

From Pastor's Desk...

AGAPE

Rev. K. M. Varughese

The ancient Greeks talked about love, recognizing seven different varieties.

Eros, Philia, Storge, Ludus, Pragma, Philantia and **Agape** are the seven Greek words for love. The below given material is quoted from *Roman Krznaric*.

1. **Eros**: The first kind of love was 'Eros' named after the Greek God of fertility and it represented the idea of sexual passion and desire
2. **Philia**: The second kind of love, Brotherly love, which the Greeks valued far more than 'Eros'
3. **Storge**: Parental love, which embodied between parents and their children
4. **Ludus**: Greek idea of playful love, which referred to the affection between children in the early stage of relationship
5. **Pragma**: Mature love / deep understanding that developed between long-married couples
6. **Philantia**: Self-love, which they understood as either healthy or unhealthy kind of self-love
7. **Agape**: The highest form of love. It is selfless love. The New Testament writers used the word 'Agape' to refer to God's love.

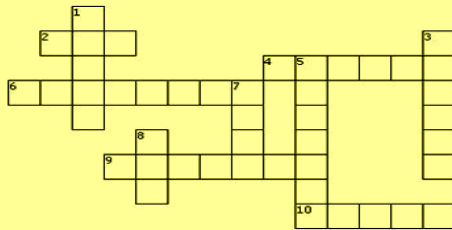
God is *Agape*.

1. *Agape* is the noblest form of love in the Greek language
2. *Agape* does not look at the merit or worth of its object
3. *Agape's* nature is giving
4. *Agape* is unconditional love
5. *Agape* desires only the good of the ones loved
6. *Agape* does not expect anything in return

Jesus Christ is the very personification of *Agape*. He loved the world unconditionally. Christians are called to practice *Agape*, the selfless love. A new command is given to us as His disciples, "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34).

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD!

John 3:16-17 (NIV)



ACROSS

2. The creator of heaven and earth
4. To die or be destroyed
6. Accepts something as being true, genuine, or real
9. To set the punishment of someone who has committed a crime
10. Cared very deeply for someone

DOWN

1. The earth with its inhabitants and everything upon it
3. Anyone; any person
5. Lasting forever; without end
7. To rescue from danger or harm
8. Male offspring

GOD IS LOVE

Jeremiah Johnson

We are all blessed to be loved by a God. Sometimes, we waver in our faith and loose hope but God is always their picking us back up. However, God doesn't even need to do this for us. He could have just let us die, or left us stay in our troubles, but God loves us so much that He does anything and everything for us.

In John 3:16 it says "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." He gave his only son to die for us, which no other God or no other individual would do to save us from our sin.

We are all sinners like it says in Romans 3:23-24, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus". Yes! We are given a way out through Jesus Christ our savior.

Love is the greatest gift of all from God for He is love and if He is love then He is all of the things it says in 1 Corinthians 13:4-6 which says, "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, and it is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. No other God is like this and we are privileged to have such a loving God, and to be in His presence every day of our lives.

THE VICTORY IS MINE

Santhosh Jacob

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:31). Paul describes how much we are held firmly by the love of God. He explains the role of God Himself in calling, justifying and glorifying us. And then he concludes with this amazing promise, "If God is for us..." God's love is and has forever been for us!

We just have to look at that cross to see His love for us. The cross proved that God, the eternal Creator, was willing to become the creation, the superior taking on the inferior form and limiting Himself by plunging into the dimension of time and finite matter. He took upon himself the punishment we rightfully deserved so that we might receive His favor and blessing that Jesus deserved (Phil 2:7). By His own willingness, He went into our state of being lost to rescue us (Luke 15:3-7). The cross was never for Him, but it was for us. It was not about Him changing His heart towards us, but about Him proving His heart to us. It was not about Him trying to change His mind about us, but about us changing our minds towards Him. And this is what we call repentance!

Repentance is a fruit of receiving Him resulting in us enjoying in His unconditional love toward us (Romans 2:4). Often we do not see God this way. We tend to judge the love of God based on our status (sometimes good and sometimes bad), resulting in a distorted/false image of God in our hearts. However, that is not the image of a God revealed to us in and through Christ, but a mere byproduct of our own inferior conclusions to our given external circumstances.

As you read through this today, meditate and declare it out loud God loves me unconditionally & He is for me. He has eternally sworn to be for you and not against you. He has fought for you, He is with you, and He is in you promising to never forsake you. (Heb 13:5, Rom 8:38-39). This is it, this is the truth. And if we are willing to believe it, then the Victory is ours!