

The Greatest Love of All

Bible Study

Church of God, International (Philippines)

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There is a song popularized by
Whitney Houston entitled:
"Greatest Love Of All."

It was the greatest hit during its time. The lyrics of the song go like this:

The Greatest Love of All

I believe the children are our future

Teach them well and let them lead the way

Show them all the beauty they possess inside

Give them a sense of pride to make it easier

Let the children's laughter remind us how we
used to be

The Greatest Love of All

Everybody's searching for a hero

People need someone to look up to

I never found anyone who fulfilled my needs

A lonely place to be

And so I learned to depend on me

The Greatest Love of All

Chorus:

I decided long ago,
never to walk in anyone's shadows
If I fail, if I succeed
At least I'll live as I believe
No matter what they take from me
They can't take away my dignity
Because the greatest love of all
Is happening to me

The Greatest Love of All

I found the greatest love of all

Inside of me

The greatest love of all

Is easy to achieve

Learning to love yourself

It is the greatest love of all

The Greatest Love of All

I believe the children are our future

Teach them well and let them lead the way

Show them all the beauty they possess inside

Give them a sense of pride to make it easier

Let the children's laughter remind us how we
used to be

The Greatest Love of All

And if, by chance, that special place
That you've been dreaming of
Leads you to a lonely place
Find your strength in love

The lyrics and the melody sound pleasant. Yet if you carefully read the message behind it, it is a terrible song.

The greatest love of all is not
directed to oneself!

That is complete selfishness!

All the love in everyone's heart and even in the whole world, does not even come close to the one and only greatest love of all.

Today, we will talk about
the Greatest Love of All

What is the greatest love of all?

We will divide the discussion into three (3) parts:

(1) What is love?

(2) What is the greatest love?

(3) What is the greatest love of all?

“What is love?” is the most searched phrase in Google in 2012.

People express love and expect love.

People fall in love and
fall out of love

Some love are transitory, others more permanent, while others are limited

Love can be a source of joy and
encouragement

It is also the source of
sorrow and hurt

Love is a wonderful thing, yet at times it drives you crazy and makes you mad.

Without love,
life is not worth living.

So what is love?

Can anyone define it?

Defining love is never easy. Many people
have a wrong notion of love.

People think love is an emotion –
a feeling to cherish, to have and to
hold.

People expect love and to be loved.
That is why we often hear among
couples saying: you do not love me
anymore.

Love is a funny thing.

Yet God instructs and expects us
to love one another.

John 13:34-35.

John 13:34-35

(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.

What kind of love is Jesus
referring to?

Mr. Webster defines love as:

1. “A deep and tender feeling of affection for or attachment or devotion to a person or persons.”

2. “A strong, usually passionate, affection of one person for another, based in part on sexual attraction.”

3. “A feeling of brotherhood and good will toward other people.”

In spite of the three definitions of love in the English language, it is still very broad.

However, in the Greek, the word love is categorized into 3 types. The Greeks had a different word for each type of love.

Greek words for love

Eros

Philia

Agape

#1 Eros

Modern interpretation describes Eros as physical love, referring to a husband and wife relationship. It is not the best description of Eros love but it fits the description quite well.

Eros

In an Eros relationship, each partner expects a certain kind of love from the other.

When this expectation is not met the marriage tends to end in divorce.

Eros

It is interesting to note that the word 'erotic' comes from the root word Eros which means sexual love or desire.

Eros

This kind of love is egoistic and self-centered.

Eros love is self-seeking by definition. It is the type of love that is self gratifying.

Eros

Sadly, today's marital love is purely attributed to Eros love. This is not what God intended marital love to be. God wants a marital relationship to be sincere, eternal and selfless.

#2 Philia

Philia is the type of love that gives but expects something in return.

Philia

You receive and give love. It is a healthy two-way loving relationship. You love me and I love you in return. It is mutual love.

Philia

Philia is often described as brotherly love, such as friendship, in which there is a close bond that gives rise to trust.

Philia

This two-way, mutual relationship makes the sacrifice of loving worthwhile.

#3 Agape

Love that gives without expecting anything.

Agape means complete and unconditional
love - love without expecting any return.

Agape

It gives and continues to give without expecting anything in return.

Sometimes it is referred to as altruistic
love.

Agape

Many consider the Love of God as the embodiment of Agape.

They maintain that only God has the capacity for this kind of immeasurable love.

Agape

The Agape love is evident when God sent His one and only Son to redeem mankind.

Agape

Jesus gave all His time and energy to helping people who could not pay Him back. This is the kind of love that God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ have for all of us.

What is Love?

The scripture says God is love – He is the author and originator of love. When you look at the actions of God you will know what love REALLY is.

1 John 4:7-21.

I John 4:7-21

(7) Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

(8) Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

(9) This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

I John 4:7-21

(10) This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

(11) Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

(12) No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

I John 4:7-21

(13) We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

(14) And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

(15) If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

I John 4:7-21

(16) And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

(17) In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.

(18) There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

I John 4:7-21

(19) We love because he first loved us.

(20) If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.

(21) And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

There is this song that captures
perfectly the true essence of love.

Love Isn't Love Until It is Given Away

Smile's not a smile until it wrinkles your face

Bell's not a bell without ringing

A home's not a home when there's nobody
there

A song's not a song without singing

Love isn't love till you give it away

Love isn't love till it's free

Love Isn't Love Until It is Given Away

The love in your heart

Wasn't put there to stay

Oh love isn't love till you give it away

You might think love is a treasure to keep

Feeling to cherish and hold

But love is a treasure for people to share

You keep it by letting it go

Love isn't love till you give it away

Love isn't love till it's free

Love Isn't Love Until It is Given Away

The love in your heart

Wasn't put there to stay

Oh love isn't love till you give it away

Cause love can't survive

When it's hidden inside

And love was meant to be shared

Love Isn't Love Until It is Given Away

Love isn't love till it's free

The love in your heart

Wasn't put there to stay

Oh love isn't love till you give it away

Love is never about ourselves.
Love is about the other person.

Love that is hoarded is self-love –
narcissism – and is the exact opposite
of the essence of love.

Love is a state of being wherein we care for others as much as we care for ourselves.

Love isn't love
when it is not given away

The apostle Paul eloquently
wrote about the true essence
of love

He devoted one whole chapter to describe true love. Read 1st Corinthians 13 and you will realize that love is indeed love when you care for the other person as much as you care for yourself.

Agape –

the word used for love – means
outgoing love for others.

I Corinthians 13:1-3

- (1) If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.
- (2) If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.
- (3) If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Paul says that without love
everything loses its meaning.

Without love every deed is only for
self-aggrandizement; self-glory and
self-seeking.

1 Corinthians 13

- (4) Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.
- (5) It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.
- (6) Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

I Corinthians 13

- (7) It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.
- (8) Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.
- (9) For we know in part and we prophesy in part,
- (10) but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

I Corinthians 13

- (11) When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.
- (12) Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.
- (13) And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these

I Corinthians 13

Love is patient

It is long suffering. It can endure evil, injury, and provocation, without being filled with anger, resentment, indignation, or revenge.

I Corinthians 13

Love is patient

It is persevering patience, it waits and wishes and longs to see the reformation of a person. All because love is outgoing and is projected towards the other person.

I Corinthians 13

Love is kind

It is benign, bountiful; it is courteous and obliging. It is willing to show favors and opportunities for the good of the other person.

I Corinthians 13

Love is kind

It suppresses envy: It envies not; it is not grieved when others are better off, neither at their gifts nor at their good qualities.

I Corinthians 13

Love is kind

If we love our neighbor we will not envy his welfare, or being displeased with his well-being. Instead, we share in their joy and rejoice in their success. This is the proper effect of kindness and benevolence.

I Corinthians 13

Love does not envy

Envy is the effect of ill-will. The prosperity of other should never grieve us. A mind that is bent on doing good will never envy others.

I Corinthians 13

Love does not boast

It vaunts not itself. Love subdues pride and vainglory. Is not puffed up. It is not bloated with self-conceit or pride - nor with arrogance or self-righteousness.

I Corinthians 13

Love is not proud

It is not insolent, does not look down on others, nor belittle others, nor treat them with contempt and scorn. True love is to esteem others better than ourselves.

I Corinthians 13

Love is not rude

It behaves not unseemly. It is careful not to pass the bounds of decency. It does nothing outside of decorum.

I Corinthians 13

Love is not rude

Always acts and behaves properly and justly. Conducts affairs with fairness, respect, courtesy and good will towards all men.

I Corinthians 13

Love is not self-seeking

Seeks not its own. Love is an utter enemy to selfishness. It has no desire to seek its own praise, honor, profit, or pleasure.

Love is not self-seeking

Love never seeks its own to the hurt of others, or with the neglect of others.

It would not advance, nor aggrandize, nor enrich, nor gratify itself, at the cost and damage of others. It often neglects its own for the sake of others.

I Corinthians 13

Love is not easily angered

It is not exasperated. It tempers and restrains the passions. Love will never be angry without a cause, and not over react in anger and rage. There is no anger and rage when love reigns.

I Corinthians 13

Love keeps no record of wrong

Love is grace and mercy towards others. It is very easy to drop our resentments and be reconciled to the one we love.

I Corinthians 13

Love does not delight in evil

It cherishes no malice, nor gives way to revenge: it is never mischievous, nor inclined to revenge; it does not suspect evil of others, or impute malice.

I Corinthians 13

Love does not delight in evil

True love is not apt to be jealous and suspicious; it will never indulge suspicion without proofs, never be forward to suspect ill. It will always think of the best and positive in all things and circumstances of all people.

I Corinthians 13

It rejoices not in iniquity. It takes no pleasure in doing injury or hurt to any. It thinks not evil of anyone. It does not delight and rejoice in doing harm and mischief to others. Nor will it rejoice at the faults and failings of others.

I Corinthians 13

It rejoices in the truth

It is glad of the success of others. It finds fulfillment to see truth and justice prevail; rejoices when men do good and flourish when they turn to the truth.

1 Corinthians 13

It bears all things, it endures all things. True love will pass by and put up with injuries, without indulging anger or cherishing revenge against a neighbor.

I Corinthians 13

Love always hopes

Believeth all things; hopes all things.

Love believes and hopes well of others. Love does not doubt. Love is to believe in others.

I Corinthians 13

Love always trust

Love does not doubt. Love is to trust fellowmen. Holding firmly the belief in the goodness of others.

1 Corinthians 13

Love will be patient upon provocation,
and suffer long - holding firm -
perseveres peace and harmony with
everyone.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 13 that
love in essence is to esteem others
better than ourselves.

Love is as the song goes:
Love is not love until it is given away.

Yes, love is not about us rather it is
about the other person.

Now, we know
what true love is

There is a riddle that is extremely difficult to solve and you might have encountered it in the past.

The riddle goes like this:

In a shipwreck both your wife and child are drowning. You can only save one of them.

Who would you save? Would you save your wife or your child?

It is a question of who you love more; your wife or your child. I hate the riddle because we need to save all the people we love, even if we have to sacrifice our own lives.

What is the greatest love of
all?

Romans 5:8

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Christ offered Himself to save us.

John 3:16

Jesus said: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

This is God’s love and His love is directed towards us.

Titus 3: 4-7

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

The greatest love is that
Jesus died
to save us all!

John 15:13

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

What is to love someone?

How do you love someone?

How do you manifest your love
towards someone?

If you truly love someone –
you will do everything within your
power to save him or her.

True love is to *SAVE* those you truly care about, so that they too may have eternal life.

What is the Greatest Love of All?

When the teachers of the law tested Jesus on which is the greatest commandment, Jesus replied with good judgment and great insight.

Matthew 22:34-40

(34)Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.

(35)One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:

(36)"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Matthew 22: 34-40

(37) Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

(38) This is the first and greatest commandment.

(39) And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

(40) All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

We all want to be saved thus we ought to save others. That is one of the greatest commands.

And this command includes everyone – people whom we know, whom we don't even know and even includes our enemies.

1 Peter 5:2

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve...

We do God's work not because we must, but because we are willing.

Doing God's work is an act of love.
Make no mistake, the Work of God is
purely a work of love.

It was out of great love
that Christ sacrificed
Himself to save each and
everyone of us

Thus, we must exercise this love
with conviction to save others,
particularly the people whom we
love.

God's ministry is purely a work of love. After His resurrection Jesus took time to teach Peter a lesson on true love.

John 21:15-17

- (15) When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter **"Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"** "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said **"Feed my lambs."**
- (16) Again Jesus said, **"Simon son of John, do you truly love me?"** He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, **"Take care of my sheep."**
- (17) The third time he said to him, **"Simon son of John, do you love me?"** Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, **"Do you love me?"** He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, **"Feed my sheep."**

The essence of the entire
conversation is LOVE

Jesus was telling Peter and the rest of
the Apostles - and He is telling us
today that true love is to SAVE

Do you love Me? Feed My sheep! If
we love people whom we care
enough – we must save them.

The Apostles understood this perfectly.

Let us read what Paul said in

1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

- (19) Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.
- (20) To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

- (21) To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.
- (22) To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.
- (23) I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings

Jude 1:20-25

- (20) But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.
- (21) Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.
- (22) Be merciful to those who doubt;
- (23) snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

Jude 1:20-25

- (24) To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—
- (25) to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

James 5:20

Remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

John 15:12-17

(12) My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

(13) Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

(14) You are my friends if you do what I command.

John 15:12-17

(15) I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

John 15:12-17

(16) You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

(17) This is my command: Love each other.

Summation

Jesus came to save us whom He considers friends. That is truly God's love.

In love, God the Father sent His Son
Jesus to save us from sin and death.

In love, He will give us
eternal life by His grace.
In love, He is determined
to save us

With the same love that Jesus has, we ought to save those whom we truly care about and whom we truly love.

True love is to save others especially
those people whom we truly love
and care for.

Let's keep the love burning in our
hearts, always and forever!

The greatest love of all is not only 'loving' ourselves but also 'saving' a friend, a relative and all others.

Back to the riddle: In the shipwreck
of life, whom do we save?

The answer is: every single one!