

On Love

We can say, “I love Dr. Pepper,” and we can say, “I love my wife.” In both cases, our words are spoken truthfully, yet no one would dare claim the loves are equal. If a man were to look at his wife and say, “I love you just as much as I love Dr. Pepper,” he would likely earn a slap, followed by a long and well-deserved period of silence.

Agapē, Philia, Storgē, Eros

When reading the Bible, scholars often point towards four Greek words used to speak about love. This isn't because love is divided into four separate parts, but because love itself is too full to be carried by a single word. Love remains whole. Yet human language, especially modern English, is often too narrow to express its depth. Greek, by contrast, allowed meaning to branch outward. Different words were used to capture different movements, emotions, and images that love can take, much like many other Greek terms that resist simple translation.

Agapē is the unconditional love given often when nothing can be gained in return. We can see its first fruits in simple tasks like feeding the poor or even forgiving the wrong. Yet a greater image is given to us in our Heavenly Father, who grants life itself without asking repayment. We did not earn our being, nor could we ever return such a gift (Romans 5:8).

Philia is placed in our wholesome friendships. It's known through companionship and gentle affection, formed where hearts are honest and time is shared. It is not born of passion nor duty, but from the unseen threads of trust. When Jesus asked Peter if he loved (agapē) Him, Peter affirms that he loves (philia) Him.

Storgē lies within familial love. It is the affection that endures familiarity, weakness, and time. It is seen when a mother nurses her child, giving of herself with no thought of reward, yet moved by the bond of kinship rather than choice. In Scripture, this love appears quietly in compound words. Philostorgoi speaks of brotherly, familial devotion—love softened by nearness and care (Romans 12:10). Astorgous, by contrast, names the absence of such love, a sign of hearts grown cold and disordered (Romans

1:31, 2 Timothy 3:3). In this way, Scripture teaches us that even natural affection is a gift to be guarded, for when it is lost, something deeply human is lost with it.

Eros is not stated directly in the Bible. The Greeks spoke of eros most often because it was the love most felt. It stirred the body, seized the imagination, and demanded attention. Eros is where words such as erotic take their root. It names the love of desire, the pull toward beauty, and the longing that awakens the senses. The experience of romantic attraction, impulsive behavior rooted in sexual instinct, and the fundamental human desire for spousal bonding. Because this *love* is felt strongly and spoken easily, it has shaped much of how the world now understands love—often mistaking intensity and desire for depth and devotion. Likewise, we can trace forms of such love in Scripture: The Song of Solomon, David towards Bathsheba, etc.

And obviously, the love most closely joined to Christ is agapē. This is the love He lived, taught, and revealed upon the Cross. Christ did not love because He was received, understood, or repaid. He loved while being rejected. He loved while being betrayed. He loved until the end.

Cruciform

Yet love isn't only known by the words we give, but by the works it produces. Because love acts, it appears differently in different people. One can love through labor, another through patience, another in unassuming efforts, another through persistence, and so on. For this reason, love cannot be measured by feeling alone. Feelings rise and fall, but love endures by choice. Love reveals itself not in what is said, but in what is done when it costs something.

Then we ask, is there a pinnacle form of love that arises? If so, we can surely see that love is not measured by the height of its peak, but by descent.

who, as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross.

Philippians 2:6-8

The first movement of Christ's love is humility. Utter humiliation. He doesn't seize power, nor cling to glory, but lowers Himself. In like manner, we who are allotted the Kingdom of Christ, whilst possessing far more of the world's luxuries than many across the earth, are called to the same posture. Love, when it is true, does not clutch what it has been given. It loosens its grip. It learns to bend low, not from lack, but from abundance.

Then there is sacrifice—what we quite literally give. Not what's felt, nor what's intended, but what is surrendered. Time, comfort, safety, and even life itself.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3:16

The Father gives the Son, and the Son gives Himself. This giving isn't forced, nor reluctant, but chosen. God's love isn't proven by sentiment, but by gift. For God so *loved* the world that He gave... Christ didn't merely teach love, but spent His life to reveal it. He gives His time, His strength, His blood. Love is shown not in what is kept safe, but in what is laid down. And when we behold such a sacrifice, we are rightly humbled. For whatever we give, we must confess that it is little beside the Cross. Yet this is not to shame us, but to awaken us in our senses; to call us into a love that gives not because of comparison, but because it follows.

Unfortunately, one may give much and still remain ruled by the self. The truest measure of love is not found in what we choose to surrender, but in to whom we surrender it. Thus love reaches its summit in obedience.

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross.

Philippians 2:8

Obedience binds sacrifice to truth and keeps love from becoming self-directed. Christ did not only give His life; He gave His will. He didn't act according to his preference nor comfort, but according to the will of the Father. His love was perfected not merely in dying, but in obeying to the point unto death.

These postures of love are, in a way, one. Christ does not perform these in sequence, but in perfect unison, for the sake of our salvation. Thus the highest love is not found in any single movement alone, but in their unity.

So in our relationships, our service to one another is not measured merely by buying food, offering compliments, or spending time together *needless to say, these are very good ways to show small acts of kindness*—but the truer question is how low we are willing to go in the smallest things, whether we can obey a request from one younger than us, or less regarded, and how much we are willing to give when the cost is so real. For love is tested not in what is easy or admired, but in what crushes us, empties us, and asks for faithfulness when nothing follows.

Squander

To any man foreign to the Christian faith, this “*cruciform*” love appears not as virtue, but as waste. By the judgment of the world, a love that empties itself seems irrational—like a poor investment, a careless expenditure of one’s life. To give one’s time, strength, and even suffering without visible return appears to be nothing more than the throwing away of something precious.

Utilitarianism, based on an individualistic understanding of freedom — a freedom without responsibilities — is the opposite of love
John Paul II

Since the opposite of love is use, love cannot be governed by its usefulness. To use someone is to measure them by what they offer, what they produce, or what they can do for us. Love is the reverse. Love gives where no profit can be gained or pours itself out even where the world sees no efficiency, no advantage, and no return. In that sense, love appears wasteful—not because it is meaningless, but because it refuses the logic of utility.

Love was a waste or is extravagant
Reverend David 광신 Kim

To call love wasteful is not to call it pointless. Rather, to say that love is waste is to say that it is willing to spend itself completely for another, even when nothing is given in return; to say that love is extravagant is to say that it is abundant, excessive, overflowing, and untouched by careful calculation.

Yet this wasteful love must not be confused with recklessness. Even modern society has its own language of extravagant love, but what it often praises is not love's holiness, only a mere impulse. I see many young men neglecting his duties for some hollow romance or having some shallow performance of affection purchased from their parents' wallets. Such things are far from love, but true extravagance in love is not waste for the sake of desire, but the free surrender of oneself for a genuine good of the other.

And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.

Matthew 5:41

Christ teaches of this love long before He hangs crucified upon the Cross. Even here, He reveals that love is not measured by bare obligation, but by a freedom that gives beyond what is demanded. To go one mile is to satisfy the command; to go two is to enter the logic of grace. It is the difference between duty and gift, between reluctant compliance and a heart already loosened from itself.

Love, then, is not content with the minimum. It doesn't merely ask, "*What must I do?*" but rather, What more can I give? The second mile is where love begins to show its true form, for there the soul is no longer acting under compulsion, but in voluntary self-offering. What the world sees as excess, Christ names righteousness. What appears wasteful in the eyes of calculation becomes beautiful in the eyes of God.

Thus the road to Calvary is already present in the second mile. The Cross doesn't suddenly appear at Golgotha, as though love only then became costly. It's already there wherever a man gives more than is required, forgives beyond fairness, serves beyond recognition, and lays down his comfort for the good of another. Cruciform love is not born only in death, but in every holy act of self-forgetting that prepares the heart for sacrifice.

Matrimony

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her

Ephesians 5:25

In marriage, men partake in a union of oneness with their female counterparts. Yet this union is not merely social, emotional, or physical. It is sacramental in shape, for marriage becomes an icon of Christ and His Church. The husband is not called merely to enjoy his wife, protect his household, or provide for his family, though all these things are good. He is called to love as Christ loves. This means his love must become cruciform: humble, sacrificial, obedient, and so on...

Notice that the command given to husbands is not vague affection. Scripture does not say, "Husbands, feel warmly toward your wives," nor does it say, "Love your wives when they are agreeable." It says to love them as Christ loved the Church. And Christ loved the Church while she was stained, wandering, weak, and unfaithful. His love did not wait for perfection before giving itself. Rather, His love moved toward the beloved in order to cleanse, heal, and sanctify. Conversely, this doesn't mean the husband becomes a passive man, emptied of strength or authority. Rather, his strength is purified by his love. His headship is not from domination, but from taking responsibility. His authority is not the right to be served, but the burden of serving first. Christ, though Lord of all, knelt to wash the feet of His disciples. In the same way, the husband's leadership must be shaped by the service before its shaped by the any form of glory.

For this reason, marriage exposes whether a man's love is real or merely imagined. It's easy to speak of sacrifice in poetry, prayer, and theology, but it's harder to sacrifice sleep, pride, comfort, money, and preference for the person beside you. Marriage brings love out of the fairytales and places it into daily life. It tests love in dishes, arguments, sickness, silence, bills, fatigue, forgiveness, and the small hidden deaths of selfishness.

Yet the wife, too, is not called into something lesser. The Church receives the love of Christ and responds with good service such as, [but not limited to](#), faithfulness and trust. In Christian marriage, the wife does not become an object beneath the husband, but his beloved for whom he is responsible before God. Her dignity is not reduced by his love; it is revealed by it. If Christ gives Himself for the Church, then the Church must be

precious beyond measure. Likewise in marriage. Wives, in knowing the loveliness you hold within the hearts of your husbands, carry yourselves with depth and quiet confidence so that love within marriage may never grow ordinary, but continually inspire affection, admiration, and pursuit.

Thus marriage is not merely two people who desire one another for desire alone cannot carry the weight of covenant. This is why Christian marriage is not sustained by passion alone, but by promise. Passion may rise and fall, but covenant remains. The vow stands even when feeling grows quiet. In this way, marriage becomes a school of holiness, teaching both husband and wife how to die to themselves without losing themselves. For in the mystery of love, the self is not destroyed by surrender, but fulfilled through gift.

And perhaps this is why marriage is so difficult: because it asks two sinners to become one flesh without ceasing to be two wounded souls. It asks them to forgive before they'll ever feel ready, to give when they feel empty, and to remain when leaving would be easier. Yet in this difficulty, marriage becomes somewhat beautiful. Not because it is always sweet, but because it forces us to depend on Love.

For if Christ's love for the Church is the image given to husbands and wives, then marriage is not finally about romance alone. It is about sanctification. It is about learning, day by day, to love with the shape of the Cross. And when such love is practiced, even imperfectly, the household becomes a small chapel, the marriage bed becomes honorable, and ordinary life becomes a place where divine love is quietly made visible.

Knowing Love

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love

1 John 4:8

Yet if love is most perfectly revealed in Christ, then we must speak carefully about what this means of God Himself. For God is not loving in the way man is loving. Man may possess love, lose love, grow in love, or act against love. But God does not merely have love as one quality among many. God *is* love.

God is simple. Not that He is simple-minded, shallow, or easy to understand. Rather, God is simple because He is not divided into parts. He is not made up of pieces that combine to form His being. In us, love is often only one part of who we are. A man may be loving in one moment and selfish in the next. He may possess patience, but lack courage. He may desire goodness, yet still be pulled by sin. But God is not like this. God is not partly loving, partly holy, partly just, nor partly merciful, as if these attributes were separate ingredients mixed together to form a whole image.

Instead, God is wholly Himself. His love is not separate from His holiness. His justice is not separate from His mercy. His wrath is not separate from His goodness. All that God is, He is perfectly and eternally. When God loves, He does not pause His justice. When God judges, He does not cease to be love. When God shows mercy, He does not compromise His holiness. In Him, there is no conflict, no confusion, no division.

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another

John 13:35

We love, because He first loved us.

1 John 4:19

Oftentimes, this is difficult for us to understand or practice because we are divided creatures. We often feel love fighting against truth, or mercy fighting against justice, or desire fighting against our duty. But in God, there is no such discord. He does not become more merciful by becoming less just, nor more loving by becoming less holy. So when we say God is love, we do not mean that love is one soft part of God that overpowers the rest. We mean that the whole life of God is love.

The Father loves the Son. The Son loves the Father. The Spirit is the bond and breath of divine love. Before the world was made, love already was. God did not create the world because He was lonely, incomplete, or in need of someone to love. Love was already perfect in the life of the Trinity. Creation, then, is not the beginning of God's love, but the overflow of it.

This means that God's love is not reactive. He does not begin loving once man becomes worthy. He does not love because He discovers something lovable in us. His love begins in Himself. It flows from who He is. This is why divine love is so unlike human love. Human love is often awakened by beauty, kindness, usefulness, or affection. But God's love creates beauty where there was none. It calls the dead to life.

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

So God is equally patient; equally kind; etc. Love is not the "easy" doctrine for children while deeper minds move on to "harder things". Love is the depth itself. To say God is love is not to say something small, but something infinite. To say that *God is Love* is not a simple statement because it's frivolous, but because God Himself is apparent and forthright: whole, undivided, pure, and perfect. If love were merely something He chose to use, then perhaps He could one day withhold it from His own nature. But because God is love, His love is as eternal as He is. It has no beginning. It has no weakness. It doesn't flicker like human affection, nor collapse under betrayal. It remains because God remains the same (Hebrews 13:8).

My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

John 15:8-9

Thus, all true love begins and ends in God. Every human act of love is only a small reflection of the One who is Love Himself. They are not love in themselves, but participation in Him. And because we belong to Him, we are called to imitate His love. Not because we can love as perfectly as God loves, but because His love becomes the pattern of our own. If God is wholly love, then those who are His should be slowly shaped into that same image. We love because He first loved us, and every act of

humility, sacrifice, forgiveness, and obedience becomes a small reflection of the Love from which we came.

Take Paul's description of love in the first epistle to the Corinthians. When Scripture says that love is patient, kind, truthful, enduring, and without selfishness, it speaks first of God before it speaks of us. God is patient. God is kind. On and on.

And because Christians are called to imitate God, these words also become a mirror held before our own souls. We should practice reading the passage by replacing the word "love" with our own names: *Ray* is patient, *Ray* is kind ... *Ray* never fails. The exercise is often uncomfortable because it exposes how far we remain from the fullness of divine love. Yet this discomfort is not meant to lead us to despair, but to repentance and transformation.

To know Love is to abide in Love. For holiness is not something separate from love. To grow in holiness is to grow in love: love that is truthful rather than sentimental, sacrificial rather than self-seeking, steadfast rather than emotional alone. The saints are holy precisely because they have been shaped by divine love. Their lives become transparent to God's own character, however imperfectly in this life.

Falling in Love

We remember that Christ is love, and what confounds me to this day is that excluding meaningless pairings such as "And he," "He said," or "Of the," the most repeated and theologically important word pairing in the New Testament is "in Christ".

*Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a new creation. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, **in Christ** God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*

2 Corinthians 5:17-19

*And because of him you are **in Christ** Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."*

1 Corinthians 1:30-31

*Making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth **in Christ** as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things **in him**, things in heaven and things on earth.*

Ephesians 1:9

*And raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places **in Christ** Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us **in Christ** Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created **in Christ** Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Ephesians 2:6-10

*So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God **in Christ** Jesus.*

Romans 6:11

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are **in Christ** Jesus.*

Romans 8:1

*For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God **in Christ** Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 8:38-39

And so, perhaps the Christian life is nothing less than learning how to fall in love aptly. Not into a love that is shallow, accidental, or ruled by feeling, but into the Love who is eternal. As we are brought in Christ, then we are not merely commanded to love from the outside. We are invited to dwell inside Love Himself.

To fall in love with Christ is not to be overtaken by temporary spiritual emotion or religious enthusiasm, but to surrender our mind, body, soul, desire, memory, and will. It's to let His love become the air we breathe. friendship, marriage, beauty, belonging, intimacy, or home—is a fragmentary sign pointing beyond itself.

Therefore, we should all fall *in Love*. Not merely with the concept of love, nor with the emotional consolation of being loved, but with Christ Himself. And from that union, His love must overflow upon all that surrounds us. For to be *in Love* is to be immersed in Christ. And if we're immersed in Love, then love must become incarnate through us. Our lives should become living testimonies to the One who first loved us, until every act of mercy and every hidden sacrifice becomes a quiet confession: we have fallen into Love, and Love makes us new.

Closing

Jesus loves me. In understanding a fraction of the depth of this love, I am abound with the capacity of love I emanate amongst my surroundings. And I tell you the same: Jesus loves you :)

As I grow in love, I begin to understand God more deeply. Not just in ideas or beliefs, but in the way love changes how I see people, forgive, stay patient, and remain open even when it gets tough. The more I experience real and tangible Love, the more I recognize the weight and depth within it. My love for God naturally grows because every genuine act of love begins to carry a reflection of Him.

I'm realizing that knowing God is not separate from learning how to love well. The deeper I grow in compassion, the closer I feel to Him.

And I wish the same to you all :)

I hope you enjoyed this blog, but more than that, I hope it gave you space to slow down and reflect on the love of God. I pray insofar as you will encounter the tangible Love of Christ in our daily lives. A few questions to ruminate upon:

1. How can I fall deeper in Love?
2. What are some of the things I care about? What are some of the things I should be caring about less? What are some of the things I should be caring about more?
3. What is the quantitative and qualitative deficit in my reciprocal love compared to Christ's?

Love,
Ray



John 15:9-13

9 As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. **10** If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. **12** This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.