

### Prayer Quest Lesson 3- Love—the Reason Why We Pray

In our lesson this week Dee Duke points out that Love is really spelled TIME. Our relationship with God is like every other personal relationship. If we do not spend time with the one we purport to love, how can we get to know them intimately? He says, **“Prayer is an expression of love to God. It’s also an expression of love toward people.”**

1. How can prayer be an expression of love toward God? Toward people?

In Scripture we find that Jesus was among people wherever He went while He was on earth. He desired a personal relationship with those He walked among because **He loved them** and He still desires a personal relationship with each one of His children because **He loves us**. “It is truly a delight and a pleasure to our Father when we seek Him with all our hearts. Intimacy with God must remain our priority, for it is out of such fellowship that our lives become a fragrance to Jesus, full of His presence and power. When we have been with Jesus, it is evident to all around. The sweet aroma of Heaven is life and light to the world and as we carry the presence of Christ within us we are able to shift the spiritual atmosphere around us as our lives become the message we live and breathe.”<sup>1</sup>

**Love is the reason we pray-love for God and love for man.** In the English language we have only one word for love and that leads to much confusion. We love pizza, we love shopping, we love God and we love our family and friends. We love the lost and we love golfing. Do you see the problem-loving God cannot be the same as loving pizza!

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<sup>1</sup> Brown, Catherine, “She Broke the Jar” Elijahlist Publications, Albany, OR. 4/9/08.

The Greeks clarified love with three different words and reviewing them helps us determine what kind of love is the reason we pray.

- **Eros:** means longing or desire. This is a selfish love based on my desires. It is often associated with sexual love which becomes possessive, conquering, controlling, or destructive unless it is redeemed by the presence of God. God created the physical attraction between men and women, but He did not intend it to become selfish eros. This word for love is not used in the New Testament but was commonly used by the ancient Greeks who adapted it from the name of their god of love (eros).
- **Philos:** means the love one has for a friend or companion, brotherly love. This love is characterized by esteeming someone highly, sharing experiences and like-interests. 1 Peter 3:8 and other Scriptures urge us to love our brothers. Philos can be a motivation to pray for those we value as friends or brothers, but there is a biblical love that is much higher. Philos is **love by chance and is rooted in the emotions.**
- **Agape:** Agape is a divine capacity to love. It is sacrificial and unconditional. “Agape denotes an undefeatable benevolence and unconquerable goodwill that always seeks the highest good of the other person no matter what he does. It is the self-giving love that gives freely without asking anything in return and does not consider the worth of its object.”<sup>2</sup> Only God is capable of Agape, but we are commanded to love this way. (John 13:34-35) We have the capacity for Agape because the Holy Spirit resides in us, but the only way we

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<sup>2</sup> The New Spirit-Filled Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002, Word Wealth, Romans 5:5, p. 1556.

can grow in Agape is by spending time with the One who imparts more of His love into our hearts. Romans 5:5, “Now hope does not disappoint us because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given us.” As we spend time in the Lord’s presence, we become more like Him and are able to express His love (agape) back to Him and to others. 1 John 4:7-21. Unlike philo, agape is **love by choice** and is **rooted in the will**. We are commanded to love God and others in Matthew 22:37, The Great Commandment. Philo is never used in a command to men to love God but rather agape.

▪ **Characteristics of Agape-1 Corinthians 13:4-8)**

1. Agape is **patient**. “a person who is able to avenge himself but refrains from doing so.”
2. Agape is **kind**. “to show oneself useful”
3. Agape **does not envy**. “a passionate sense of jealousy that can lead to murder.”
4. Agape **does not boast**. A person who truly loves does not have to exalt himself, because God will.
5. Agape is **not proud**. Pride leads to destruction and shame.
6. Agape is **not rude**. “to behave in an ugly, indecent, unseemly or unbecoming manner.”
7. Agape is **not self-seeking**. “Seeking one’s own interests.”
8. Agape is **not easily angered**.
9. Agape **keeps no record of wrongs**. “forgiving and merciful”

- 10. Agape does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth.**
- 11. Agape bears all things and protects.** “to cover over in silence and not expose the faults of others”
- 12. Agape always trusts and believes.** “Having faith in someone.”
- 13. Agape always hopes.** “To expect with desire.”
- 14. Agape always perseveres in endurance.** “To remain under-to hang in there”
- 15. Agape never fails.** “To have effect, and not be in vain.”

Jim Goll writes, “I am convinced that the last days’ battle is a battle of passions. The world flaunts her lustful passions daily across the stage of life full blown with no shame. But the Church has often been anemic in this area. It is time for the bride of Christ to be filled with passion for her Bridegroom and perform extravagant displays of lavish love. What better place to exhibit boundless zeal and holy passion than in the place of prayer? Prayer is the bridal chamber of intimacy with our Master.”<sup>3</sup> We only grow in love in His presence and we enter His presence with thanksgiving and praise (Psalm 100) two forms of prayer.

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<sup>3</sup> Goll, Jim W., Kneeling on the Promises, Chosen Books, 1999, pp. 58-59.