

REFOCUS

Refocus on Love

The God-Kind of Love

- Agape love, in the Bible, is love that comes from God.
- God loves from an outpouring of who He is.
- As 1 John 4:8 states, “God is love [agapos],” meaning He is the source of agape love.
- Agape love is often described as unconditional, sacrificial, and selfless love.
- It is the type of love that God demonstrates toward us and is exemplified in Christ's sacrificial death on the cross.
- We are to love God and others with agape love.
- God set the standard for agape love in sending Jesus to die for us while we were still sinners.
- Agape love does not come naturally to us because we are imperfect, but we can develop the God-kind of love in our lives
- Only through God can we show and experience agape love.

Do You Have a Love Leak?

- If we are not consistently loving others the way God loves us, we may have a “love leak”
- A “love leak” occurs when believers seem to allow situations and circumstance to cause the God-kind of love to slowly diminish
- There are several causes for “love leaks” in our lives:
 - *Neglect of Spiritual Disciplines*
 - *Busyness and Distractions*
 - *Unresolved Conflict*
 - *Self-Centeredness*
 - *Misunderstanding Love*
 - *Lack of Intentionality of Growing in Love*
 - *Worldly Influences*

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Matthew 22:36-40 (NLT) 36 “Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” 37 Jesus replied, ““You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”

- Jesus is asked, what is the most important commandment, and Jesus replies, love God with all your heart, soul, and mind; and love your neighbor as yourself
- Jesus links loving God *and* loving your neighbor

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- We are to love God like David did; he was a man after God's own heart
- We are to love our neighbor like the early church in Acts 2:44-47 did where they demonstrated love by sharing everything and caring for one another
- It's impossible for us to love God and not love each other **1 John 4:20 (NLT) 20 If someone says, "I love God," but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?**
- *Love is the foundational principle for Christian living*
- We are to put our love in action
- Paul said in **1 Corinthians 13:1 (NLT) 1 If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.**
- Another aspect of love is that it perseveres **1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NLT) 4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. 6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.**
- The God-kind of love endures even in the face of hardships
- *Genuine love is the essence of Christian maturity*
- Another aspect of God's love is His love for us is *unconditional* **Romans 8:38-39 (NLT) 38 And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. 39 No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.**
- God's love for us is unwavering which emphasizes the permanence and all-encompassing nature of God's love
- We can trust in God's love for us despite the challenges we face in life
- *We can live in the assurance of God's unconditional love*
- We can find strength and comfort in God's love even in the midst of adversity and challenging times

Practical Ways to Refocus on Love

- Make prayer a priority - Establish daily times of prayer individually, as couple, or as family
- Spend time in the Word **Psalms 119:105 (NLT) 105 Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.**

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- Serve in love ***Galatians 5:13 (NLT) 13 For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.***
 - Serving other is not an obligation, but an opportunity to show love
- Spend quality time together with the ones you love ***Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NLT) 1 For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.***
- Learn how to communicate with each other ***Proverbs 15:1 (KJV) 1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.***
- Practice kindness and compassion ***Ephesians 4:32 (NLT) 32 Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.***
- Practice forgiveness and reconciliation ***Colossians 3:13 (NLT) 13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.***
- Cover the ones you love ***1 Peter 4:8 (NLT) 8 Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.***
 - Genuine love is so powerful, so sincere, and so sacrificial, that it will cover a multitude of sins
 - God expects us to conceal the sins of our brother/sister in Christ so that no one can see a trace of their sin
 - We're not hiding sins from God because He sees and knows everything; ***"The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good"***
 - But what we are saying is the love believers have for each other is a forgiving love ***Proverbs 10:12 (KJV) 12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.***
 - Our love for others motivates us to cover the sin to hid it from others so that it does not spread
 - Covering the sins of a person is not condoning their actions or turning blind eye to sin
 - We still must confront the sin and work to restore the person, we protect them by not broadcasting it to others
 - It should not be too difficult for us to cover the sins of others when we think about Jesus died that our sins might be covered by His blood
- Our love is our witness ***John 13:34-35 (NLT) 34 So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."***