



Quick Backdrop

Interesting point: The English language has only one word for love, which is, “love.” We use the same word to describe our love for pizza as we do to describe our love for friends. But the Greeks distinguished several different types of love, like these:

Agape: This word was used to describe sacrificial, selfless, and unconditional love, often for people who couldn’t or didn’t love in return.

Philia: This was the word that described love between friends and family.

Eros: This word was used for romantic love.

It makes sense that God, who is described as love, would send His Son when the dominant language of the day, Greek, had several words for love. So let’s take a look at some love verses out of the gospel of John. By the way, the apostle John used the word love more than all the other gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke) combined.

1 Digging In (God, Show Me!)

Love is the subject of each of the Scripture chunks below. Read these passages (either print them out or read on screen) and mark/highlight the word “love” (or any form of “love”). If you’ve printed out the passage, mark the word with a heart. In each chunk, the Greek word used for “love” is *agape*.

John 3:16

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:33-35

³³ Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. ³⁴ For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. ³⁵ The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.

John 13:33-35

³³ “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. ³⁴ “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

2 Taking It Inward (God, Teach Me!)

After reading and marking, look at what you marked in each passage and journal your thoughts to these questions:

1. Who loves? (Who is doing the loving?)

2. Who or what is loved? (Who is being loved?)

Let’s put a few things together. In the first chunk of Scripture (John 3:16) we learned that belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, requires behavior to back that belief. Using the info you just uncovered, what behavior is a good starting place for demonstrating your belief in Jesus? If you need a hint, it rhymes with *dove*. Write the word down somewhere.

Now, according to these verses, what are we to do with that love?

What does it mean to you that you are loved unconditionally?

What does it mean to you that you are asked to love unconditionally?

3 Putting Into Practice (God, Change Me!)

Remember, the kind of love we’re talking about is sacrificial and selfless—loving people who can’t or don’t return love in the same way...loving people just as Jesus loves you.

Who in your life needs your sacrificial love? Write their names below, and contact info, and make some *agape* contact today!