



Women Building Godly Lives

*The wisest of women builds her own house,
but folly with her own hands tears it down. Prov. 14:1*

Vol 2

January 1, 2018

No. 1

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Agape Love

By Elizabeth Turner Beall

God loves the vilest sinner as much as he loves the most faithful Christian, but in that love, he also desires that “all people everywhere should repent...” (Acts 17:30 [NASB]). He loved us enough to send his only Son, but God still wants belief and obedience so we can have salvation (John 3:16-17). He wants *us* to choose *his* way.

If God did not love everyone the same, then God would be imperfect. Peter says in Acts 10:33 that God does not show partiality. James tells us in chapter 2, verse 9, that partiality is a sin, and God cannot sin. He has to love everyone the same.

God’s love for mankind is agape love, that unconditional “love-you-no-matter-what” kind of love. He is pleased with those who follow Him in obedience to His word, but that does not take anything away from his love for sinners.

The Greek word AGAPAO is a verb of action, decision, and choice, made with the mind and heart, a decision of commitment. Agape love is what God does *to* us and *for* us, and is the kind of love we humans spend a lifetime trying to show to others.

Think about how much God loves us. “So much that He gave His only begotten son.” (John 3:16) Paul, in Romans 5:8 (NASB) tells us “but God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” What a profound thought, and more love than we can ever imagine. How many of us

would willingly give our son or daughter to save any group of people? None!

God’s love for all humanity is pure and only for mankind’s sake. He doesn’t *need* to be loved back for any reason. He loves us completely, not for any goodness we might show Him, but because He knows, as our Creator, He can help us be better. And I will add, His love is so strong and pure that He is willing to *let* us choose to obey Him. He will love each one of us whether we choose to love him or not.

How do we know God’s agape love after we have become His child and part of His Kingdom? In Romans 5:15 Paul says “...hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Look at the phrase “has been poured out”. The verb is in the perfect tense meaning “settled, finished, or complete.” It’s done and we will have blessings throughout our lifetime. Paul in Romans 8:38-39 shows us that God will never leave us and is always near (James 4:8). Only we, ourselves can take us away from God. This verse also is a show of love to us who are walking daily with God. (See also 1 John 1:7-9).

How do we show our agape love to other Christians? In John 15:13 Christ said, “this is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.” Christ’s love sets our standard of what our “agape” love should be for one another.

Paul lays out what it means to have love, telling us we can say and do many things, but if it’s not sincere and done in true love, then it’s empty, wrong, and worthless (I Corinthians 13).

When Jesus said “This is my commandment, that you love one another...,” he

gave no options. He didn't say, "if you want to," or "if you're friends," or "if someone is nice to you." If we are members of the Lord's body, there simply is no choice.

What does loving one another include? Paul says "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love, give preference to one another in honor...be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind (Romans 12:10 & 16), admonish one another (Romans 15:14), bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), encourage and build up one another" (I Thessalonians 5:11).

Our goal is Agape love for each other the way God and Christ love us. It's a lifelong action we are to develop if we obey Christ's command. Let each one of us determine to learn and do this kind of love for each other as we make our journey home to heaven. We can't do it alone, but helping each other along the way, we can make it together.

NOTE: Space in this article doesn't permit a listing of all "one another" verses, but at the end of this issue they are listed with scriptures. Read, study, and work on each one.



3 Kinds of Love

AGAPAO (verb), AGAPE (noun): unconditional, "love-you-anyway-no-matter-what" kind of love

PHILEO (verb), PHILANTHROPIA (noun): a "tender affection and care" about/for others, brotherly love

EROS: sexual love

A Sister Is..

Someone special, a friend so true,
Exactly the same, yet different from you,
She knows your thoughts without a word,
Understands your feelings before they're heard;
May drift apart but remains near,
In her heart she holds you dear;
Your secrets safe, your faults untold,
A bond of trust she will uphold;
So cherish her as she does you,
For remember you are a sister, too.



Lisa Baillargeon

Love

By Wilburta Arrowood

I have really struggled with this article because there are so many aspects to the English definition of love. I love ice cream; I love good movies; I love to read; I love birthdays; and then there is I love God. That last one hardly fits the other sentiments listed above, and yet all are used correctly. Perhaps we need to consider what God calls love.

I Corinthians 13: 1-6 NASB "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. ⁴ Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

Many of these attributes are easy to demonstrate to people we know well and are comfortable around, but what about the “crazy neighbor,” or the obnoxious co-worker? And let me tell you, that super slow clerk at the grocery store is beyond unbearable, especially when I go after work and am totally exhausted and the kids are hungry and tired, too.

Does that sound familiar? Do we control our emotions and truly love people who get on our nerves? That crazy neighbor is struggling with illness or trauma you have no clue about. The obnoxious co-worker just needs a friend to talk to in order to sift through the overwhelming issues she is facing at home, or maybe the task she has been asked to do is beyond her experience and she needs a helping hand to complete. That clerk you grew so impatient with is working a double shift to cover for someone taking chemo this week. Does any of this knowledge change your attitude toward the offending person? It does for me. Getting to know a person and their circumstances makes things look totally different. I can be more sympathetic and even love them better.

I challenge you to look at people and imagine what motivates their actions. It will change your attitude and it will help you to “bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things”

Even before we start working on loving the people around us, though, we need to focus on our love for God. Just as getting to know people helps us to understand and love them more, we need to get to know God so we can understand and love Him more. There are several ways to do that, but the best way is to read and truly study your Bible. Get some study helps and dig deep.

There are many free online bibles and helps. One of the best I know of is e-Sword, a free downloadable bible software program with many versions of the bible and study helps that can be added. A few of the versions do require payment due to copyright, but most are free. Get it at <http://www.e-sword.net/> Another site is Bible Gateway, with several versions of online bibles you can search, and there are also links there to audio bibles you can listen to.

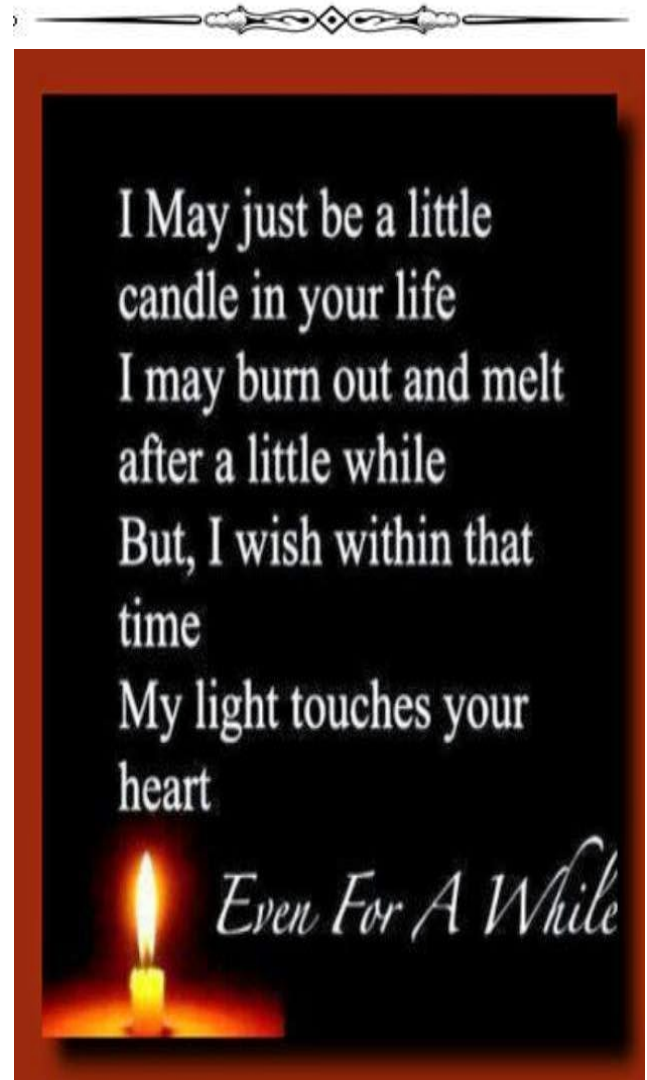
<https://www.biblegateway.com/> There is a

plethora of bible study guides here:

<http://www.biblestudyguide.org/church/index.htm>

If you struggle with how to go about this, find a friend who will read and study with you. Join a study group, or start one of your own. Attend worship services and don't skip Bible class. That is where you can ask questions and get help finding answers. Remember, there is no such thing as a “stupid question.” Everyone had to be taught what they know about God, either by personal study or from someone who has done the study earlier.

[1 John 4:8](#) says “The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” (NASB) Get to know God and His infinite love for you, so you can return His love in abundance.



The Decision

By Marlene Oleksak

Twenty years ago, while working at a homeless shelter, I met a young woman. Her potential impressed me; she was incredibly outgoing and smart. However, it was not long before I realized that she was drug addicted and manipulative. We were not emotionally close, but for years I answered her calls, treated her kindly, spoke the truth to her in love, and tried to share Jesus with her. I simply did what I thought the Lord would want me to do. A few years ago, she called me to tell me that she had gone to rehab. While there, some of the things we had talked about over the years came to mind; she was really beginning to understand and she gave her life to the Lord because her faith led her to baptism into Jesus Christ.

My experience with her has taught me many things, and reminds me that love is not an emotion, but rather a choice. I decided to act lovingly toward this young woman even when it was hard. I wish I could say that it has been my habit to make the decision to love often. Sadly, the emotional closeness that is often called love has led me to make very unloving decisions. I have come to abhor the popular saying, "follow your heart." I have followed my heart and nearly every time I have regretted it. My heart is truly deceptive (Jeremiah 17:9).

Deciding to love someone does not mean we continually endure abuse, or refuse to allow someone to reject the Gospel. Scripture tells us there is a time and place for tough love (I Corinthians 6) and a time to wash our hands of those who reject the Gospel (Matthew 10:14). It is easy to forget that tough love is love. Its purpose is to restore the erring one and to preserve the integrity of the Gospel. I have been guilty of enabling people I care about to walk further down a path away from God because I did not decide to love them and face my fear of confrontation. I have also walked away out of hurt and anger rather than love.

I am so glad God loves us perfectly. He decided to love us even when He had every reason not to (Romans 5:8). He shows tough love through discipline (Hebrews 12:6), and He stands ready to embrace those who have walked

away, if they repent and return to him (Luke 15:11-32). I pray we will all learn to be as longsuffering with others as God has been with us, to offer forgiveness as freely as He has forgiven us, to be willing to extend tough love when called for, and to decide every day to love others the way He loves us.

Who do you need to decide to love today?

What is it that would hold you back from loving that person?



The best kind of people are the ones that come into your life, and make you see the sun where you once saw clouds. The people that believe in you so much, you start to believe in you too. The people that love you, simply for being you. The once in a lifetime kind of people.

“One Another”

Abound in love for one another (I Thessalonians 3:12)

Accept one another (Romans 15:7)

Admonish one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16)

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love (Romans 12:10)

Be hospitable to one another without complaint (I Peter 4:9)

Be kind to one another (Ephesians 4:32)

Be of the same mind to one another (Romans 12:16)

Be subject to one another (Ephesians 5:21)

Be tender-hearted to one another (Ephesians 4:32)

Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)

Bear with one another (Colossians 3:13)

Building up of one another (Romans 14:19; I Thessalonians 5:11)

Comfort one another with these words (I Thessalonians 4:18)

Confess your sins to one another (James 5:15)

Consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24)

Do not complain against one another (James 5:9)

Do not lie to one another (Colossians 3:9)

Do not speak against one another (James 4:11)

Encourage one another (I Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13)

Forgive one another (Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:32)

Give preference to one another in honor (Romans 12:10)

Greet one another with a holy kiss/kiss of love (Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 16:20; I Peter 5:14)

Keep fervent in your love for one another (I Peter 4:8)

Let us not become boastful with one another (Galatians 5:26)

Let us not challenge one another (Galatians 5:26)

Let us not envy one another (Galatians 5:26)

Let us not judge one another (Romans 14:13)

Love one another (John 13:35; 15:12, 17;

Romans 13:8; I John 3:1,11; 4:7, 11-12)

No one repay another with evil (I Thessalonians 5:15)

Pray for one another (James 5:15)

Pursue things which make peace with one another (Romans 14:19)

Regard one another more important than yourselves (Philippians 2:3)

Show tolerance for one another (Ephesians 4:2)

Speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19)

Take care that you are not consumed by one another (Galatians 5:15)

We have fellowship with one another if... (I John 1:7)



Questions for discussion/meditation:

1. When is it easiest for you to love your sisters in Christ? Why?
2. When is it most difficult to love your sisters in the Lord? Why?
3. Why is it important that we love one another in the Lord?

Ideas for applying this topic:

1. In the margin of your Bible at Romans 5:8, write your name. Now read the verse out loud and insert your name. It should read something like this:

“God demonstrated His own love for (your name), while (your name) was yet a sinner, Christ died for her.”
2. Read I Corinthians 13:4-8 along with the “one another” verses given. As you read each one, evaluate how well you do each one.
3. Choose one item to work on for a given time. Continue working and adding other items as you develop more love for others.
4. List ways you already show love for your sisters.

