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If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, or aren't sure and would like to become one, then you need to believe that Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God, that he was God who became a man, that he lived a sinless and perfect life, keeping the Law of God perfect in every way, that he kept faith perfectly, and that he was crucified on that cruel cross for your sins, mine and the entire world- he died for our sins! His death on the cross paid the penalty fully, one time for all sins that we have ever committed and that we will ever commit. He died; he went down into the bowels of the earth, even into Hell, and was raised from the dead on the third day in a resurrected, eternal body. He ascended back into heaven, was seated at the right hand of God, and is now Lord over heaven and earth. He is coming again to judge the world, to raise the dead, where he will give an eternal, resurrected, glorified body to everyone that has believed on him as their Lord and Savior, and to establish his kingdom one earth.

You come become a Christian right now as you read this, by personally placing your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior; believing that he is God's only begotten Son, that he died on the cross for you and that he was raised from the dead and is now seated in heaven at the right hand of God the Father. *“Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..” Acts 16:31a* And when you do trust Christ, and Christ alone, as your Lord and Savior, then go to God the Father in heaven in prayer and tell him so. Tell him that you have believed on his Son, thank him for his Son, and thank him for forgiving your sins and saving you! *“That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord”, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” Romans 10:9,10* *“For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Romans 10:13* *“Therefore, being justified by faith (declared righteous), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1*

Personal Love Versus Impersonal Love

A. Introduction

It seems that love is the main topic of just about everybody's conversations, the themes of the shows we watch on TV and the music we listen to. Virtually everybody, including Christians, want to have it, and devote much of their lives in pursuit of it. But the love that they are seeking after is not the love taught about in the Bible but a different kind of love. What they are seeking after is **romance**.

The Bible has much to say about **love**, but there are only two kinds of love that God has for the Christian, *agape* love and *phileo* love. Both loves are available for the believer in Christ and one of them, *agape*, is mandated by God. The problem is that many Christians are seeking another kind of love other than the two biblical loves.

What they are looking for is a love that was sought after in ancient Greece and still being sought after today. This kind of love is identified by the word *eros*. Society has mistranslated *eros* today into the idea of being erotic, a synonym for pornography, which isn't the case. **Eros** love was an intoxicating love. It so controlled the individual's life and senses that if they were "in love" they never wanted to be free from it. And if they were free from it, they never wanted to go back to it because of the pain it brought to the emotions.

The ancient Greeks basically avoided the *agape* love idea because it was too sterile for them. It didn't have the all-consuming magic of *eros*. They even worshipped a deity that they had named, "Eros", (with a long o). Of course we know that it wasn't a god, but a demon. This should start to raise some flags in the minds of biblical Christians.

Eros is not found in the New Testament at all, and all the ideas connected with *eros* defined it as being in the sphere of the phenomenon we know today that we call romance, and would best be defined as "being in love". So, there were three Greek words for love, *agape*, *phileo* and *eros*, and *eros* was never a spiritual concept that God has for his people, only *agape* and *phileo*.

So what we're going to do is look at the characteristics of the two biblical loves, *agape* and *phileo*, how they come about, their applications to life and give them terms that best describe their characteristics. The terms we will use for *agape* love is impersonal love and the term for *phileo* love will be personal love.

B. Defining the Impersonal Love of Agape.

1. "Charity suffereth long" - η αγαπη μακροθυμει

The word **charity** is how the KJV has translated *agape* and means love. The love, *agape*, suffers long, or is patient.

Makrothumeo is a compound of two words, *makros* - long, and *thumos* - anger. Together

they make up the idea of being long-tempered, which is just an expression for not losing your temper or getting angry at people.

Makrothumeo is a people word. *Hupomeno*, **endurance**, deals with patience while going through a trial and *makrothumia* refers to patience while dealing with people. It is one of the manifestations of impersonal love produced in the believer by the filling of the Holy Spirit. “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*” Galatians 5:22

A book can be written just about this subject of the need for patience when dealing with people. People can be insulting, rude, condescending, hateful, abusive, proud, stubborn, spiteful, vindictive, selfish, stupid, self-centered, slow to learn, confrontational, inflexible, implacable, unyielding, negative, proud, etc., etc.. And it can be quite difficult in dealing with them, or living around them.

When confronted with these old sin nature manifestations by various people in life, whether in their attitudes or activities, it is very difficult to bear the brunt of their hatefulness without acting in kind, Operation Retaliation, or taking it to heart and letting it hurt us on the inside.

That's where God has provided us a spiritual provision whereby these things won't hurt us. **He provides impersonal love** and an aspect of it is patience with people! We don't become angry at them; we don't harbor bitter resentment; we don't try to get back at them by hurting them the way they try to hurt us.

It doesn't mean that we have to submit ourselves to their abuse time after time, day after day; it doesn't mean that we have to constantly expose ourselves to their negativity and hateful venom on a permanent basis. It simply means that when subjected to the abuse that people give out we do not react back at them with our old sin nature activity (OSN), but remain filled with the Holy Spirit and still love them with *agape* love. So **one of the attributes of impersonal love is patience with people**.

2. “*Is kind*” - $\chi\rho\eta\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$

Both patience and kindness are in the verb form, present active indicative of *chresteuomai*, telling us that we will be acting this way toward others; **we will be patient with others and be treating others kindly**.

Now, if we were looking at the noun forms, it would be emphasizing the quality of kindness about us, which we would and should have. But we're looking at the verb form, which emphasizes **acts of kindness toward one another**.

The noun, *chrestotes*, has the idea of no harshness about the believer, but mellowness. Much like new wine or liquor that has a bite when new, but when allowed to age over the years it mellows out. (Some people, though, get like vinegar when they age).

But the impersonal love of *agape* produced by the filling of the Holy Spirit **always** mellows the soul of the believer in Christ, so that over the years they lose their harshness

and become sweet, gentle and mellow, like a fine wine, and that's what God wants in us! But the emphasis here is not on the character of the believer, which will certainly be there, but on their **acts!** *Agape motivates us toward acts of kindness to others.*

But what is it that makes an act an act of kindness? **First**, the act must be intrinsically good. **Second**, it must be beneficial to the other person. And **third**, it must be gentle! The ideas of softness and gentleness are found in *chresteuomai*.

Goodness would be an act that is intrinsically good and beneficial to the other person, but gentleness would not necessarily be a factor in it. The disciplining of children is a good thing intrinsically, and is beneficial to them, but certainly not a gentle act. That's where **kindness differs from goodness**.

Contrast that with what people are going to be like in the Last Days: abusive, unforgiving, slanderous, brutal, treacherous, no self control, boastful, rash, conceited and selfish. How can one exhibit acts of kindness to others who manifest these kinds of traits?

But, if we're filled with the Holy Spirit, operating in our new natures, and operating under the dynamic of the impersonal love of *agape*, then we will be able to treat others with kindness, even though they don't merit it!

We're to be witnesses for Christ, not just with our mouths, but with our lives in how we treat people. What kind of a testimony is it if we are mean to people, or angry at them, rude and harsh like they are, uncaring and unsympathetic? But if we are **kind to people**, even if they're hateful toward us, what does it say to them but that our God is kind!

3. “*Charity envieth not*” - η αγαπη ου ζηλοι

The two Greek words for **envy** and **jealousy** are *zelos* and *phthonos*, with *phthonos* being the worse of the two. Both are wrong, but *phthonos* is worse.

Envy, *zelos*, is where one sees something that another person has: a car, an house, nicer furniture, new appliances, TV, job, position in the company, career, money, a husband, a wife, kids; envies them and wants it for themselves.

While **jealousy**, *phthonos*, not only wants what the other person has, **but seeks to deprive them of it!** Under **envy** a woman sees that her friend, neighbor, or sister has a husband, so she wants to have a husband for herself. But under **jealousy** a woman sees that her friend, neighbor, or sister has a husband so she tries to steal the other woman's husband away!

While we're on the subject, the word **covetousness** is the desire to have more things. Its opposite is being **content** with the things that you have.

Envy, jealousy and coveting are what drives the economy of this country. But they are destructive to the well-being and character of the nation and the family unit. This is the basis for the “Keeping up with the Jones” mind-set that drives so many people. It's the reason why couples go into debt; mothers leave their homes and families to work; it's

why believers neglect sitting under the teaching of the word of God; it's because **they see what other people have and want it for themselves!**

The tenth commandment is “*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*” Exodus 20:17 You say we're not under the Law! Quite true, but it's still wrong.

But under the filling of the Holy Spirit, when operating by *agape* love, we will not envy what other people have. So the key to getting out of this trap of envy and jealousy is to be living by the impersonal love of *agape*. So we have another aspect of *agape* love.

4. “*Charity vaunteth not itself*” - η αγαπη ου περπερευεται

Tired of hearing others brag about themselves and their lives? I think we all are. It seems that no matter where you go, at work, at home, in the marketplace and the schools, even the churches, all we hear is people boasting about what they do, who they are and what they have. And, if they don't have anything themselves to brag about, then they'll mention someone and brag about them, usually their kids.

Even in the churches, if it isn't the membership bragging about what they have done, who they are and what they have; it's the church itself bragging about their programs, how many got saved, how many got baptized, how many attend and so on.

Bragging is so much a part of our culture that it has permeated every aspect of it to the point that we aren't aware of it when it is going on. Maybe we even do it ourselves! But it certainly is not the expression of love.

Love does not boast! Never! The static present is used here to denote a perpetually existing condition. Love never boasts about anything or anyone. And with the emphatic negative, *ou*, used here it's to stress the point even more – **love does not boast!**

Boasting is so much a part of many believers conversation that they don't even know that they're doing it when they do it. But what it tells us about them is that they're not filled with the Holy Spirit when they're doing it, and that they're not manifesting *agape* love.

Boasting, a function of pride, is the vehicle by which people seek to elevate themselves above other people. It's saying in effect, “I'm more special than you”, I'm smarter than you, I'm more talented than you, I have more things than you do, I have better things than you do, I'm more of a man than you are”, etc., etc.. “I don't drink”, I don't smoke, I pray so often”, all of these things are bragging rights designed to state that you are superior to the other person in some way or in some field.

Boasting is how people try to convey their superiority to other people, and at the same time, try to make the other person feel inferior. It is 100% Old Sin Nature Activity (OSN). It adds to the pride of the one who is doing it, while it tears down the self esteem of the one hearing it. Who, in turn, will try to find something to brag about so he or she doesn't feel bad about themselves, and on and on the vicious cycle continues.

But, if we confess our sins to God, 1 John 1:9, and live by faith in the Word of God and are filled by the Holy Spirit, then we will have the *agape* mental attitude produced in us and there will be no boasting. So, **one of the other aspects of impersonal love is that there will be no bragging.**

5. “*It is not puffed up*” - ου φυσιοιυται

It's interesting to note that the word for **pride** here is still being used today. It means to be puffed up taking its idea from the bellows used to get more air into the coals used in blacksmithing. Today we say, “He sure is puffed up!” Or, “What an inflated ego.” Or, “He sure is full of himself!”

In 1 Corinthians 8:1 we have seen that **knowledge**, *gnosis*, puffs a believer up with pride, but it's not the only thing that does. One's looks, their money, position, education, profession, possessions all can puff a person's ego up.

It's not that there's anything wrong with these things, but it's how we relate them to ourselves. **We think because we have these things we're something special! We're better than others!** Whether it appeals to our intellect, our ego, or physical pride, because of the problem of sin in the flesh, our egos become inflated due to our pride.

Knowledge, *gnosis*, can puff Christians up with pride. How we avoid this is by acquiring *epignosis* knowledge. The difference between the two is that knowledge, *gnosis*, is just knowing Bible facts. While *epignosis* knowledge is derived as we place our faith in the Bible Doctrine we are being taught. Being **puffed up** is more of an attitude, while **boasting** is something one does with their mouth.

But where is the humility in pride? The love? The gentleness? There aren't any because pride is the natural expression of the flesh nature found in everyone. It's a part of Adam's race. If the flesh can do it, then it's going to puff itself up and brag about it.

That's why salvation is a gift from God, so no man can boast. If man could do anything in this matter of his salvation, which he can't, then you can be sure he'd go about all puffed up with pride and telling everyone what he had done.

But there's none of these things found in the mental attitude of *agape* love. In the sphere of the dynamic of impersonal love Christians won't be going around all puffed up with their own sense of importance and bragging about things. When you see the characteristics of true love, and so little of them found in believers, it makes you realize how few believers are actually filled with the Holy Spirit and live in *agape* love.

6. “*Doth not behave itself unseemly*” - ουκ ασχημονει

Aschema comes from two words, *a* – negative, *schema* - it refers to our outward appearance, conduct, or behavior. It speaks of how we talk and act in society. Translated in the NIV as, “*It is not rude*”.

The term rudeness is somewhat limiting because we associate it with speech and conduct that falls way below an acceptable level in society. While *aschema* certainly includes that idea, but also encompasses our social graces, manners and how we treat people.

Aschema deals with the three ideas of: how we talk to others, how we talk around others and how we treat others in society; doing so in a manner that is thoughtless, inconsiderate, disrespectful, discourteous or indecent. It could be on the job, walking around the mall, in restaurants, driving our cars, at sporting events, etc..

It's difficult to explain this to the younger generation because most of them have no frame of reference. To them anger, yelling, cursing, improper displays of affection in public, getting in people's faces, cutting people off in traffic, giving the finger, vulgarity, immodest forms of dress, and doing these all things, even in front of women and children, is acceptable behavior to them. And sadly, many adults do these things too.

They have never been taught about manners, speech, dress and conduct in public places; about respecting their elders, as well as other people; about addressing them as “Mam” and “Sir”; about holding doors open for women; about viewing women with respect as wives, mothers and sisters, not sex objects and sluts; about treating others as they would like to be treated. They have become “Bulgars”, from which we get the word vulgar, a people years ago that were viewed as base and worthless.

The spiritual mental attitude of *agape* love **does not have rudeness in it.** It talks to people, treats people, behaves around people, talks around people with dignity, respect, courteousness, integrity, politeness, propriety, considerateness and manners. It's not the way **we act toward people**, but it's **how we are around people!** And it is the filling of the Holy Spirit that produces this spiritual mental attitude in us.

7. “*Seeketh not her own*” - ου ζητει τα εαυτης

It is not seeking after its own things. Self seeks after its own things when self is the priority and puts itself above everyone else including God. When looking at the priority list self is always at the top for selfish people. Everybody else comes a distant second, third, etc.. And the self centered person views everyone else as existing only for the purpose of serving its ego.

Self-seeking is one of the manifestations of the sin nature and is definitely not the *agape* mental attitude under the filling of the Holy Spirit. Selfishness, *philautoi*, is to love oneself in a bad sense. Self-seeking, “*seeking after one's own things*”, is to go after, to do what one wants to do, to please oneself, to gratify one's lusts.

The self-seeking individual is at the center of his own universe. Other people are only satellites orbiting the main body. They are there, but he is the center, the main focal point. Everybody else's existence centers around him. They exist, but only for his sake. They are there, but only to serve his purposes, will and desires.

They are of no, or little, consequence. Whether they are people or things is of no real importance to the self centered person, for they are all things, people included, to be used

for one's own desires, will, or self gratification.

Self-seeking and self-centered people will never get their priorities right. Which are the **Word of God** first, then their **spouses**, their **children**, then **home** and **work**. God will never be first in their lives, because they come first! They'll never be seeking the things of the Lord, because they are seeking their own things! They're so skilled at this that they are able to deceive themselves, and others, into thinking they're seeking God's will, when they're really seeking their will. To the self centered believer spouses, children, home and work are there as an extension of their own self seeking.

They'll never get their priorities right as long as they are controlled by their flesh natures! The sin nature is both selfish and self seeking. They may be filled with the Holy Spirit from time to time for short periods of time, but they do not spend enough time filled with the Holy Spirit and living by *agape* love to see any real change in their lives.

If selfishness and self seeking is a part of our lives, and if we want to get away from it, then the first thing we're going to have to do is recognize that it is going on with us, confess it to God, receive the filling of the Holy Spirit and start living by the dynamic of *agape* love.

8. “*Is not easily provoked*” - ου παροξυνεται

Paroxuno is a very intensified form of anger. It's to burn with anger, to be really mad, the “blood-boiling” idea. It doesn't have the “breaking-forth” idea, but the idea of a very intense burning anger. It's to react with burning anger, to have an intense burning emotional mood, over something that hurt you, disappointed you, or was at cross purposes with you.

The passive voice is used to denote the fact that it comes about as the result of the believer being acted upon by outside forces; things, people, events act upon the believer that go against the believer's grain to the place that he or she reacts to the situation in the flesh and starts to burn with intense anger, or gets in a “mood”.

The reason why we react so strongly in this form of anger is due to our own pride. This is not to justify the things done to us. Oftentimes we are subjected to terrible things that are wrong; we are recipients of major injustices. The problem comes when we react to them; and we react to them because of pride in the flesh.

There is also the demonic element which could be present in the matter of anger. The fiery darts of Ephesians 6 actually refer to fierce burning anger. As with the fiery serpents of the Old Testament, the term fiery actually spoke of burning. When the serpents bit someone, the venom they injected burned. And the burning arrows of Satan refer to his bitter rage which he shoots at believers in Christ. If they get past our shield of faith, then the result will be burning anger in our souls. So **venom** equals **burning** equals **fiery**.

It's understandable why we react over certain things in life; it doesn't make it right, but it's understandable. And at the same time, someone else can go through exactly the same thing and it doesn't bother them at all!

And sometimes there are things, people, or situations that, on the surface, may not seem that bad, and maybe they aren't, but send us right through the roof. Now why is that? Why is it that there are some things that are not that bad or significant, that will trigger such a strong reaction in us?

This goes back to scar tissue on the heart. Scar tissue is formed in our heart, in our emotions, as the result of deep hurt, and our reaction of resentment to it, over something that happened in the past, even in our childhood. The hurt, and our reaction of pride over it, triggered resentment and anger.

Usually the more intense the hurt and pain the more intense is the bitterness and anger. Along with that is the matter of sensitivity. Generally we are more sensitive in the area that we have been wounded.

Something happened to us in the past; the fire of anger roared to life. In time the anger dissipated, that is, the fire died down, but the coals continued to smolder. Along comes a similar incident in the present; the coals burst into flame and the anger burns again.

If a wrong had been done to you in the past, (recent or even back to childhood), such as betrayal, abuse, disappointment, etc., something that really hurt the heart; the natural reaction is to react with bitterness and anger, to strike out because of the pain. If one has not dealt with these things, the individual buries the feelings and scar tissue is formed on the soul. And there it will lie for many years until something, some event, some person, some thing triggers it and the burning anger that was originally there flares up all over again.

Easily provoked should be translated as **provoked to anger** because the word has the idea of provocation from an external source. Something happened to us; something painful that we went through in life.

The issue is not **what** provokes us; life is full of things that will do that, but **why** we get provoked? The provocation is not the issue. **The issue is our reaction to it.** A wrong is done to us, we get hurt, we experience pain of soul and/or body, we react out of pride with bitterness and we become angry.

The solution is doctrinal. The filling of the Holy Spirit and the *agape* mental attitude will prevent the anger from being aroused. And confession of sin, forgiving the person and the filling of the Holy Spirit will get us out of the anger we're in.

Job 15:12,13, plus other passages, talk about the bitterness and anger Job had because of his trial. Job was angry, and had great anger at times, but consider why: his children were dead, his business was destroyed, his wealth was gone, his employees were dead, his standing and reputation in the community was destroyed, his health was ruined, he was in continuous pain, his plans were shattered, his hope had disappeared, his three friends were judging him, and unbeknownst to him Satan had been shooting his burning arrows of anger into him!

We can talk about the weakness of the flesh, body and soul, under severe trial, or what pain can do to one's mental attitude, or the attack of Satan, but he reacted to the whole ordeal in bitterness and anger. He was handling the trial, until his body was afflicted. That was the external thing that served as the provocation.

But with *agape* love, we will never be provoked to anger. The question is why do we? It happens to us out of pride, out of the flesh we react to the trial we are subjected to. We lose the filling of the Holy Spirit and the impersonal *agape* mental attitude that He produces, we become controlled by the flesh nature and we react with anger.

9. “*Thinketh no evil*” - λογίζεται το κακον

I think the NIV translation does a much better rendering of the Greek here, **It keeps no record of wrongs**. *Logizomai* was the thinking of the accountant as he kept his books. If money was paid out; he entered it into his books. If money was received; he entered it into his books. He kept a record on every transaction. This is *logizomai*. Now if someone owed money, the debt was left in the column until it was paid off. If the debt was paid, an entry was made and the balance showed zero. **If the debt was forgiven, then it was erased as if it was never there**. And this is what forgiveness is all about.

God was like that with man's sins. A sin was committed, an entry was made in his book. Billions of people and billions of entries into his book. And there they all remained, until one day almost 2,000 years ago when Christ paid the penalty for man's sins.

Sin incurred a debt that was owed to God. The debt was the punishment for sin, namely, the death of a man, a righteous man. This God supplied for us when he had his Son die on the cross for our sins. When the debt was paid by Christ's death the entries were removed.

People keep entries too. When someone does something nice for them, they remember it. **When someone hurts them in some way, they remember that too!** They make an entry into their book. It's then that their anger starts to burn against the one who hurt them. **Anger, then, is related to keeping an entry in our record book!** It's remembering a wrong suffered! What we have to do, in the matter of forgiveness, is erase it from our memory, or at least put an entry into our mental notes that it has been forgiven. In the world of computers we need to erase it from our hard drives.

If a believer is operating by *agape* love when suffering a wrong, then there will be no need for forgiveness! The reason why is because there was no entry made at the time of the wrongdoing! This is a very important point to remember. **Forgiveness is the act of erasing the entry that has been made; it's the erasing of the “debt” out of our personal account book.** We even use these terms to describe it, such as, 'the debt is forgiven', 'the debt is wiped out', 'it's been blotted out', etc..

Forgiveness is what we have to do to recover the filling of the Holy Spirit, along with the confession of our sin, when we have not been operating by *agape*. But if we are filled by the Holy Spirit, and operating with the *agape* mental attitude, then no record will be entered into our account books of a wrong done to us. But if we weren't, then we will have to forgive because of the entry that has been made.

If we have made an entry in our mind on a wrong suffered, and push it down into the subconscious, then the next time we revisit that place in our ledger, that is think about it, then we must consciously picture ourselves erasing it, if that helps, but we must let it go.

Agape love does not take into account a wrong suffered. If we have taken an account of a wrong suffered, due to being in a state of carnality, then *agape* love, under the filling of the Holy Spirit will motivate us to forgive.

10. “*Rejoiceth not in iniquity*” - ου χαρει επι τη αδικια

Again the emphatic negative is used to show that Christian love never delights in evil. The word used here for **iniquity** is *adikia* and refers to any kind of wrongdoing.

Why? Because *agape* is an integrity love. It is the spiritual mental attitude of God himself and is synonymous with integrity. It's quite the opposite of the flesh which delights, “gets a kick out of”, the wrongdoing of others.

God is righteous and he loves righteousness. When it says that God loves, and he does, he loves in a righteous sense and in a righteous sense only. And when believers are operating by *agape* love it will be the same with them.

11. “*But rejoiceth in the truth*” - συγχαρει δε τη αληθεια

Rejoice with is *sunchairo* from *sum* – with, and *chairo* - to rejoice. *Agape* rejoices with the truth, but this means much more than that.

Meta would be used to denote an association of some kind; it would be like the idea of when the two are in the same room, that is, when love is in the room and truth walks in, then love would rejoice.

It would be the same as a man and a woman walking down the street together. If they were friends, coworkers, business associates, or neighbors, then *meta* would be used. But if they were husband and wife *sum* would be used.

But the word *sum* is used here to denote a union between two things. What it shows is that *agape* love and truth are in union with each other. Love's rejoicing is because of its union with Biblical truth.

Agape love loves truth; love loves truth, because the two are united together and have been with each other since eternity past. If love is standing in the room and truth walks in through the door love rejoices! Why? **Because the two belong together and have been together from all eternity.**

Now if there's no *agape*, then there's no rejoicing in the truth. And **the truth** mentioned here with the definite article is the truth of God's Word or Bible Doctrine. This is why the unsaved, and believers not filled with the Holy Spirit, don't care about Doctrine.

This is why when you talk to some believers about the Word you notice there's no delight, no rejoicing. The reason why is that they're not filled with the Holy Spirit, therefore no *agape* mental attitude. If they were filled with the Holy spirit, then there would be an *agape* mental attitude in them and they would be delighting in the truth that you're delighting in.

Now truth isn't love and love isn't truth. They both retain their individual identity and characteristics Only they are united, permanently connected to each other forever. Much the same as a man and wife. He's a man; she's a woman; they both have their own biological and psychological uniqueness; they both have their own personalities, yet they are in union with each other. So it is with truth and love.

Love loves, this we know, **but love loves the truth!** That is, whenever truth is around love rejoices! This is why believers rejoice when they go to church and hear the Word being taught and are filled with the Holy Spirit. The *agape* love produced in them by the filling of the Holy Spirit rejoices whenever it hears the teaching of Bible Doctrine!

They are joyful when they are listening to the Word of God being taught, and rejoicing when they leave the services, because metabolized doctrine, under the filling of the Holy Spirit, produces *agape* in them and ***agape* rejoices with the truth**. *Agape* is always relaxed, it is a spiritual mental attitude, but when it sees and interacts with the truth of God's Word it rejoices.

The happiness found in the world is external coming from pleasant circumstances, from having your way, successes, emotional gratification, OSN gratification, etc.. But the joy found in Christianity is spiritual, internal, not dependent on external circumstances. It is produced whenever the *agape* mental attitude hears and receives the Word by faith.

The first three fruits of the Spirit, love, joy and peace, come from God. He possesses them and has given them to us. All of this is a spiritual phenomenon that takes place in the new nature by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It cannot take place in the flesh. The flesh can get "happy" when certain things take place: having fun, human love, lusts gratified, victory in a game, success, promotion, accomplishments, but for Christians, joy comes whenever *agape* in the stream of consciousness meets Bible Doctrine.

12. "Beareth all things" - παντα στεγει

Agape provides a barrier that **protects the soul, the mind and the heart, from hurtful people**. When living in this life, on a cursed earth full of people with sinful natures, including our own; **the believer's soul needs protection**

The word *stego* referred to one of the hatches on a ship. Now a hatch was needed to let people and goods to go in and out of a ship. But a ship was not designed to be a storage vessel sitting in some port, or on dry land, but a vessel that could travel on the open sea from port to port.

That's where the problem lies. Out at sea you have the wind and the waves, the storms of life, the trials that we go through and the hurtful things that others try to do to us. And

with water washing over the decks the ship could be easily swamped and sink, if it were not for the hatches that you could close.

The sea is always put for the world system and the sinful activity found in the world from people with old sin natures and Satan's demons. Anger, hatred, strife, all the sinful activity that sin natures can produce keep the world in agitated turmoil driven by the evil winds of Satan's demons. Even the OSN of our own flesh can do us harm.

We are the ship! And we need protection, our souls need protection, from the outside world and even from the sin in our own bodies. And *agape* love is the thing that protects our souls. It acts as a buffer, as a protective barrier from the harmful elements of sin. **It is the hatch that protects the inner cargo of the soul from the harmful elements of life.**

Now most people retreat inwardly, erect psychological defense mechanisms, or get hard and angry to protect themselves from other people's sinfulness and the destructive influence of the world.

Even we ourselves have done this, or are presently doing this, retreating into a shell, or putting on layers of protection around ourselves, or becoming angry and distant, all to protect our vulnerable souls. But God has provided a spiritual provision far superior to protect our souls – *agape* love!

Our souls are the most precious thing that we have, and they are so sensitive to being harmed, so vulnerable; souls that are living in this hostile, stormy world surrounded by so many things that can and do hurt them. How do we protect them? Does anyone care about them? God cares and God has provided his very own *agape* mental attitude that will protect our souls from all the hurt and evil of this life.

So our soul is our ship of life, traveling on the sea of life of the world. And *agape* love is the hatch that gives our little ship of the soul watertight integrity, so that our little ships will stay afloat as we sail the stormy seas. No matter how much the wind may blow and the waves break against the hull, our ships will stay afloat because of *agape* love!

13. “*Believeth all things*” - *παντα πιστευει*

First of, this isn't teaching that love is gullible, that is, it believes all things. We need to go back to the relationship that exists between faith and love; love being the *agape* mental attitude produced by the true filling of the true Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:6 tells us that faith operates by means of *agape*, that is, *agape*, which is produced by the filling of the Holy Spirit, produces faith and faith ideas. “*For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*”

Believeth all things, *panta pisteuei*, is in all things there is faith, or, in all things there is believing. If one is living by *agape* love, which is produced by the filling of the indwelling Holy Spirit, then **their mental attitude will be one of faith!**

The spiritual mental attitude of *agape* love means that **faith will be circulating in the believer's stream of consciousness.** His outlook is one of faith; he faces life with faith;

he faces his trials with faith; he believes that the Lord will provide and carry him through; and he looks at the Word of God with faith.

When *agape* love is present in the believer's mind, through the filling of the Holy Spirit, his approach to life, his problems, his decisions, his future, his thinking will be, "*The Lord will provide*"; the Lord will work it out; it's doable; we can do it; *The Battle is the Lord's*!"

The *agape* mental attitude is a **mental attitude of faith**. It's a positive mental attitude, but beyond that it's a confidence in the Lord. And it's not just a mental attitude, but it has action! **Faith motivates the believer to step out, to take action, and then to keep walking by faith.**

But when *agape* is not present, then neither is the mental attitude of faith! This explains why there is so little faith-living today and the faith-rest life among believers today. And there is no *agape* love because there is no true filling of the Holy Spirit.

Faith says, "God will cause all things to work out for my good." Faith says, "My God will provide all my needs." Faith says, "God will never leave me, nor forsake me." Faith says, "God has a plan for my life."

And faith provides the shield whereby we can stop all the fiery darts of Satan! **Fiery is to be taken in the sense of burning.** Burning is to be taken in the sense of the burning of the venom from everything from the sting of the wasp up to the bite of a snake. And is to be taken in the literal sense of the **burning anger Satan tries to afflict us with.**

But faith comes to us through *agape* love, which is brought about by the filling of the Holy Spirit. So the question is, where is the love? **If there was true love, not the pseudo love we see so much of today, then there would be faith!** Phony love is produced by the flesh and merely covers up for the believer's lack of the filling of the Holy Spirit. You can be sure there is no faith mental attitude being produced in faked love.

14. "*Hopeth all things*" - παντα ελπίζει

As we know **hope** is the confident mental attitude that good things await us in the future. This passage says that, **in all things there is hope.** It is not a wish or a desire for there to be good things awaiting us in the future, but the **confidence** that there will be!

Now the reason we know this is because the God of hope, who gives us hope, who has saved us for the purpose of blessing us, is going to make everything that happens to us in life, whether good or bad, make those things work out for our good. "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*" Romans 8:28

Now the mental attitude of **hope** is produced in us whenever the believer believes the promises and doctrines of God. Faith plus the promises gives us hope toward the future. So, whenever the believer trusts the Lord, or is believing his promises, that dynamic produces a relaxed confidence concerning his future.

So, when the believer is filled with the Holy Spirit, which filling produces the spiritual mental attitude of *agape* love, which in turn produces faith in the soul, and that mental attitude of faith when it comes in contact with the teaching of God's Word, then the mental attitude of hope toward the future comes about!

Optimism and hope are not the same thing. Optimism is a positive mental attitude that, somehow, things will work out all by themselves and the future will be good. While hope is confidence that things will work out and that the future will be good, **because hope is centered around the God, who will make things work out for our good.**

When we're at the top, when things are going our way, it's easy to have hope toward the future. (And hope is always the mental attitude that deals with our future). But when we're down, when we're hurting, or sick, or grieving, or under attack by Satan, then it becomes difficult to have hope toward the future, as per Job. In fact it's impossible to have hope when we're controlled by the flesh nature.

That's why it's so important for us to recover the filling of the Holy Spirit, through confession of sin to God, 1 John 1:9, while we're in our trial so that we can get back to the faith rest dynamic and regain the confidence that it's all going to be OK.

15. “*Endureth all things*” - *παντα υπομενει*

As it takes strength to lift a weight; it takes endurance to carry it over a distance. **Endurance** entails weight or pressure, time and distance. When Job was hit with his trials, that was not endurance. That was withstanding the shock of the event. But when they dragged out over a long period of time, that was endurance.

The word **patience**, *makrothumia*, is patience when dealing with people, while *hupomeno* patience, endurance, is patience in a trial. So when endurance is talked about it's telling us to abide under the trial until we get through it.

Now there are many spiritual provisions that God has supplied to us to enable us to get through our trials in life: prayer, fellowship with God, confession of sin to God, the faith rest drill, claiming the promises, the filling of the Holy Spirit, Bible Doctrine, sitting under the teaching of the Word in the local church, etc..

Testings, trials, people, adversity are all inevitable. They are a part of life. We may be able to **minimize** them, but we will never be able to **eliminate** them. But here he's telling us that we have one more thing that will enable us to endure all things in life and that's the *agape* mental attitude!

There are some things that we go through that are because of the bad treatment by evil people. There are also things that we go through due to the will of God for our lives. **Making the right decisions in life will eliminate, or at least minimize, deserved suffering and self induced misery, but will not eliminate undeserved suffering.**

This is where the *agape* mental attitude will help us greatly. The filling of the Holy Spirit

will be definitely needed for he produces the *agape* mind state. In addition to cutting off the activity of the OSN with its anger, fear, worry, resentment, revenge tactics, guilt, self punishment, etc..

For suffering, whether directed at the body or the soul, always impacts the soul. And when the soul is impacted, and then influenced or affected by sin in the flesh, then the emotions are affected, which in turn affect the body. And round and round it goes until we are thoroughly miserable. So love enables us to endure our trials.

16. “*Charity never faileth*” - η αγαπη ουδεποτε εκπιπτει

The love never fails, that is, the *agape* mental attitude produced by the filling of the Holy Spirit never fails. But the word **fail** here is perhaps not the best choice of words, for to us, it has the idea of not being successful. The word *pipto* means to come to an end, to stop. The gift of love given to us by God will never come to an end.

To understand this we must take it in context. Paul is talking about the gifts that God has given to the Church: love, prophecies, tongues and knowledge. And out of the four he says that love will never end or stop. Which also implies that the other three will.

When it comes to **prophecies** it says that they will be rendered inactive, inoperative. That is to say that they won't be in operation any more. And he says the same thing for the spiritual gift of **knowledge**, that it too, will not operate any more using the word *katargeo*. And when it comes to **tongues**, the spiritual ability that enabled a male believer to talk in a foreign language for the purpose of communicating the gospel of Christ, that it will *cease, pauo*, that it will simply come to an end – it will stop! All three of these are in the future indicative which emphasizes the certainty of their action occurring in the future, but the question is when and why?

The answer to both these questions is found in verse ten, “*But when that which is perfect, teleion, (nominative neuter singular, a reference to the completed canon of scripture,) is come, then that which is in part, (or the imperfect or incomplete), shall be done away.*”

We know that the Bible was completed by 96 AD and that two of the gifts had gone into a state of activity by then. And we know that tongues had stopped before Paul died in 67 ad. One thing is clear that all three gifts were gone when the canon of scripture was completed. Once the Word of God had been completed, so was the revealed will of God for his people. It was perfect and it was finished.

But love? It never stops. It never goes away and it will never be rendered inactive. This means that we can count on God's love to be there for us. It is the spiritual dynamic that provides everything that we need for time and eternity!

18. Summarization of the *agape* mental attitude, or love.

It is patient when dealing with people.

It has the quality of kindness and deals kindly with people.

It is not jealous of what other people have or who they are.

It does not want to take things away from people.
It does not brag about oneself, what one has, or what one does.
It is not “puffed-up” with one's self, position, accomplishments, or things
It is not rude to people in speech or treatment.
It does not seek after one's own things, but the things of the Lord.
It is not provoked to anger.
It does not keep a record of wrongs done to you.
It does not rejoice in wrongdoing.
It loves the truth and rejoices with the truth.
It forms a protective barrier to protect the soul.
It exercises faith in all things.
It has hope, a total confidence toward the future in all situations.
It endures all situations, testings and trials.
It is only produced by the true filling of the Holy Spirit.
It is commanded for all the Royal Family of God.
It is available only to the Royal Family of God.
It will never come to an end.
It is not an emotional phenomenon.
It cannot be produced in the flesh or by the flesh.
It is the very spiritual mental attitude that God possesses.

C. Defining the Personal Love of *Phileo*.

1. Comparing personal love to impersonal love.

Throughout the New Testament there are many references to Christians loving one another. In fact, we are commanded to love one another. But **there are no mandates or commands that we are to love one another with *phileo* love.** The only love that we are commanded to love one another with is the impersonal love of *agape*.

Agape is a mental, spiritual and volitional mental attitude that is produced by the filling of the Holy Spirit. And because it is a volitional love it can be exercised upon command. While personal love, because it involves such things as growth, capacity and our feelings cannot be commanded. You can command someone to love you personally, but they simply are unable to do it.

Both loves deal with such matters as virtue, integrity and honor, but in somewhat different fashions. Loving someone with impersonal love, *agape*, **emphasizes the virtue and integrity of the one doing the loving.** The virtue of the one being loved is not an issue. While personal love, *phileo*, **does emphasize the virtue and integrity of the one being loved.**

This shows us that if one is to have a personal love relationship with another believer, both the subject and the object, the one loving and the one being loved, must have: virtue, integrity, honor and **the capacity to love in return with *phileo* love.**

When we speak of virtue, honor, integrity and capacity we mean that: 1) the individual must be a believer in Christ; 2) there must be a mutual level of personal commitment to

Christ and his Word by both parties; 3) a mutual agreement concerning Bible Doctrine, they both must be agreed on the supremacy of the Word of God and certain basic doctrines; 4) both must understand their mutual responsibilities to maintain their respective walks with Christ; 5) there must be a mutual area of compatibility, such as, friendships, romance, marriage, common interests, soul compatibility, etc.; 6) they both must live lives filled with the Holy Spirit; and 7) they need to have personally grown to the place where, through BD and the F/HS, where they have the capacity for personal love and are able to maintain it. This also entails with them having to deal with the areas in their own souls and personal lives that would prevent them from maintaining their personal love relationship with each other.

Just because one is a believer in Christ, and/or has been under the teaching of the Word of God for many years, does not mean that they have the ability to love with personal love. They may lack the capacity to do so due to a variety of issues that they have failed or refused to deal with; issues in their souls. But they will always be able to love with the impersonal love of *agape*. *Agape* love is not dependent upon growth or capacity, but rather if one is filled with the Holy Spirit.

Personal love is a growth concept that comes from taking in Bible doctrine and applying it in different situations. One may be able to have a friendship love with a believer of the same sex, but not the opposite sex. Or they may be able to have friendship love with someone of the opposite sex, but not the same sex.

Or, one will have no problems with sustaining personal love relationships on a friendship level, but not able to do so on a romantic level, or in soul intimacy with their spouse.

Or, one may have developed the capacity to love on all levels, but not find someone with whom they can have a personal, soul relationship. And we're talking about soul love, not physical love. One's spouse may have virtue and integrity, but not capacity. Another believer's spouse may have no virtue, no integrity and no capacity. Another may have no commitment to the Word, no growth and their integrity is spotty. Which also disqualifies them for maintaining a personal love relationship. For in having a personal love relationship with another believer there must be stability of soul as well as capacity of soul, which comes only from a consistent walk with the Lord and intake of Bible Doctrine!

In personal love A loves B, B receives A's love and loves A back, which A in turn receives. In impersonal love A simply loves B. Impersonal love is like the rays of the sun falling upon the earth. People can come outside and enjoy the rays of the sun, or they can stay indoors. In the case of the sun, the sun still keeps on shining regardless of whether one goes outside to enjoy it or not. **But with personal love there has to be reciprocation.**

There are some problems in this area of love. In personal love A may have the capacity to love with *phileo* love, but have no one to love. Why? There may be no one in his direct circle that has compatibility or capacity. B may be compatible, but not have the capacity; or has capacity, but there is no compatibility. This leaves A left only with loving with *agape* until there is opportunity. A may love B impersonally with *agape*, but B wants it to

be personal. But perhaps A does not want to.

What does one do if he lacks the capacity to love on a personal basis, (many Christians desire to have personal love relationships, but lack the capacity for them), or if he has it, but has no one to love personally, or he has one kind, but not the other? He must be content to love others on an impersonal love basis and be satisfied with the level of love or friendships that he presently has.

How does one go about getting personal love? Join a lonely hearts club? Computer dating services? Singles group at a church? Hang around the aisles at the grocery stores? Hit the bars? The answer is no to all of them.

The answer lies in that having the capacity to love on a *phileo* basis is a blessing of God's grace **and comes to us as we grow in the Word of God**. It is a growth concept that develops through our consistent intake and application of BD. As one grows and overcomes their hurts, deficiencies, etc, they will develop the capacity for personal love. If it's something you want, then the first step would be to get under the teaching of BD. Secondly, pray to God; let him know it's what your heart desires. Third, realize that **God will provide you this blessing when you're ready for it**.

And don't be too quick to rush out and get involved in these things, especially in your own works and strength. Some people want romance or friends so bad, to the point that they rush into situations that end up hurting them. Many believers get involved in "love" relationships that leave them devastated simply because they have mistaken pseudo love for the true love that comes from BD and growth in grace.

Many believers get into bad relationships and situations out of their own efforts, having disregarded the teachings of the Word on these matters, teachings about capacity, integrity, doctrinal compatibility in the other person, etc.. And they go on, blissfully so for awhile, until that other person's true colors start to come out. Later on they find out that the other person really isn't that sold out for the Word, or that they do not have the integrity that you thought they had, or you find out that they were nuts all along and were using you to gratify their emotional, sexual, or financial lusts! The result of all this will be great damage done to your soul along with everything else you have!

You forget that it isn't enough that **you** have the capacity, growth, commitment and integrity to sustain a personal love relationship. **The other believer must have it too!** It may go along fine for awhile, but sooner or later the object of your personal love will start to destabilize as their OSN activity, their lusts of the flesh and their worldliness begin to kick in. Then all you're left with is an OSN standing there seeking to gratify its lusts, or manipulating you seeking to control you out of their insecurities and fear. And there will be no personal love relationship going on between you and the other person. Remember, in a personal love relationship, it takes two to tango.

A good rule of thumb to use, along with several others, is to observe the other person's attitude toward material things. If they love things they are no candidate for a personal love relationship, whether it is friendship, marriage, or whatever. People who love things are incapable of maintaining a personal love with other people! And if you get involved

in them you are heading for disaster.

They are two kinds of believers out there in this area. There are those who love things, but use people! And there are those who love people, but use things. If they love the World, or the things of the World, or they are in operation carnality from their own OSN, or involved in things of the occult, or if they aren't a doctrinal believer, then run away from them as fast as you can!

Phileo love is a rapport love between two believers. There is harmony between them; there is an affinity that exists and a level of mutual respect and trust. It can end up being physical, but only between an husband and his wife! But it basically is a soul to soul relationship and interaction.

They both have to be believers in Christ. They both have to be committed toward Bible Doctrine and pleasing the Lord in their life. They both have the responsibility to maintain their own respective spiritual walk with the Lord, through the filling of the Holy Spirit, taking in the Word of God. They both have to maintain a separated lifestyle from those who aren't walking with the Lord and from the World system. There has to be mutual respect for each other, for the basis of true love is respect for the other person. Their biblical personal love relationship must be centered around the concepts of virtue and integrity at all times. And usually there is an affinity between the two, a natural attraction, liking, or feeling of kinship. Sometimes opposites attract; sometimes like minded believers attract; sometimes they are just going through the same experience or trials in life. **But it always centers around the Word of God!**

2. Structuring personal relationships.

One of the best ways to approach this is to envision a circle with concentric circles inside of it. Inside the circle are a variety of personal love concepts going on, and outside the circle are the rest of the interpersonal relationships we have in life.

At the very core of the circle will be only you and God. God is your Father, you are his child and he indwells you through the Holy Spirit. The point of contact that you have with the Lord is your relationship with him through Christ, your growth in grace through Bible Doctrine which gives you the capacity to love him, and fellowship or communion with him over his Word. This is the most important personal relationship of all!

The next circle out will be, hopefully, between a husband and his wife. Their points of contact will be: spiritual, mental, emotional and social. Their growth in the Word, their attitudes toward Bible Doctrine, their capacity of soul and walk with the Lord in the filling of the Holy Spirit will determine the degree of soul intimacy that they will have with each other.

The next circle out will be the children and family members, again hopefully. Points of contact: spiritual, mental, emotional, (different kinds of emotions), and social. Their walk in doctrine will determine the level of soul intimacy that you will have with them.

The next circle out from that will be your friends in life. They must be Christians and

they must be on the same page doctrinally. Their points of contact will be: spiritual, mental, emotional and social in one or more areas of mutual interest. But their degree of intimacy never approaches that between an husband and a wife.

Now we go outside the circle to one's acquaintances. This category takes in co-workers, business acquaintances, business contacts, shop owners, next door neighbors, etc.. Points of contact will be: mental, social, current events, more or less the mundane things in life. There is no emotional interaction with them.

The rule of thumb; the operating principle behind structuring interpersonal relationships and limiting them, is **to limit how close you let people come to your heart.** All these concentric circles are barriers to how close you let people get to you. It starts with you and God, this is the ultimate intimacy, then you and your spouse, then you and your children and family, then Christian friends, then other people in society.

Acquaintances are nice to have; they are a part of life. These are the people in town that you know and are on speaking terms with. They're not just strangers, or the people you know and say hi to, but people that you meet frequently and are able to carry on conversations over the things going on in life. These are not those that you take into your home and your personal life, or are friends with. They can be Christians or non-Christians. There is no relationship with them; it is more along the lines of casual, friendly and social. They may be fellow professionals, or fellow workers, or fellow business associates, or business contacts, neighbors, or owners of the stores that you do business in. Your relationship with them is causal and friendly, but they are outside your circle of personal relationships.

There can be **other Christians** that you are friendly with, and there may be a degree of rapport with them because they are fellow believers in Christ, but even they still are under the rules of limited access to your personal life, to your home, your family, your time and your soul. You have your own life apart from them.

Personal friendship is based upon: mutual respect, integrity, walking with the Lord, soul compatibility or mutual interests, respect for the other person's lives and families and respect for boundaries. It recognizes the limits it can intrude into the other friend's life and respects that. There are some old sayings worth remembering, "*Familiarity breeds contempt*", and another one, "*There are two things that stink after three days, fish and company*", and, "*Don't wear out your welcome*". 'Enuf said.

A true rapport friend never uses the friendship for their own personal gain. They also never abuse the friendship. It doesn't intrude; it doesn't impose itself; it respects the other person's private lives, their lives with their families, their private affairs and that they also have a life apart from you! It is not like a marriage.

One can have a personal friend who is closer than family, but one can also have family members who are close personal friends. But one has to remember, blood ties are not the issue; rapport friends are a doctrinal issue.

Loyalty to friends, and their loyalty to you is vital to the friendship, but it is not

above loyalty to God, to your spouse and your children. A true friend understands that, respects it and abides by it. But a true friend is loyal to you and will stand by your side through all the flak in life expecting nothing from you in return.

A prospective friend needs to be observed, tested and evaluated to see if they are friend material. How do they treat other people? Do they have character and integrity? Can they add something to your life? Or are they needy? (If there's no profit, why bother?)

Need is never to be the basis of a friendship. If they need you, they will use you! And after they don't need you any more, then **they will discard you!** Most people are needy due to so much lacking in their lives, souls and pocketbooks. Whatever “friendships” they enter into are designed by them to fill those needs. They are able to **act friendly**, but lack the capacity of soul to **be friends**. They need to grow up and look to God to fill their needs, not other people!

Friends add to our life, but they are not to be our life! Our life is to be Christ, Bible Doctrine, our spouses and our homes. That is our center. Friends, and even acquaintance to a degree, enhance that, but are not to be a substitute for that.

Friends respect each other's privacy in their marriages, their homes and families, in their health, finances and priesthood. Understanding our cores, or centers, will help us in coping with unloving, uncaring societies. When it's rough outdoors, we can always go back to our center, God, family and friends.

Limitations of access to our core or center are important for our protection because we are so easily fooled. The reason why is not because we are stupid, but because we want to be liked, or to be loved, to be accepted and not to be alone. To do that we need to remember the core of our circle, then the outward expanding concentric circles. (God) (Spouse) (Family) (Personal Friends) (Social Friends) (Casual Acquaintances) (Business Contacts and Co-workers).

Things to avoid:

Treating your friends like acquaintances.

Treating an acquaintance like a friend.

Bringing an acquaintance into your inner circle.

Bringing a friend too far in.

Treating God like one of your friends or acquaintances.

A friend who treats you like an acquaintance.

An acquaintance who thinks he's a friend.

We may have confidence that our family and personal friends won't betray us, but we're never to put our trust in them! *“Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.”* Jeremiah 17:5 But even then, sometimes family and friends can betray us.

Christians are never to have non-Christians as friends. You may have them as acquaintances or social friends to varying degrees, but not close personal friends. They can be people with whom you socialize, or be friendly and chat about things, but never be

brought into your circle of personal friends.

One can understand structuring from the standpoint of territory or location. Your private life, your personal domain is your home or apartment, but when you go outside you enter into the public domain. There is our private life and then there is our public life. There is how we conduct ourselves in our homes, and there is how we are to conduct ourselves in public; we call this manners. There is how we dress at home, and there is how we are to be dressed in public! We may walk around the house in our underwear, (hopefully with the shades drawn), but we don't go out in public in our underwear. Although some wear clothes so skimpy that they would pass as underwear. Which is an arrogant disregard for other people. Ever since the hippie movement, drugs and sensitivity training in schools, the distinction between personal and public life has been blurred with tragic consequences for society.

Home is where our hearts can come out, where we can be free to be ourselves. But outside the front door is the world at large. It is not the place for the vulnerable heart to be exposed. Be careful who you let into your home for this is a move into intimacy. And levels of intimacy start in the home and go outward in concentric circles.

The bedroom is the ultimate place of privacy and intimacy. It is our sanctum sanctorum reserved only for the husband and wife. And if single, it is your place of privacy. We must respect that in others and demand it for ourselves. Then there is the living room and kitchen for entertaining and our friends. You see the shift of location. Then there is the front porch for neighbors, deliverymen, mailmen, acquaintances, etc.. Once again you see the shift in location.

Beyond that we leave the home to go out into the neutral ground of the **public domain**. We have our private life, as do the others, but we all have our public life as well. Out in public are the coffee houses, restaurants, shops, grocery stores, places of work and places of business; all expanding outward from our personal center.

Out in the public world is where the socializing with social friends, acquaintances, shopkeepers, business contacts and co-workers goes on. But when you invite someone over for dinner the subconscious signal is that you are bringing people into your inner circle, into your private life, or that you are thinking of doing so. So be careful of whom you bring into your home.

Some will say, 'We're just socializing with people we know!' But what if one has acted too hastily? Then it will be much more difficult to un-invite them in the future! Socializing would be better done on neutral ground in public, such as, a restaurant, park ,coffee house, etc..

One must learn to establish boundaries in their lives to limit access to your core or center. If one doesn't, if one doesn't protect their core, then you will have let all sorts of negative elements into your personal life, which can have disastrous effects on not only you, but your spouse and children as well. We must protect our home and our privacy!

It's not being unfriendly, or anti-social; **it's protecting the sweetness of the core of our**

personal lives. We can be friendly to all people, yet limit our personal lives to our families and a few friends. It's one thing to socialize with people at church, but another thing to bring them into your home, which is opening the door to them into your personal life. It's one thing to socialize with acquaintances in public, but another thing to invite them over for dinner.

One must always guard to keep his/her private life separate from their public life, professional life and business life. If one uses their home as a business, then there needs to be areas that are off limits, areas that are private. This can be done by having areas set aside from the living area where customers or prospects can be taken care of. Ideally, as far away as one can get. There needs to be privacy for the family!

The home must be protected; it is the bastion of our privacy. It is the place where we live and love, and the place where we're vulnerable. So we need to be careful who we invite into our homes. Some can bring demons with them!

This is why it's so important to observe people over a period of time, so that you can get to know something about them. Are they caring, decent, honest, moral people? Do they treat people well? Are they arrogant and self serving? Are they the bitter, angry type? Do they talk about other people behind their backs? If they talk about others, they'll talk about you. If they have used their other friends, then they'll use you. If they're selfish, then don't expect them to be gracious to you!

To protect our privacy, our families and our souls, we need to keep the mass of people at "arm's length". How we do that is by limiting our interaction with them to the various circles of our existence, such as, the work place, or the shops, or the coffee houses, etc.. By doing so their access to you is limited to the neutral ground of public places, thus keeping them away from your home and your private places.

Your home is only for your spouse, your family and a few close friends. Occasionally other people will come in, a neighbor, worker, or someone else, but the encounter should be brief, non-personal and to the point, yet cordial and friendly. **Emotional intimacy, or soul intimacy is only for a few people.**

Christian homes can be used for Christian fellowship, but this is an *agape* matter and it is always to be centered over Bible Doctrine. But again, there needs to be an evaluation of the kind of Christian you let into your home. Not all Christians are positive to the Word, or have the capacity to fellowship. Once again the neutral ground of the local church is the best place for it. Your home is your fortress for privacy and protection.

The problem with living in a mobile society, where people are always on the move coming and going, or living in **large cities,** is that it is very hard to get to know people, that is **to know their character!** If one was raised in a small town, you knew what kind of a person that people were because they had a good or bad reputation. You avoided those with a bad reputation and gravitated toward those with a good one.

Self delusion and naivety about people is an invitation to disaster, just look at Eve in the Garden with the serpent. Just because people go to church, or to your church, or are

friendly, does not mean that you can take them home! Two to three years of being around a person on an impersonal basis can give you a lot of insight into what kind of a person they really are. And even then you may not know what they're really like on the inside.

“All that glitters isn't gold” is an old saying also, but one well worth remembering. People can put on an act; they can have a facade that it may take years to see through! Some people have the ability to put up false fronts and are able to do it for years.

Hypocrisy is the false face that actors wore as they acted on stage. And that's what many of them do to us. They consider us a part of their audience and they are doing nothing more than acting. Just because the actor tells the audience that he loves them doesn't mean that he does!

One of the keys to maintaining structure to your personal life so you can protect your family and your soul is **to assign people that you meet in life to various the categories** that have been mentioned here. Life is not like Hollywood where everybody “loves” each other, which is such evil hypocrisy. There will be those close to you and there will be those farther away from your center. And you will need to also see that **those categories can and often do change throughout the years!** Those that were once close to you have drifted away to the outside, and those who were once not close to you now have come closer to the center. Life changes and so do people.

Those that were acquaintances become social friends, and those who were once social friends become casual acquaintances. Children who fought with their parents throughout their teenage years, now have their parents as their best friends! Social friends or business acquaintances can become best friends in time.

Social friends would be that category between personal friend and casual acquaintance. You see them frequently at school, the stores in town, business meetings, social mixers, etc., and are on friendly terms with them, able to chat about things, but their not those you have in your life and your home on a regular basis.

Usually you will have very few personal friends, and in the next circle out you will have more social friends, then out from there you will have more casual acquaintances. By understanding where people fit into your life, and you into theirs, you will be more relaxed, confident and comfortable around people.

Some believers don't want to have any friends in life because they've been **burned in the past**. Or had the same problem with a spouse. It's understandable, but not healthy. Other believers make the mistake in thinking that is someone is friendly to them then they're friends! This thinking is untrue, unsound and opens the door to a lot of heartache.

What they lack is the ability in handling personal relationships. Somewhere between everybody's my friend and everybody's my enemy lies reality. Hopefully this study will help people in their personal and impersonal relationships.

We need to see that there are categories of personal relationships: spouse, children, personal friends, social friends, casual acquaintances, business and work place contacts. So think about what category the people you know fall into. If one hasn't done this, then

this is the first step.

Then one needs to think long and hard about who they let into their inner circle for not everyone is sane! If a believer is not under the teaching of Bible doctrine **he or she has a mental disease**, or as we say, a mental illness! *“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.” 1 Timothy 6:3-5*

The word used in the passage is *nosos* and it means to have a mental illness in one area or another. You may not be able to detect it at first; on the outside they may look normal, act normal and dress normal; they may be totally functional in society, but they have a disease going on in their minds. **We are to stay away from such types** and we certainly shouldn't want them to be our personal friends. And from what I see American society is rampant with these types.

There are people in life that will hurt you, but there are also people in life that will help you! If one stays away from everybody, then they will avoid being hurt by people. But they will also miss out on good people helping them in life. On the other hand, if they embrace everyone as a friends, they will have some people who will help them, but they will have plenty of people who will hurt them. The key is structuring and being selective.

And the main key for success is obedience to the Word! If we obey what God says we will be successful in our relationships. If we don't, then we will suffer the adverse consequences of our bad decisions. If you choose “friends” who use drugs, you bring demonism into your life. Is that what you want? If you have friends who are bitter people, then your soul will suffer constantly. Is that what you want? To have good consequences in life **you must make good decisions!**

The next thing we need to see is that there will be movement in and out of these categories. Casual acquaintances can become social friends, and social friends can become casual acquaintances. Social friends can become personal friends, and personal friends can become no friends at all. Business contacts can become social friends, and in time, close personal friends.

There seems to be no middle ground, though, **with personal friends**. If they betray your friendship, and there is no reconciliation, then there is no social; friendship with them, or even a casual acquaintanceship. They are just somebody that you used to know. They're either in or they're out. Unless there is an apology, or contrition, an explanation and a “peace offering” suitable to the offense. You say you don't believe in peace offerings? Hah! Every married man believes in them when he brings his wife candy and flowers!

Having Bible Doctrine, understanding human nature, evaluating people and having a personal relationship structure in place, will enable the believer to have and many and personal successful relationships. By that I mean they won't all be friends, but there will be a lot of people in life that you can enjoy, while avoiding those who aren't good for

you.

Believers must realize that the ability to have true rapport *phileo* friendships are based upon having **doctrinal capacity of soul** and there are very few believers out there that have it! Most are totally self-serving, messed up and care more about money, things and gratifying their own lusts than they do Bible Doctrine.

When a salesman comes to your door or place of business, you know what he's there for! He's there to make money off you. But that's OK because **you know why he's there!** But you can still have a cup of coffee and conversation with him. His motives are apparent when he walks in, but not so with many people.

You're at a party, a business luncheon, a business mixer and people are friendly with you. You know they're not your friends; you know that they're using the function and you to improve their economic condition; to try to use you to move up the social ladder, or make business contacts, to make money, or to improve their position in life. But that's OK because you know **what** they're doing and **why!** You're doing it yourself.

Knowing that virtually everyone is self-serving and cares only for themselves and their own families helps you categorize people. They are social friends, casual acquaintances, or business contacts. **One doesn't react** over the way they are, you take it all in stride, but also noting that these aren't the types that you would have as a personal friend. But sometimes you meet doctrinal believers of quality in these functions. By **understanding the different kinds of personal relationships**, and learning to structure, it will give us what is ours all along - control! Only we are now controlling the situation for the benefit of ourselves, our souls and our families.

After all, God has given us the right to associate. We're to love everyone with *agape*, that's a command, but we're not commanded to love with *phileo*, personal love. We retain the right to associate with anyone that we choose and we don't have to explain ourselves. Our God given right of association gives us the control over whom we associate with, who our casual acquaintances are, who our social friends are, who are personal friends are and who we invite into our homes, if we do at all!

But control is only one part of the equation. **We need to have wisdom** so we can evaluate the character of people and it is Bible Doctrine in the soul that gives us that wisdom. We also need wisdom so that we are not one of those "needy" people glopping on to anyone who comes along just so we can have a friend. There's a difference between being a needy person dependent on other people and a self-sufficient believer who doesn't need friends, but enjoys the company of people. Social friends are those that you let into your life to a degree. Personal friends are those that you let into your soul to a degree. So judge wisely!

Being a friend all the way down to social acquaintances has certain obligations: respect of the other person, good manners, courtesy, considerateness, etc.. But more is expected from a personal friend. When one enters into the category of personal friendships, then all those things are there plus loyalty. **To be a friend and have personal friends**, which is what *phileo* is all about, takes **personal integrity and**

doctrinal capacity of soul. The two believers must be on the same page doctrinally. In fact, having rapport friends is one of God's grace blessings for doctrinal believers walking with the Lord.

Phileo love is a two way street. Rapport love of the one believer goes to the other; the other receives it and reciprocates that love. If you're a selfish person, you will not be a good friend. If you're materialistic, you will not be a good friend. A good friend always thinks of the other person's good and acts accordingly. There is also the concept of personal responsibility to do what is necessary doctrinally for the sake of the friendship.

Pastor Mike