

- I. Session 60: The Love of God Part 2: God’s Love for others in the New Testament
- a. Purpose: In this session we shall explore the attribute of the love of God as taught in the New Testament and also draw implication for the Christian life as a result of our study.
 - b. What is the love of God? The words in the Greek New Testament:
 - i. *Phileo*
 1. The noun form appears 30 times and the verbal form appears 25 times.¹
 2. While its basic meaning include love of a friend, there are times it is used synonymously and interchangeably with *Agape*.
 - ii. *Agape*
 1. Before the New Testament, in the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint this noun was appears 18 times and its verbal form over 250 times.²
 2. It is the primary form of “love” that appears in the New Testament.
 3. Sometimes people think this word can only refer to good love but we also see this noun and verb use to describe sinners wrongly loving the wrong thing.
 - a. “*Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places.*” (Luke 11:43)
Jesus spoke this as a rebuke for the Pharisees and not a virtue.
 - b. “*for Demas, having loved this present [a]world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to [b]Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.*” (2 Timothy 4:10)
Demas love for the world resulted in apostasy and desertion of the Apostle Paul.
 4. Biblically it is a love that includes action but more than action, with emotions as well. Note Paul’s use of the term: “*And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body [a]to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.*” (1 Corinthians 13:3)
 5. With that said as a general rule: “This kind of love is love that loves even the unlovely and unlovable. It is a self-sacrificing, self-giving love It is given not because of the desert of the recipients but because of the giver’s choice. It is love that seeks the benefit of the recipients.”³
 - c. Summarizing definition:
 - i. Love is one of those things that we know but can be hard to define.

¹ “φιλέω” in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 4:606.

² “αγαπάω” in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 1:104.

³ John Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 349.

- ii. From John Frame: “Jack Cottrell offers an excellent definition of God’s love: “his self-giving affection for his image-bearing creatures and his unselfish concern for their well-being, that leads him to act on their behalf and for their happiness and welfare.”⁴
 - iii. Love of course is described in **1 Corinthians 13**.
 - iv. My definition: Strong emotions and will that results in action for the good of others which also produces the effect of joy in seeing others being better off.
- d. What does the Bible teaches about the love of God for others in the New Testament?
- i. Statement that God is love
 - 1. “*The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*” (**1 John 4:8**)
 - a. Notice it says “*God is love.*”
 - b. In context “*God is love*” is given as a reason for something since the word “*for*” appears in “*for God is love.*”
 - c. Therefore the implication is this: “*The one who does not love does not know God*” (**1 John 4:8a**)
 - 2. “*We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*” (**1 John 4:16**)
 - a. Notice it says “*God is love.*”
 - b. The Apostle John states that his readers and him both “*have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us.*” **Do we believe this as well?**
 - c. Again there’s implication of knowing God’s love: “*and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*” (**1 John 4:16b**)
 - ii. God demonstrated His love through Jesus Christ
 - 1. Note: We have already seen in the Old Testament that certainly God is love; what is different in the New Testament is the depths and details of God’s love for others involves Jesus Christ! That is, the love is Christ-centered!
 - 2. “*We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*” (**1 John 3:16**)
 - a. In context this is talking about Jesus Christ.
 - b. Jesus has given his life and that is a loving act.
 - c. This act is something we can know God and Christ loves for us.
 - 3. “*By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*” (**1 John 4:9-10**)

⁴ John Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2002), 414.

- a. This passage begins by telling us what is the subject manner: *“By this the love of God was manifested in us...”* (1 John 4:9a)
 - b. So how has God manifested His love? *“God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him”* (1 John 4:9b)
 - c. The Son Himself shows the love of God by being *“the propitiation for our sins.”* (1 John 4:9-10)
 - d. Propitiation means satisfying the wrath of God.
 - 4. Other passages: Ephesians 2:4-6, Titus 3:4, Revelation 1:5.
 - 5. How much did Christ love us?
 - a. We already seen that Christ’ love means giving up His own life but we see His love is seen in its depth when we consider who we are towards Him.
 - b. A principle stated in John 15:13: *“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”*
 - c. But Jesus’ love towards us was not dying for a friend, but for His enemies: *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* (Romans 5:8)
- iii. God demonstrated His love through the Father’s spiritual adoption of us
 - 1. *“See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”* (1 John 3:1)
 - a. The *“love the Father”* has is mentioned as *“great”*
 - b. It’s described as being *“bestowed on us”*
 - c. What is the content of the Father’s love is *“that we would be called children of God”*
 - 2. *“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before [d]Him. In love 5 [e]He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,”* (Ephesians 1:4-5)
 - a. Notice that the subject Here is God the Father.
 - b. Here God the Father brings about our *“adoption as sons”* (v.5)
 - c. The means that the Father brought this about is choosing us and predestining us.
- iv. God the Spirit demonstrate His love by producing love within us
 - 1. *“For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.”* (2 Timothy 1:7)
 - a. Paul first denied what kind of spirit that God did not gives us: *“a spirit of timidity”*
 - b. In contrast to that, God reveals what kind of Spirit He did give us: *“but of power and love and discipline.”*

- c. Of course love is specifically mentioned!
 - 2. “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*” (Galatians 5:22)
 - v. Notice that we have seen all three members of the Trinity demonstrating their love towards others.
- e. Implication for the Christian Life
 - i. Christians must love God given how much He loves us!
 - ii. Christians loving God means we must obey God: “*He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.*” (John 14:21; cf John 14:23 and 15:10).
 - iii. Christians love for God means we must not love the world! “*Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*” (1 John 2:15) Note: A sign of not having the love of God the Father is loving the world.
 - iv. Christians must love others because God has loved us (John 13:34, 15:12 and Ephesians 5:2).
 - v. Christians must love others even to the point of loving them as ourselves (Romans 13:9, Galatians 5:14, James 2:8)
 - vi. Christian husbands must love their wives because Christ has loved the church: “*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,*” (Ephesians 5:25)
 - vii. If the Love of God abide in you, help in a practical way a brother in need: “*But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his [a]heart [b]against him, how does the love of God abide in him?*” (1 John 3:17)
 - viii. We must love even to the point of willing to die for the church: “*We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*” (1 John 3:16) **So do you love the church enough to be willing to die for it and for those within the church?**
 - ix. **Struggling with loving God?** Meditate on Christ and His love. His love will:
 - 1. Be what controls you: “*For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;*” (2 Corinthians 5:14)
 - 2. Be the reason why you no longer live for yourself: “*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*” (Galatians 2:20)