



The Four Loves

Care Group & Equipping Ministry

Introduction

What is love? (“Baby don’t hurt me, don’t hurt me, no more” - Did the song by Haddaway pop-up in your head?). The word love is thrown around nowadays. It has been reduced from an intentional giving of self, to your favourite burger at Shake Shack. But do you really know what it means? In this four part series, you’ll explore the **four Greek words for love - Phileo (friendship), Storge (family), Eros (romance) and Agape (unconditional love from God)**. You’ll explore biblical demonstrations of these loves and what it means for you.

Session 1 – Phileo (friendship)

Phileo love is a friendship love between brothers of the faith, sisters of the faith, and one another. Phileo is most commonly found in groups. We will focus on the friendship of David and Jonathan - one that was close and beyond the “love of women”. In today’s culture, it may be hastily mistaken for homosexuality, but scripture says otherwise – by leaning into an intentional and committed friendship.

Please pick and choose from the list of questions – you do not have to complete them all.

Part 1 – Friends

- Share about your closest friends. What makes them so special in your life?

Part 2 – 1 Samuel 18:1-4, supplementary verse 2 Samuel 1:26

- What does being “one in spirit” with somebody look like?
- Jonathan loved David as himself. What is the significance of loving yourself? When does loving yourself become too much?
- How easy/hard is it for you to love others? How does Jesus help us to love others well?
- Why do we pick and choose who/how much to love?
- What was symbolic about Jonathan giving David his armour? (sacrifice). What have you sacrificed for your friends?
- Jonathan and David had a beautiful friendship, but their friendship also highlights the tragedy David faced by marrying multiple wives. In a Biblical marriage, should one have a friend that loves you, or knows you *more* than your spouse? Why or why not?

Part 3 – 1 John 3:16-17 – How do we ‘Phileo’ our friends?

- Are Phileo friendships unrealistic in today’s culture? Say more.
- What is Jesus’ clear instructions for us? Share a time when you have lived this out.
- What makes us hesitant to “lay down our lives” for others?
- As we Phileo others, what happens to us, and our friends?
- What healthy boundaries are needed for healthy Phileo friendships?

Reflect

1. Who are you as a friend? Are you a giver/taker or a healthy mix of both?



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Session 2 – Storge (family)

The concept of family is extremely important in the Bible. Whilst we may glance over scripture, we may also glance over the intentional phrases and words which allude to a strong family focus. Family “Storge” love is very different to other loves, as it is a covenantal and decisional love – a commitment love. Storge love in some ways is also instinctual.

Please pick and choose from the list of questions – you do not have to complete them all.

Part 1 – Your family

- What words describe your family of upbringing? Share more
- What would you change/do differently?

Part 2 – Romans 12:9-13 – Storge

The word Storge only appears once in the Bible. Paul uses it in Romans 12:10 where it says “Be devoted to one another in love (storge).”

- What does sincerity within family look like? How easy/hard is this to do?
- Verse 9 uses the word “cling” – what does that word signify?
- In addition to birth families, Paul also refers to the church family. How does the church represent family? How is relationship with family mirrored with fellow church members?

Part 3 – Ephesians 6:1-4 – Children

- What could verse 2, “to honour your father and mother”, look like in your home?
- Are there times we should not submit to authority/our parents? How come?
- What have your parents done well? What would you change?

Reflect

1. Family love can be difficult. How do you view God's ‘fatherly’ love in spite of your family?
2. How can you honour and love your parents/siblings in godly ways?



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Session 3 – Eros (romance)

Eros is an intimate, romantic/physical love, reserved for a husband and wife in marriage. Eros is usually associated with the word erotic which has become extremely sexualized. What was the original intent for Eros, physical intimacy, aka sex?

Please pick and choose from the list of questions – you do not have to complete them all.

Note: Consider dividing into male/female groups for greater transparency.

Part 1 – Today's culture and influences

- What does culture tell us about sex? What do you agree or disagree on?
- Where did you learn about sex from? What do you think of these influences?

Part 2 – 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 – Our impulses

- How open is your home on discussing healthy sexuality?
- At which point does sexual temptation become “sexual immorality”? Why?
- What makes sexual sin so tempting?
- What could undergird Paul's passion for sexual integrity?

Part 3 – Galatians 5:19-20 – The consequences

- What are the consequences of unrestrained sexual indulgence?
- Where have you seen the consequences?

Part 4 – 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 – God's view of Eros

- How does this passage juxtapose modern society? How readily would you abide?
- What is the benefit of sex as defined in the context of marriage?
- What are the implications of verse 4? How does God value both male and female?
- What happens when sex is freely given and taken outside of marriage?
- How is sex beautiful in God's eyes?

Reflect

1. How can you spur one another to remain pure until marriage?
2. How can you remain pure within marriage?



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Session 4 – Agape (Unconditional love of God)

The greatest of the four loves, Agape is almost always used to describe the love that is of and from God, whose very nature is love itself: “God is love” (1 John 4:8). God does not merely love; He *is* love. Everything God does flows from His love. Agape is also used to describe our love for God (Luke 10:27). Agape love is beautifully described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:4-5.

Please pick and choose from the list of questions – you do not have to complete them all.

Part 1 – Genesis 3:9, Luke 19:10 – God seeks

- How had/has God sought after you? Share your experiences
- If you don't believe God sought after you, share your experience

Part 2 – 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 – The “love” passage

- Which aspect(s) of love appeals to you the most? Share more
- Which aspect(s) of love is most difficult for you to live out? How come?
- How realistic is this verse today? If you were to modify it, what would you change?

Part 3 – Living it out

- Why can't anyone, or anything else satisfy us the way God claims to?
- What is dangerous about substituting other gods in place of the Agape love of God?
- Where can you begin practicing Agape love to others? Who can receive this?

Reflect

1. What prevents you from fully receiving the Agape love of God?
2. What could change if you allowed God's love to fully impact your life and relationships?