

Love Or Lust – Which Is It?

The word “love” as used in society is **not** very well defined.

What one person means by love may be totally different to what another understands.

The basis of such misunderstanding is to think that “love” is always linked with emotions and sex.

In the Hellenistic Greek, that is the original language of the New Testament of God’s Holy Bible, there are two words that are translated love.

The classical Greek word used to express love, “eros” which is the root of the word “eroticism” which is love of a sexual nature **is not found anywhere in the New Testament.**

The Greek word “*ēpithimua*” which has a sexual connotation is translated “lust”, is something that we should avoid as it is linked with sin [to miss the mark or goal we should be aiming at, so missing the prize.]

Romans 6:12 [Amplified Bible] *“Let not sin therefore rule as king in your mortal, short-lived, perishable bodies, to make you yield to their cravings and be subject to their lusts and evil passions.”*

What then does the Christian Bible tell us that true love should be?

We find two Greek words are used.

Philēō – describes a tender affection and is the root of the word “*philadelphia*” which is the love for a brother or sister, the love of members of a family one towards another.

Agapé – a spontaneous love given irrespective of “rights” or response of the recipient. This is the love that the Creator God is and has towards all of humanity.

John 21:15-17 [NIV] *“When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”*

We have in this passage of scripture both words in use.

Jesus used the word “*agapé*” while **Peter** responded with the word “*philēō*”.

Peter looked on Jesus at this time as a “*brother*” towards whom he had great affection.

This is the full extent that a human being can love without help from the Creator God.

Jesus Christ tells us we need to go beyond this human-generated brotherly love.

John 15:12-13 [NIV] *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”*

The word used throughout the passage is “*agapé*”.

How do we make this transition?

John 15:16-17 [NIV] *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.”*

Here is the key this “*agapé*” love – it is a “*fruit*” of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

How is this relationship sealed?

John 14:16-18 [NIV] *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

Jesus Christ will come to us in our relationship with the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*

One of the “*fruits*” of the Holy Spirit is love – “*agapé*” and if we have an intimate relationship with Him some of the love He has will “*rub off*” on us.

This is the only way to receive true eternal love.