

Love of self

Vs

Agape Love

“Agape love is what God was after from the beginning, because agape love is essential for rulership in God's eternal social order. Indeed, love is the necessary ingredient for a truly successful life on earth, but its ultimate value is in qualifying one for eternal rulership in an economy where love is the supreme law.”

-Paul Billheimer

“Calvary love, the love that took Christ to the cross, is the supreme qualification for rulership in the new order of things to come. That quality of love is learned only in time and in a fallen world, as one yields to be broken. The full-time occupation of the enthroned Bride will be expressing God's love-nature throughout the universe unto the ages of the ages.”

-Paul Billheimer

“One is not broken until all resentment
and rebellion against God and man is
removed.”

-Paul Billheimer

“We speak about falling in love. That kind of love is not an achievement; it is something which happens to us and which we cannot help. There is no particular virtue in falling in love. It is something with which we have little or nothing consciously to do; it simply happens. But agape is far more than that.”

-William Barclay

“Agape has to do with the mind: it is not simply an emotion which rises unbidden in our hearts; it is a principle by which we deliberately live. Agape has supremely to do with the will. It is a conquest, a victory, and achievement. No one ever naturally loved his enemies. To love one's enemies is a conquest of all our natural inclinations and emotions.”

“But I say to you, love your enemies,
bless those who curse you, do good to
those who hate you, and pray for those
who spitefully use you, that you may be
sons of your Father 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.”

-Matthew 5:44-45 NKJV

“Let a man be a saint or let a man be a sinner, God's only desire is for that man's highest good. Now that is what agape is. Agape is unconquerable benevolence, invincible good will. It is not simply a wave of emotion; it is a deliberate conviction of the mind issuing in a deliberate policy of the life. It takes not only his heart; it takes his mind and his will as well.”

-Barclay

“Christian agape is impossible for anyone except a Christian man. No man can perform the Christian ethic until he becomes a Christian. He may see quite clearly the desirability of the Christian ethic; he may see that it is the solution to the world's problems; mentally he may accept it; practically he cannot live it, until Christ lives in him.”

God's love toward man:

Universal
Sacrificial
Undeserved
Merciful
Saving/Sanctifying
Strengthening
Inseparable
Chastening

Man's love for God:

Exclusive
Founded on Gratitude
Obedient
Outgoing

Christian love begins in the family. It is a fact not to be forgotten that a Christian family is one of the finest witnesses in the world to Christianity. Christian love begins at home.

Christian love goes out to the body of Christ.
Let it be said, “see how these Christians
love one another.”

A church completely enveloped in the peace
of mutual love is a rare phenomenon. Such
a church would not be a church where
everyone thought the same and agreed on
everything; it would be a church in which
men could differ and still love one another.

Christian love goes out to our neighbors.
“It is the simple fact that more people have
been brought into the Church by the
kindness of real Christian love than by all the
theological arguments in the world; and
more people have been driven from the
Church by the hardness and the ugliness of
so-called Christianity than by all the doubts
in the world.”

-Barclay

Christian love goes out to our enemies.
No matter what any man does to him,
the Christian will never cease to seek
that man's highest good.

When Lincoln was accused of treating
his enemies with too much kindness
and courtesy, he replied, "Do I not
destroy my enemies when I make them
my friends?"

Love is Sincere

It has no ulterior motive.

It is not surface pleasantness that
cloaks inner bitterness.

Loves with open eyes and open heart.

Love is Innocent

It does not destroy.

It does not lead others to sin.

It is not over-possessive.

Love is Generous

Christian love does not demand, it gives.

Love is Practical

It is not merely a kindly feeling.
It is not pious good wishes.

Love issues in action.

Love is Forbearing

It is proof against things which so easily
turn love into hate.

Love is patient.

Love is Forgiving and Restoring

Enables wrong-doers to turn to the right
way.

Love is not Sentimental

Does not shut its eyes to the faults of others.

Is not blind.

Will use rebuke and discipline when needed.

Love Controls Liberty

Will not offend his brother to prove his own freedom.

Christian liberty is controlled by Christian love and by Christian responsibility for others.

Love Controls Truth

The Christian loves the truth but never cruelly or unsympathetically speaks the truth in order to hurt.

The Christian is never false to the truth but must always remember that truth and love go hand in hand.

Love hold the Body of Christ together

Our theological views may differ; our views on methods may differ. But across the differences there should come the constant memory that we love Christ, and that therefore we love each other.

Love is the motive power of Faith.

More people are won for Christ by appeal to the heart than to the head.

It is true that sooner or later we must think things out for ourselves but in Christianity the heart must feel before the mind can think.

Love is the perfecting of the Christian Life

There is nothing higher in this world than to love. The great task of any church is not primarily to perfect its buildings or its liturgy or its music or its vestments. Its great task is to perfect its love.

Set your mind on Love