

THE BIBLICAL DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE

Part 15

Love: The Fuel For Marriage Part 1

What Love Is

INTRODUCTION

The definition of love by Oxford's Dictionary tells you all one needs to know about the problems of relationships in the world today. Oxford defines love as:

"A feeling or disposition of deep affection or fondness for someone, typically arising from a recognition of attractive qualities, from natural affinity, or from sympathy and manifesting itself in concern for the other's welfare and pleasure in his or her presence (distinguished from sexual love at sense 4a); great liking, strong emotional attachment; (similarly) a feeling or disposition of benevolent attachment experienced towards a group or category of people, and (by extension) towards one's country or another impersonal object of affection."

An additional definition provided by Oxford includes:

"An intense feeling of romantic attachment based on an attraction felt by one person for another; intense liking and concern for another person, typically combined with sexual passion."

Scripture records various words for love that encompasses Oxford's definition. But we will find that there is one word that surpasses them all — agape love. We will see that there is a chasm between agape love and all other forms of love that are advanced in the world. It is agape love that provides the fuel for a long successful marriage.

I. THE HEBREW WORDS FOR LOVE ARE NOT AS EXACTING AS ARE THOSE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A. The verb used to translate love in the Old Testament is Ahab

1. ***"Having a strong emotional attachment to and desire either to possess or to be in the presence of the object. First, the word refers to the love a man has for a woman and a woman for a man. Such love is rooted in sexual desire, although as a rule it is desire within the bounds of lawful relationships."*** — Vines Expository Dictionary
2. ***"To have affection for (sexually or otherwise)"***. — Strong's lexicon
3. ***"It indicates desire, inclination, or affection, whether human or divine."*** — Robert Girdlestone's Synonyms of the Old Testament

B. The nouns used for love in the Old Testament include:

1. Agab — is used of a flirtatious type of love as seen in the nations of Israel playing the harlot. Ez. 23:5, 7, 9
2. Chashaq — is similar to philos in the Greek which means “**to cling, that is, join, delight in.**” --- Strong’s lexicon cf. Deut. 7:7
3. Ahabah can be used of many types of love and is driven by the context to determine which. Gen. 29:20 (of love between a man and a woman); 1st Sam. 18:3; 20:17 (of love between friends)
4. Dodim — “the impulse of the heart, or of sexual affection.” Prov. 7:18 (of the appeal by the strange woman);

II. THERE ARE FOUR GREEK WORDS USED FOR LOVE IN SCRIPTURE.

- A. Eros is translated in the Septuagint — “***This is characteristically the word for love between the sexes, for the love of a man for a maid; it always has a predominantly physical side, and it always involves sexual love***” — William Barclay cf. Prov. 7:18

- B. Philos — “***This is the highest word in secular Greek for love. It describes a warm, intimate, tender relationship of body, mind and spirit. It includes the physical side of love, for the verb philein can mean to kiss or to caress, but it includes very much more.***” — William Barclay (“it is true that it describes the highest kind of human love, but it is also true that the light of philia can flicker and its warmth grow cold”)
 1. It is to be added to the believer’s faith. 2 Pet. 1:7
 2. Women learn to use toward their husbands. Tit. 2:4

- C. Storge — is a word used to describe love for one’s family. Rom. 1:31; 2 Tim. 3:3

- D. Agape — “***is the spirit in the heart which will ever seek anything but the highest good of its fellow-men. It does not matter how its fellow-men treat it; it does not matter what and who its fellow-men are; it does not matter what their attitude is to it, it will never seek anything but their highest and their best good.***” — William Barclay
 1. Agape love’s ultimate demonstration of self-sacrifice is the love the Father showed for mankind. 1st John 3:16
 2. Agape’s selflessness is demonstrated in a believer laying down the things important to him for other saints. 1st John 3:17
 3. Agape’s selflessness is demonstrated in not working evil towards another. Rom. 13:10

CONCLUSION