

## The Core of the Covenant

Humans make covenants in order to bring about the state of living in lovingkindness. God makes covenant not to make lovingkindness but to reveal that He is all that it means.

### Read 1 John 4:7-10

Notice what this passage says

- "...love is of God." This means that He is the original source of love. He did not get love from somewhere else.
- "God is love" - He does not have love as something added, that may or may not be present, or that is capable of change, increase, or decrease. He is love in His core.

I may tell you I have a glass of water, but it is in an entirely different category to say that I am water.

### Agape or Eros

The covenant word for love in the Greek is agape. It was a word that meant love but was a very general word and lacked a clear definition. It was hardly used and is not to be found in the Greek literature of the first century.

In the days of Jesus and during the writing of the New Testament the word for love was eros. A word that fits almost exactly to our English word for love. Eros meant the love of the lovely and the beautiful; it reached up straining to possess the highest and the best and, therefore, was incapable of loving the ugly or that which was out of harmony with itself. Eros love is repulsed by what it perceives as ugly or anything that is lower than its standard.

The source of eros is in the beauty of the person that is loved. This is a very shaky foundation.

Eros is driven to fulfill its own needs and pleasures. It is driven to conquer and to own the object of its desires. This reduces beloved to a thing or object.

The Holy Spirit did not use eros to define God's love as it did not fit. He took the word agape and used the NT to fill it with His own meaning and definition.

Agape is not wakened or created by the beauty of its object, but arises spontaneously from the heart of God. It is therefore a love that cannot be earned or deserved, for it springs from the heart of God upon all persons.

Agape reaches out to the spiritually ugly and those who are out of harmony with Him. It even reaches out to the enemy who would seek to destroy Him.

### If-Then Love

Most believers believe God loves them but they understand this as a type of human (eros) love. This results in a relationship with God that is on very shaky ground. If God loves us to the degree we please Him then we are forever in doubt concerning His love towards us. If we believe we have attracted His love by our behavior, then we are filled with pride.

The Gospel declares something else. Not if-then love but rather because-therefore love.

Because He loves us....therefore He is the source of our salvation.

**Read Luke 18:9-13**

The word the tax collector used as he called upon God, translated here as "mercy", is the covenant word hesed (lovingkindness). The man was calling upon a covenant that was made on his behalf by the God who is love.

In an eros world the Gospel is a scandal. "We love, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Everlasting and Limitless Love

**Read Jeremiah 31:3 and Psalm 139:1, 13-16**

The word in verse 1 of this Psalm "know" in the Hebrew is yada, which is a word that means knowing intimately by observation. It is used to describe the knowing between lovers, and is the word used for the most intimate union of husband and wife.

When we think of His love, we must remember that in all that He is, He is limitless. Since He is love, His love is limitless.

In human terms it is almost impossible to understand this kind of love. A mother's love for her infant may be the closest. The infant does not deserve all that is poured out. It would be ridiculous to speak of it earning or deserving love. The baby is selfish, demanding and smelly. the love initiated and bestowed is freely given because of who the mother is - the baby contributes nothing except its existence.