

THREE KINDS OF LOVE

Agape - The biblical love exemplified by Christ that is available to all believers because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is a volitional commitment to give; to serve.

Commitment

264 mean can blow you off because → choose to serve *John 21:15-17)
Eph. 5:25
1John 3:16-17

Agape' love is not purely an emotion. 1John 3:16-17 tells us it is a volitional commitment to give; to meet one another's needs - especially at your own personal expense. as Christ loved the Church

Read John 13:38. Jesus asks Peter ... "will you lay down your life for Me?"

Phileo - from the Greek "famileo" meaning family, brotherhood. In John 21:15 Peter was only capable of Phileo love. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit had not taken place as this was before the Resurrection.

Rom. 12:10

Eros - The Greeks defined Eros as "the passion that overwhelms". This corresponds to the modern concept of "romantic love". We are presented with the "soap opera" love ethic. Listed are the ingredients necessary for it to succeed:

- soft lights, music
- Cosmetic mastery
- Perfect bodies; youth
- alcohol

Mt 5:27

"Romance in the pants"

changing partner according to need and interest

We are faced with a dangerous modern myth that is based solely on eros love. It has proved not only to be a despairing belief for Christians, but also for the world system that embraces it. One out of every two marriages fail. Its substitute - the live-in relationship - is temporary and shakey at best. We live in a world where real commitment isn't even expected.

Eros, or passion, is not all wrong. It was created by God and meant to be placed in His appointed slot - within the bonds of marriage.

Gen. 2:24. "For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife. AND THEY SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." (United)

God created and blessed sex before the fall. He is positive toward it. He is only down on its misuse. Sex in the right relationship is part of His Perfect Will.

1 Cor 7:11

Rm 14:13

(Heb. 13:4

1 Cor. 7:1-2)

Note: In Gen. 2:24, the "leaving" (the marriage) comes before "cleaving" (sex).

Passion & romance alone is entirely inadequate as a basis for a permanent life commitment. Marriage is built on the foundation of Agape' love with the proper eros attitude - that sexual expression of love is a gift from God to those He binds together as one flesh.

(Rm 15:1-2)

THIS " THING" CALLED L-O-V-E :

Man has forever attempted to describe "Love". Hugh Hefner has declared "I have everything but 'true love'". In college my friends and I enjoyed rattling off a little saying, "Love is the feeling you feel when you feel the feeling you never felt before". (We never thought of applying this description to falling off the side of a mountain).

The soap opera ethic tells us it only happens "in the afternoon". Hollywood says love is "never having to say your're sorry". Nothing could be further from Biblical truth!

In the 1960's, the Doors sang a song "Hello I love you, won't you tell me your name?"

People are desperately searching for love. We all need love. We were born with an inner need for love and cannot live without it.

Let's begin by saying what love is not.

It is not a "Cinderella Syndrome" when a girl is waiting for Prince Charming. This is better called infatuation. There is a vast difference between it and real love.

Infatuation	Love
Says "I love me -I want you"	Says "I love you. I want to give to you."
A feeling	Feeling <u>plus</u> commitment
Love of emotion	Love of <u>devotion</u>
Only emotions are affected	Both emotions & the will are involved
"Fall" into	"Build" into; requires time
Impatient; needs met <u>now</u>	Patient; willingness to allow it to grow at a rate beneficial to both
Based on physical; mostly biological	Physical attraction, yes -but grounded in spiritual concern & caring
Easy to do	Requires investment of self
Basically selfish -more interested in satisfying self & the "feeling"	basically selfless; interested in the welfare & spiritual growth of the other person
Comes & goes	Steadfast; not subject to momentary feelings
Emphasis on "getting"	Emphasis on "giving"
Seeks own satisfaction of needs- emotional & physical	Seeks highest good for the other
weakened by time & separation	commitment grows even through loneliness
It questions itself, doubt is always present	It is not a mystical, subjective thing

Temporary

Defined by "highs & lows"
of circumstances

Grows into permanence

Defined by commitment of the
will - regardless of circumstances

BOTH

CAN give unselfishly & have a
high level of communication, but.......is motivated by feelings
that disappear
---...is motivated by Agapè
commitment

"Love is not naïve. Anyone who believes that God guarantees a successful marriage to every Christian is in for a shock. This is not to say that He is disinterested in the choice of a mate, or that He will not answer a specific request for guidance on this all-important decision. Certainly His will should be sought in such a critical matter,

God does not perform routine matchmaking service for everyone who worships Him. He has given us judgment, common sense, and discretionary powers, and He expects us to exercise these abilities in all areas of relationships. Those who believe otherwise are likely to enter marriage thinking, "God would have stopped us if He didn't approve." To such confident people I can only say, "Lotsa luck!". "

Dr. James Dobson

We learn to exercise the abilities Dr. Dobson mentions through prayer, reading the Word, our ministry in the Body, and most important also, through the people in the Body that God uses for His counsel.

Dr. Dobson answers the question: "Is it better to marry just anyone than to remain single and lonely?" by stating that it is less painful to be searching for an end to loneliness than to be embroiled in the emotional combat of a sour marriage.

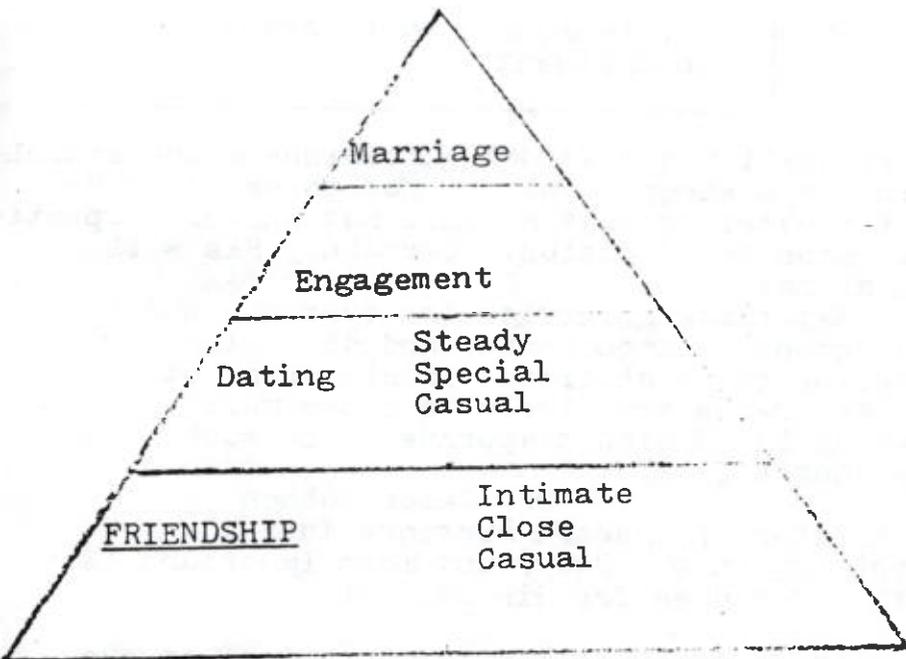
The fear of never finding a mate can cause a single person to ignore his better judgment and compromise his own standards. We say: "He isn't a Christian, but maybe I can influence him after we're married. He drinks too much, but he'll change. We don't have much in common, but i'm sure we'll learn to love each other more as time passes.

This kind of rationalization is based on a desperate hope for a matrimonial miracle, but storybook endings are uncommon events. When one plunges into marriage despite the obvious warning flags, he is gambling with the remaining years of his earthly existence.

A bad marriage is among the most miserable experiences on earth. It is filled with rejection and hurt feelings and hatred and broken children and sleepless nights. Certainly, a solitary walk as a single person can be a meaningful and fulfilling life; at least, it does not involve "a house divided against itself".

Paul observes in ICor. 7:32-34: "One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but, one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife...". This is Paul's observation, not his wish. Unfortunately, this observation is still as true today as when it was written. Paul says that if this is the case we should stay single. But if we marry, we need the determination to resist this selfishness.

LEVELS OF OPPOSITE-SEX RELATIONSHIPS



Each level is based upon the level beneath it and IS VITALLY DEPENDENT ON SUCCESS IN THE LOWER LEVEL. The better one succeeds in the lower levels, the better he will succeed in the next level.

FRIENDSHIP

Friendship is the largest and the most important level. It is the FOUNDATION STONE upon which the succeeding levels rest. This is where stability and strength are necessary.

Here is where we learn to practice "agape" love. It is a learned ability that must be developed throughout each level of relationships. It reaches its zenith with intimate relationships.

The ability to practice agape love at the intimate level is crucial to the preparation for marriage. Therefore, we begin by practicing agape, love in non-romantic, intimate relationships - best learned with someone of your own sex.