

Types of Love

C. S. Lewis identified four types of love in the Bible in the Greek.

Though sources such as *Psychology Today* identify seven types of Greek words for love, we'll focus on the four most commonly identified.

Storge

Might also be called affection or familial love.

This word isn't actually used in the Bible, but the concept is there.

***Storge* is based on familiarity.**

A person will love their family regardless of whether they are people the person would be drawn to otherwise; family members often have nothing in common except familiarity and blood.

***Storge* is a comfortable affection that can be taken for granted, but it can also be very powerful.**

Eros

Eros is romantic love. Eros also isn't a word that appears in the Bible, though it plays a major role in a lot of Old Testament problems.

Eros encompasses sexual and romantic love and is the root word of the English "erotic."

Lovers are often completely preoccupied with one another, filled with *eros*.

Eros is often associated with sexual desire and lust, but it can also be a good thing in a marriage relationship when accompanied by and bolstering with other kinds of love.

Philia

Philia is friendship love.

This word is used in the Bible.

As C. S. Lewis wrote in his book, *The Four Loves*, "To the Ancients, Friendship seemed the happiest and most fully human of all loves."

Philia occurs from bonding over similar interests.

Whereas lovers are both preoccupied with each other, friends are both preoccupied with the same things.

Friends, of course, care about one another, but it is similar interests that attract them to one another.

“Philia” is the opposite of “phobia,” literally meaning that those experiencing *philia* are drawn to one another.

***Philia* is often overlooked in modern culture, but it is exhorted in the Bible.**

In Romans 12:10, Paul urges the believers to be devoted to one another in brotherly *philia*.

***Philia* can be strongly associated with *agape* as well.**

In John 15:13,

Jesus said that there is no greater *agape* than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

Agape

Agape could be defined as charity.

However, we often think of charity nowadays as giving away money or things, which doesn't encompass all of what *agape* is about.

Agape love is unconcerned with the self and concerned with the greatest good of another.

Agape isn't born just out of emotions, feelings, familiarity, or attraction, but from the will and as a choice.

Agape requires faithfulness, commitment, and sacrifice without expecting anything in return.

This is the type of love the Bible speaks about the most.

The New Testament references *agape* over 200 times.

What does Agape Means in the Bible

To the Greeks, proper *agape* meant a general empathy or loving kindness for all people.

Though in the Bible, Christians are indeed expected to care for all in the name of Christ, Christianity took this a step further.

Biblical writers used God as the standard for true *agape*.

***Agape* love, in the Bible, is love that comes from God.**

God's love isn't sentimental; it's part of His character.

God loves from an outpouring of who He is.

As 1 John 4:8 states, "God is love [*agapos*]," meaning He is the source of *agape* love.

His love is undeserved, gracious, and sacrificial.

We are to love God and others with *agape* love.

***Agape* is a choice, a deliberate striving for another's highest good, and is demonstrated through action.**

God set the standard for *agape* love in sending Jesus to die for us while we were still sinners.

Examples of Agape Love:

As has been noted, the New Testament references *agape* over 200 times.

Matthew 22:37-39,

also known as "The Greatest Commandments," instructs us to *agapao* God and our neighbors.

Meanwhile, Matthew 5:43-46

instructs us to even *agapao* our enemies.

However, a person can also *agape* or wholeheartedly love the wrong things.

1 John 2:15

warns believers not to love the things of the world.

1 Corinthians 13

lays out a list of things that define *agape*.

Love is patient, love is kind.

It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

Though *agape* can be accompanied by other types of love, *agape* is not just a feeling, but a choice.

What Agape Means for Us

Agape love does not come naturally to us in our sinful state.

However, it does come naturally to God and is an integral part of Him.

By drawing closer to Him and experiencing His love, we are able to begin to understand what this real love means.

Only through Him can we show and experience *agape* love.