

LOVES
IN THE BIBLE

PRECEPT

1 JOHN 4:9-10

⁹ This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world to give us life. 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.

1 JOHN 4:8

⁸ But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

PROMISE

As we wrap up our series in LOVEs in the Bible, we will talk about Agape, which tells us about the divine love, founded by God Himself and expressed through Jesus, the Son of God. 1 John 4:8 tells us that God is love; clearly there is no love apart from Him. We must also understand that everything God does is out of love, love is His nature and character. *Agapē* is defined as the unselfish, unconditional, and sacrificial love expressed to imperfect people for their highest good, even to the point of sacrifice without expecting anything in return. 1 John 3:16 reveals how Jesus showed His Agape love for us, it says *"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us."*

As this is the highest form of love, this is also the kind of love that is most difficult to demonstrate. This is an unconditional kind of love, so our own selfishness always gets in the way. Sometimes, we are too preoccupied with our own needs, wants, and comfort that we cannot attend to the needs of others and love them the way they need to be loved. There are also times when we tend to think of love as primarily an emotional response. Truly, love must be expressed with the right perspective and right motives. There are times when we are too focused on ourselves that we make excuses not to love others, but if we realize that God's love overflows in us, we can share this kind of love selflessly and willingly to others. It is His strength that can empower us to love others. The following are some facts about *Agapē* love:

NOT A FEELING, BUT AN ACT OF WILL

1 Corinthians 16:14 commands us to *"Do everything in love."* Clearly, we must love not out of a feeling or an emotion. It is a decision to make and a choice to take. In everything that we do, we must be motivated and inspired by the love of God. We love based on the truth.

NOT AN OPTION, BUT A COMMAND

Another commandment in John 13:34 tells us, *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."* Loving others is a command that we must obey. We are to love as He loved us, forgive as he forgave us, and accept as He accepted us.

NOT PASSIVE, BUT ACTIVELY EXPRESSED

1 John 3:18 states, *"Let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions."* Jesus expressed *Agapē* in the most amazing way, He showed it on the cross and not merely said that He loves us. Likewise, in showing love to others, we must go beyond our words to express this kind of love. In applying this, let's look at us how Paul described love in 1 Corinthians 13. This is how we can practically express *Agapē* to others especially to those who most need it, and we can only do this with the help of the source of love Himself.

PRACTICE

1. Agape Love. How do we mirror God's *agapē* love in our lives?

2. Application. Where do you most need to apply this right now? (State some practical steps to accomplish your examples.)

PRAYER

I. Government

- Pray for the leaders of our city, province, and country. Pray for integrity, dedication, and strength.

II. Nation

- Pray for restoration, justice, unity, and above all, salvation for our nation and the world.

III. Peace

- Pray for God's peace and reconciliation to overcome all hatred, conflict, and war.

IV. Unity

- Pray for repentance, forgiveness, and unity in the church across denominations and traditions.

V. Hope

- Pray for followers of Jesus to arise as messengers of His hope to the hopeless and the oppressed.

VI. God's Will

- Pray that we would know God's will and be fruitful in our lives and strengthened by intimacy with Him.

VII. Grace

- Pray for the release of grace to love one another, and God may help us live holy lives.