

Giving to get is manipulation. Giving without expecting to get is agape. Agape takes God's help.

b. You may be selfish.

- 1) We selfishly want something in return for our love.
- 2) Giving without getting in return goes against our selfish natures. I find this hard at times.

c. You may lack biblical confession or forgiveness

- 1) When you fail, confess it. Your wife is human. She will fail you at times, just as you will fail her.
- 2) You must be prepared to forgive as God forgave you (Eph 4:32) – completely and permanently.

d. You may not be actively seeking to edify your wife.

- 1) We are to follow Christ's example. (Ephesians 5:25)
"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,"
- 2) This takes a plan and a lot of work. I struggle with this.

e. You may lack self-control

- 1) If you do not bounce your eyes away from immodesty, how can you love your wife as God demands?
- 2) If you look at pornography, how can you love your wife as God requires?
- 3) If you find sexual fulfilment in anything that excludes your wife, you are defrauding your wife.

Conclusion: It is difficult to give agape love to your wife, especially without getting bitter. This evening, we have looked at several reasons this is the case (Review). Men, God is calling us to immediate action. If you are married, it is your duty, just as it is mine. God is not interested in our excuses, He wants our obedience. He never commands us to do something without giving us the help to do it. If your Bible time is lacking, take steps to make it quality. If you have not memorised the biblical definition of love, begin tonight. If selfishness, lack of forgiveness, or a lack of a plan to edify your wife spiritually need addressed, do so. If your lack of self-control defrauds your wife and dishonours the Lord, deal with it severely.

Song: I Have Decided – 397

Why is Love so Difficult?

10 September 2023 PM – Text: Colossians 3:19 – Topic: Love

Introduction: Many people think that love is an uncontrollable feeling that comes and goes mysteriously. They speak of falling in love, as well as falling out of love. To them, love is not something you do; it is something that just happens when the circumstances are right. It is the tingly feeling you have when with a person.

In Colossians 3:19, God commands husbands to love their wives, indicating that they have an option; they can submit to God's command or disobey it. Since you cannot command feelings or emotions, God's definition of love must be different from the popular definition.

If you dig into this topic, you will find four different kinds of love in the Bible. **Phileo** love, is a friendship love. When Jesus wept at Lazarus' grave, the Jews used phileo to describe Jesus' love for Lazarus (Jn 11:35-36). The second love is **storgos**. This is a love for offspring or family. Paul used the negative of this word when he said that in the last days men would be without natural affection (2 Tim 3:3). Next is **eros** that describes romantic or sexual love. While this word is not found in the Bible, God describes the love in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5. Society's popular love, described above, is eros. The final kind of love is **agape**. This is a giving love. It is the sacrificial giving of oneself to meet the needs of another, expecting nothing in return. It is choosing to put another ahead of yourself. If you have not already done so, you need to memorise this definition.

Yes, there are four kinds of love. The first three come naturally. The last, can be very difficult at times. In Colossians 3:19, was God commanding husbands to be better friends, have more natural affection, be more romantic or to put their wives' needs ahead of their own? You guessed it; God spoke of agape, the giving love. Agape love is costly and difficult.

Transition: Since agape love is the duty of every husband, why is it so difficult? Well, many of the same reasons that submission is so difficult for wives, equally apply to the husband's difficulty.

The first reason agape love is so difficult is that ...

1. You have an Inherited a Sin's Curse

a. Adam brought sin into the world (Gen 3:16-19)

- 1) Because of sin, he lost his naturally submissive wife.
- 2) He now possessed a desire to rule over her.
- 3) Providing for the family now takes a lot of time and hard work. Because Adam ate fruit in careless disobedience from the hand of Eve, he must now struggle with hard labour, weeds and sweat (not to mention the bugs and disease) to eat the herbs of the field.
- 4) Adam's curse passed on to all men. (Romans 5:12)
"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"

b. Every husband has inherited Adam's curse.

- 1) Your wife is not naturally submissive. Thus, at times, she may resist your leadership. She may not show you the respect that you desire.
- 2) You have a natural tendency to rule harshly over her. Harsh rule is not the quality of a godly leader. Your harshness makes her respect you less. Her lack of respect for you makes you bitter toward her. This makes it difficult to tenderly place the needs of your wife ahead of your own needs. As Emerson Eggerichs said, The Crazy Cycle begins to spin. Without Love > She Reacts > Without Respect > He Reacts > (Draw on board).
- 3) You too must spend long hours of hard labour to provide for your family. Tiring work makes it difficult to give of yourself to meet the needs of your wife. Life is stressful, and stress is hard on love. **Remember, agape love is the sacrificial giving of yourself to meet the needs of your wife, expecting nothing in return.**

The second reason agape love is so difficult is that ...

2. You may have an Unstable Foundation

a. Last week we saw the foundation in this chapter.

- 1) Risen with Christ (v.1) > Seek things above (v.1-2) > Mortify and put off (v.5, 8-10) > Put on (v.12-15) > Let the Word of Christ dwell richly (v.16 ~ Eph 5:18-19) > Do all in

the name of Christ (v.17).

- 2) **Illustrate** by using wooden blocks to build a tower.

b. Without God's foundation, you will struggle to love.

- 1) Salvation is the only thing that can break the chains of sin's curse. Unbelievers cannot love to the full extent that Christians can love.
- 2) Putting off corrupt attitudes and actions and putting on godly virtues will make it easier to love without bitterness. Bitterness is angry resentment because of unjust treatment. Unresolved conflicts and unresolved irritations may cause a husband to be embittered toward his wife. Bitter resentment will make him sharp, unpleasant, severe, cruel, stern, and distasteful. Bitterness quashes the desire to sacrificially love.
- 3) Letting the Word of Christ dwell richly in your heart will empower you to obey God. If you do not have a daily, personal Bible time that truly feeds your soul, you cannot expect to love your wife as God commands. There may be nothing in the Christian life more critical than that of cultivating a genuine, flourishing relationship with God.
- 4) Men, we need God's help to love our wives as God commands. Ask God to help you remove hindrances.

The third reason agape love is so difficult is that ...

3. You may have an Internal Problem

a. You may have a wrong definition of love.

- 1) Friendship love is good, but God requires a greater love than phileo for your wife.
- 2) Natural love ought to exist in your marriage, but your marriage needs more than that.
- 3) Exciting romantic and sexual love ought to be part of your marriage, but no marriage will survive long just on eros love.
- 4) God did not command these loves. He commanded a much deeper love, a love that requires your sacrifice to meet the needs of your needy wife (Eph 5:25). She ought to respond with appreciation and respect, but if she doesn't, with God's help, you must not become bitter.