puffed up – It is not arrogant or prideful. It is instead an expression of genuine humility.
6. Agape – Does not behave unseemly – It is not boorish, rude inconsiderate, or inattentive.
7. Agape – Seeks not its own – It does not grasp for its own rights, but is totally unselfish, it seek to serve, not to be served.
8. Agape – Is not easily provoked – It never retaliates or is vindictive. It is kind in the face of unkindness.

9. Agape – Thinks no evil – It keeps no record of wrongs, it is devoted to kindness not to suspicions.
10. Agape – Rejoices not in inequity – It is never glad that others are wrong, nor does it expose the weakness of others. It does not gloat, it is gladdened by goodness.
11. Agape – Bears all things – It always protects, never retaliates, is active, not passive, as it endures and forgives.
12. Agape – Believes all things – It always gives the benefit of a doubt. It is not gullible but loyal and charitable without suspicions or cynicism.
13. Agape – Hopes all things – It never takes failures as final, or despairs, even where there is ingratitude. But this hope is based on truth not vague dreams
14. Agape – Endures all things – It cannot be conquered. It endures not passively, but actively, the key being perseverance.

Can there be any doubt that Agape as defined in 1Corinthians 13 is of a supernatural nature, something which cannot even be understood, let alone become manifest without God's intervention through His grace? The capacity for this fulfillment of love is like salvation itself, a gift from God, which cannot be earned or obtained in any other way. Just as faith, through which salvation is given, occurs at various levels of intensity in the newly born again Christian, so does this Agape also come initially in various degrees of perfection, although always far from perfect. Only Jesus had the totally perfected Agape, but just as with faith, Agape at any level of perfection, in order for it to grow, must be continuously nurtured through prayer, through His Word, and through subordination to God's will. Jesus was Agape in the flesh, as He is now also in Heaven. God is love, according to John 4:16. He is, therefore, the personification of those 14

aspects of Agape. That is why when we are born again and receive the Holy Spirit (God) in our hearts, we have Agape, although again, not a perfected Agape. Yet, praise the Lord, we are assured that Agape in us will continue to grow toward perfection through His promise in Philippians 1:6. “---that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ.” It just can’t get any better than that!!!