

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON JOHN'S FIRST EPISTLE

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

1 John 4:7 "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God."

The love shown to one another by members of a Christian church is the "mark" or distinguishing characteristic that makes it unique. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

It is important to know that the Greek word for love used in John 13:34-35 is agape. The Holy Spirit could have inspired John to use a number of other Greek words that legitimately can be translated with the English word love. So, why agape?

There are many levels or uses of the word love. Love can actually be self-centered (selfish) and it can be selfless. It can have ulterior motives and it can focus only upon loving for the exclusive benefit and blessing of the person you love with no thought of self. It can be emotional and shallow and it can be as deep as the deepest depth of the oceans.

So, why agape? The Holy Spirit inspired the word agape because your love for another person is derived from God's love to you. As Jesus said, "just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." We learn from Jesus' life exactly what His love for us looks like. He loved you so much that "He humbled Himself, became obedient unto death, even death on the cross." (Philippians 2:8)

Your love (agape) is the love you have received from God through Jesus. In turn, His love permeates your heart and life and overflows into the life of those with whom you come in contact on a daily basis. As a Christian, loving (agape) your spouse, family, friends, people at work and strangers distinguishes you as one who is filled with the love of God in Christ Jesus your Lord. Indeed, "you love because He (Jesus) first loved you." (John 13:34)

Prayer: Fill me, O Lord, with Your agape so I in turn love those who You bring into my life including family, friends or strangers. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Love in Christ is strong and living, Binding faithful hearts in one;
Love in Christ is true and giving. May His will in us be done.

Love is patient and forbearing, Clothed in Christ's humility,
Gentle, selfless, kind, and caring, Reaching out in charity.

Love in Christ abides forever, Fainting not when ills attend;
Love, forgiving and forgiven, Shall endure until life's end.
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