

LOVE

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Jesus, in scripture, tells us often that god is love. Before the advent of Jesus most worshippers of Jehovah were afraid to even speak His name. A great wall of separation stood between God and His people like the tremendously thick and heavy veil that apart the 'Holy of Holies' in the temple in Jerusalem. Meticulous care was taken regarding sacrifices and tithes. Then, Jesus came to reveal the Father. Father? Never had anyone dared such a thing as to call God 'Father'. The Creator of all things, the one who walked with Abraham, guided Moses, gave the tablets of law and anointed King David could be called Father? Blasphemous! Yet, Jesus went even farther. He prayed that Father and you would be 'one', even as He and Father are one. He went even farther. He opened the way for us to be born into the eternal realms, born of the Holy Spirit as Jesus was, born with a second Father. We now have the same Father Jesus has. What a miracle. You and I have become brothers of Jesus and sons of God. The Father has become our Abba.

We Christians often quote, parrot like, that god is love. We say it but seldom stop and really think about what we are saying. Others have written, much more learnedly and eloquently than I, about various meanings and Greek origins of the words translated 'love' in scripture. They show clearly that with all the words the Greeks had for love {brotherly love, affection, family love, etc} they had no word to fit the kind of love Jesus revealed as coming from Father. His love was absolutely different. A new word was coined which fits God's love and God's love alone. No other love is like it and we call it Agape. Jesus taught us so much, and did so much, but somewhere near the top of my list stands:

- 1) Providing **me** access to being Fathered by God.
- 2) Revealing Agape.

We have heard many sermons, read many books, sung many songs about Agape. Let us spend a few minutes meditating on what Agape is – really. The several articles that I have written and which you will receive dwell on love as described by the 'fruit of the Spirit'. I suggest that an acceptable way to read Galatians 5:22 is, "The fruit of the Spirit is love

which is: joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, mercy, and longsuffering. The seven items behind the colon are all expressions of Agape. Love is **the** fruit of the Spirit. Therefore, when we say, “God is love”, we are saying God is peace, God is mercy, etc. Agape says it all. This is the way God is. This is His nature, His character, and His personality.

Who among us has not felt some guilt while reading the ‘love chapter’, I Cor. 13. Read it once more but instead of pondering your own {and my own} failings, let us read it while keeping in mind that this is God describing Himself, and He never fails. As we work our way through this amazing litany, be sure you keep in mind that this is all about Abba, not you. Granted, as Father works in us, as we come to know Him, we do grow to be like Him and we are transformed by the renewing of our minds.

I Cor. 13 begins with patience and kindness to which I have devoted entire articles which will follow this one. Then the Holy Spirit inspired the writer to say that in Agape there is no envy, no boasting, no pride. Wow! When I was young we used to throw out the ‘one liner’ that we thought was cute, “no brag, just fact”. This is our Father. His ‘facts’ are so grand that they could sound like brag but they are always – just fact. Certainly Father could be justifiably proud but He is not. Who He is and what He does is sufficient. He has no need for, no place for pride. Agape is not rude. Several times in my life I have felt a rebuke from my Lord. He has disciplined me. He has shown me, clearly and eloquently that I have wrong attitudes and wrong conduct. I have NEVER felt He was being rude. If some human had corrected me in exactly the same way I would have been indignant. With Abba I felt love and empowerment to change for the better. In the love chapter list are some wonderful qualities of Abba’s love that we must cling to like a lifeboat in a raging sea. **Agape (Abba) is slow to anger and keeps no record of wrongs.** He says in Romans 8, “For there is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus”. Rest assured, when you are feeling condemned, it is not from Abba. The source will be either yourself or Satan, not God. Agape rejoices in truth which encourages us to ‘walk in the light as he is in the light’. Agape ALWAYS protects. It is good for us to pray, asking for protection, but even if we forget or do not know how, Abba’s agape always protects. The list goes on, ending with Agape never fails. The source of much of our turmoil and fear is failure. We fear that we will fail and God is surely so disgusted with us that He will not, indeed should not, rescue us. He will. He does. True He often does

not do exactly what we hoped for. It commonly doesn't go just like we expected. The promise is, and Agape demands, that He will always rescue us in the kindest, most merciful, most constructive way possible.

Written under the auspices of New Life Inc., a non-profit Christian organization. If you are interested in other writings contact: R.L. Pendleton, 322 Quincy St, Rapid City, SD 57701-2813 or contact us at our Web Page: www.rapidnet.com/~newlife. There are no charges for writings and there will be no request for donations.