

The Grapevine

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth. IITimothy 2:15
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No Greater Love

by Jack Northart

If you were to ask people in the world today what the greatest love that ever existed was, you might hear answers like, Romeo and Juliet, Samson and Delilah or even David and Bathsheba. However, the greatest love that has ever existed and still exists today is from our God our Heavenly Father.

The Greek word *agape* (noun) or *agapeo* (verb) is what this word love is translated from.

John 3:16

For God so loved [Gr. *agapeo*] the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

To love somebody so much that you would be willing to sacrifice your own child would be close to what God did for the whole world. Yet, the world rarely appreciates it. God so loved that He gave His only begotten son. This love is almost incomprehensible, but the Word of God declares it to be true.

I John 4:10

Herein is love, not that we loved [Gr. *agapao*], God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation [complete payment] for our sins.

This love of God is deliberate and it is active. He planned for us to be the object of His love so He took the necessary action to show us how much He really loves us. The action He took was sacrificing His only begotten Son to make the complete payment for our sins. He cares about everything in our lives.

Romans 5:8

But God commendeth [favorably introduced] his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

The word commendeth is made up of two Greek words: *sun*, meaning "with" and *histemi*, meaning "stand" or "cause to stand." Hence, *sunistemi* is "to cause to stand with." E.W. Bullinger suggests translating commendeth as "an introduction to one's acquaintance and favorable notice." So our God favorably introduced His love to us in the sacrifice of His Son. Furthermore, He decided that He would place this same love in our hearts when we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal savior.

Romans 5:5

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

He has always been Almighty God, but Pentecost marked a new beginning. He is our Father and we are His born-again children. We are as near to the heart of our Heavenly Father as Jesus is. The new love nature that God has placed in our hearts is the love of the Father. It takes our effort and our discipline to bring this love into evidence. It is not necessarily a good feeling that we have when it strikes our fancy, but rather a deliberate act of the will. It takes accepting God at His Word and taking believing action on it.

Luke 10:27

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as

thyself.

How are we to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength?

Psalm 119:11

Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Loving God with all of our hearts necessitates first putting God's Word into our hearts. This takes studying it and meditating upon it. We study it and we believe it. After Luke states that we should love God with all of our hearts, it says we should love God with all our souls. The soul of a person is the real individual. Leviticus 17:11 states that the life of the flesh (soul) is in the blood. If the soul life is in the blood, it must naturally affect the physical life, since the blood flows throughout the body. That is why as our souls prosper we have health and physical strength.

III John 2

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

To love God with all of our souls is to simply practice it in our lives. The more you put the Word of God in your life into practice, the more you receive health and prosperity. You must love God with all of your heart, which is the innermost part of your mind, and then with all of our soul (your full life).

Next we learn that we are to love God with all of our strength. Strength is ability in action. When we love God in everything that we do, we receive it, we retain it, then we release it in our actions. When we operate the law of believing, we act and then we will get results. If we simply act without believing God, then there will be no results. To love God with all of our strength means that we take action according to the revealed Word of God. We will operate the power that God has given us and we will get results.

Acts 3:6,7

Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

By walking with the love of God and operating the power of God in his life, Peter healed this man that was lame from his mother's womb. Love was in operation. The result was that the man's feet and ankle bones received strength.

Finally, it states in Luke that we should love God with all of our minds. Although the mind is the last in the listing, it is actually the starting point. We cannot take our old minds out of our head and insert one that is perfectly renewed to God's Word. But as we gradually put more thoughts of God's Word into our minds, it enters our hearts, and from there emanates into our lives and our actions. Then we love God with all of our heart, soul, strength and mind.

Love is the badge of Christianity. Love is what people on the outside see first if we are putting it on in our minds as we are supposed to. As I Corinthians 13 states, the love of God is patient. In other words, it puts up with people. The love of God is kind; it's a soothing goodness. The love of God rejoices in the truth or rejoices in Godly victories and successes. The love of God bears all things. This means it covers over with silence. There could be something that is scandalous and could hurt someone's reputation. The love of God covers it over with silence. The love of God believes all things, which means it believes all according to the truth of the Word. The love of God hopes all things. Biblically, hope anticipates for that which is not available now. We hope for the return of Christ when we shall be gathered together with him (I Thessalonians 4:14-18). And finally, the love of God endures all things. To endure is to remain when others have departed from the household of faith. We are to continue firm with a patient frame of mind. We stand!

I Corinthians 13: 13

And now abideth faith, hope, charity [agape], these three; but the greatest of these is charity [agape, the love of God].