

## The Problem with the Word Love

“And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.” – 1 John 4:16 We have one word in the English language for love, and we use it for everything from “I love my job” or “I love my car” to “I love my God” or “I love tacos.” In the Greek language there are multiple words for love. It isn’t just one word. There is eros, which mainly refers to physical attraction. There is storage, which speaks of a biological family love. There is phileo, which speaks of brotherly love, the love between good friends. Then there is agape, which is most commonly translated as love in the New Testament. Now, every one of these loves has its place in a relationship. Eros is not always bad. It’s a Greek word that speaks of physical and sexual attraction, and eros is just fine in the right place. If eros is in marriage, where it can be righteously fulfilled, it is a good thing. But outside of marriage, it becomes problematic and even sinful. While eros wants something from someone, storage will give you something because you’re related to them, and phileo will give you something but expects something in return. Agape, on the other hand, will give you something, wanting nothing back. If we were to compare these four loves to gift giving, eros would say, “I just want the gift from you now.” Storage would say “I will give you a gift only because you re related to me biologically.” Phileo would say, “I will give you a gift, but what are you giving me in return?” And agape would say, “Here is a gift you could never pay for, ever, but I’m giving it to you because I love you.” Tragically, many relationships today are built on eros. People go from relationship to relationship, saying they’re falling in and out of love, when in fact they have never really experienced genuine, lasting love that will last a lifetime. Although there is a place for storage love, phileo love, and eros love, we want to build our relationships on agape love. Donald