

The Law of Liberty

This topic is **REVISION** to remind us that we are free in the Kingdom from the Law and legalism. We have such freedom that the only 'law' we have to keep is the **Law of Love** which James refers to as the Royal Law and also as the Law of Liberty. Let's recap what we know so far:

(1) Jesus taught us that with his arrival as the Messiah, the Law had ceased and that the Kingdom had arrived and that it's precepts were to replace it:

Luke 16:16 (NKJV) – *“The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.”*

(2) Paul taught that Christ is the end of the Law. Now that the Messiah has arrived, the Law ceases because his rule and reign no longer requires us to need a legal guardian¹:

Romans 8:4 (NKJV) – *that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

Romans 10:4 (NKJV) – *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

Galatians 2:21 (NKJV) – *I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”*

(3) Jesus taught us that love is the foundation of the Law and the prophets:

Matthew 22:36-40 (NKJV) – *“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’² This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’³ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”*

(4) Jesus taught us that doing things lovingly to others in a way we'd want them to do to us is the Law and the prophets:

Matthew 7:12 (NKJV) – *Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

(5) Jesus gave us a new commandment/rule: “love one another”. We now call this the ‘Law of Love’:

John 13:34 (NKJV) – *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*

(6) His apostles continue in this vein instilling the ‘new commandment’ into the 1st church:

2 John 5 (NKJV) – *And now I plead with you...not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another.*

(7) Paul taught that love is one of fruit of the Spirit and that there is no law against it:

Galatians 5:22-26 (NKJV) – *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

(8) Paul taught that love fulfils the Law:

Romans 13:8 (NKJV) – *Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.*

Romans 13:10 (NKJV) – *Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

(9) Paul taught that we are called into liberty – freedom from binding Law – so we should love each other as this completely fulfils the requirements of the Law:

1 – Galatians 3:24

2 – Deuteronomy 6:5

3 – Leviticus 19:18

Galatians 5:13-14 (NKJV) – *For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”⁴*

(10) James refers to the ‘Law of Love’ as the ‘Royal Law’:

James 2:8-9 (NKJV) – *If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,”⁵ you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.*

(11) James taught that we should operate by the ‘Law of Love’, which he calls the ‘Law of Liberty’, and also that we will be judged as Kingdom citizens by that law:

James 1:25 (NKJV) – *But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*

James 2:12 (NKJV) – *So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.*

James 2:12 (AMPC) – *So speak and so act as [people should] who are to be judged under the law of liberty [the moral instruction given by Christ, especially about love].*

(12) God said that he would write his laws in our minds and on our hearts. The writer of Hebrews reaffirmed this as the case for the saints.⁶ This process, however, requires us to be in a loving, submitted relationship with him, otherwise it will be negated by our personal desires and our free will:

Jeremiah 31:33 (NKJV) – *But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

What is Loving?

How do we fulfil the Law of Love today so that we aren't condemned by it when we're judged in reference to it? There are 2 issues here:

1. What does love mean?
2. When is love or loving wrong?

(1) When most people think of love they either think of romance, sex or a warm fuzzy experience. They will therefore declare anything other than these 3 as something that's unloving. As a consequence, most women consider men unloving when what they do or say doesn't make them feel good or give them the 'warm-fuzzies'. In like manner, men usually consider women as unloving if they don't do things that make them feel good, or are not passionately sexual.

Sorry, but that's got nothing to do with the Law of Love.

Remember, God is love,⁷ it's one of his primary characteristics. The Greek word used in the NT for God's love is *agapé* which means 'affection', 'benevolence', 'dear', as well as 'charity', using an archaic term.⁸ The verb to love is *agapaó*. *Agapé* is different to *philanthrópia* (love for humanity), *phileó* (brotherly love), *storgé* (motherly love) & *eros* (erotic or sexual love). It's interesting that *agapé* is actually "the characteristic word of Christianity, and since the Spirit of revelation has used it to express ideas previously unknown, inquiry into its use, whether in Greek literature or in the Septuagint, throws but little light upon its distinctive meaning in the NT."⁹

To understand the full meaning of *agapé*, and to see why it's known as 'the God kind of love', it's origin

4 – Leviticus 19:18

5 – Leviticus 19:18

6 – Hebrews 10:16

7 – 1 John 4:8, 16

8 – Strong's Lexicon of Greek Terms (www.elijah.com/cgi-bin/strongs.cgi?file=greeklexicon&isindex=love)

9 – Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words

needs to be investigated in the NT. So, what do we find?

Agapé is used to describe:

- God's love for his Son;¹⁰
- God's love for humanity;¹¹
- God's love for believers;¹²
- God's love given to believers;¹³
- The kind of love God wants us to have for each other;¹⁴ & most importantly,
- God's essential nature:¹⁵

So this word has no common synonym in our language. Also, it's not something we naturally do, and therefore we need the Spirit and the moulding of the Lord to develop this love in us.

Agapé is a love that:

1. values and esteems;
2. it is not complacent, nor is it the response to the excellence of something;
3. it arises from deliberate choice, without a cause, originating in God himself;
4. it has God as the primary object;
5. it is not an impulse from feelings and it doesn't follow natural inclinations;
6. it is not reserved for those with whom there is an affinity;
7. it works for the welfare of everyone and looks to do good in all situations and to all people;
8. it's one of the fruits of the Spirit¹⁶; &
9. it's our main emotion towards the Trinity.¹⁷

Warm-fuzzies and feeling good do not enter into *agapé*. To the horror of many, *agapé* includes discipline and chastening¹⁸ – including 'tough love' as we call it. Do not reject discipline, moulding, shaping or punishment if it's given in an *agapé* manner as it is right and proper to do so. Any objection to it is rebellion and adherence to self-interest.

(2) Love is **wrong** when it is said to be *agapé* but it isn't. There is a place for all other loves, provided they are done with *agapé* as the foundation.

NOTE: Lust is not love.

Unrighteous affection can be *eros*, which can be genuine love, but God has confined this love to the sexual relations between a man and his wife.

If we consider that something is love, it must first be measured against 2 principles:

- (i) Is it based on *agapé*? &
- (ii) Does it align with Father's heart and will?

Anything that doesn't tick both 'boxes' must be considered carnal, and rejected. Such is the proper classification of marital rape, homosexuality, lesbianism, same-sex marriage, bestiality, marriage to pets, etc.

10 – John 17:26

11 – John 3:16

12 – John 14:21

13 – Romans 5:5; 1Thessalonians 4:9

14 – John 13:34

15 – 1 John 4:8

16 – Galatians 5:22

17 – This list of points: Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words

18 – Hebrews 12:6; Revelation 3:19

Love in Action

To understand the enormity of what *agapé* means, a detailed look at what is said about it in the NT is very helpful. It is surprising just how much is involved in *agapé* because it is a voluntary emotional action, not pure emotion.

Here are some of the points about *agapé*:

- It is patient.¹⁹
- It is kind.²⁰
- It does not envy.²¹
- It is never jealous.²²
- It is never boastful.²³
- It is never proud.²⁴
- It is never rude.²⁵
- It is never selfish.²⁶
- It is never quick tempered.²⁷
- It never keeps a record of wrongs that others do.²⁸
- It rejoices in the truth.²⁹
- It doesn't rejoice in evil.³⁰
- It is always supportive.³¹
- It is loyal.³²
- It is full of hope.³³
- It is trusting.³⁴
- It never fails.³⁵
- It loves enemies.³⁶
- It blesses those who curse.³⁷
- It does good to haters.³⁸
- It prays for mistreaters.³⁹
- It prays for persecutors.⁴⁰
- It loves those who don't love back.⁴¹
- It loves everyone.⁴²

19 – 1 Corinthians 13:4

20 – 1 Corinthians 13:4

21 – 1 Corinthians 13:4

22 – 1 Corinthians 13:4

23 – 1 Corinthians 13:4

24 – 1 Corinthians 13:4

25 – 1 Corinthians 13:5

26 – 1 Corinthians 13:5

27 – 1 Corinthians 13:5

28 – 1 Corinthians 13:5

29 – 1 Corinthians 13:6

30 – 1 Corinthians 13:6

31 – 1 Corinthians 13:7

32 – 1 Corinthians 13:7

33 – 1 Corinthians 13:7

34 – 1 Corinthians 13:7

35 – 1 Corinthians 13:8

36 – Matthew 5:44

37 – Matthew 5:44

38 – Matthew 5:44

39 – Matthew 5:44

40 – Matthew 5:44

41 – Matthew 5:46

42 – Matthew 22:39

- It loves God with the heart, soul, mind & strength of a person.⁴³
- It lends, expecting nothing in return.⁴⁴
- It does good, not expecting anything in return.⁴⁵
- It loves like Jesus loves.⁴⁶
- It lays down personal life for others.⁴⁷
- It serves each other.⁴⁸
- It edifies.⁴⁹
- It comforts.⁵⁰
- It knits believers together.⁵¹
- It moves us to keep the Lord's instructions.⁵²
- It isn't hypocritical.⁵³
- It releases brotherly love to other believers.⁵⁴
- It does no harm to others.⁵⁵
- It doesn't grieve others by what we do.⁵⁶
- It is to be the motivation of all that is done.⁵⁷
- It is to be the partner of faith in all that is done.⁵⁸
- It is the basis of our service.⁵⁹
- It's what believers are to “put on”.⁶⁰
- It's what believers are to pursue.⁶¹
- It's what believers are to stir up in others.⁶²
- It is a believer's attitude to the truth.⁶³
- It is to come from a pure heart.⁶⁴
- It's the identifier that we are followers of Jesus.⁶⁵
- It is to be in the home.⁶⁶
- It is to be fervent towards other believers.⁶⁷
- It covers other believers' sins.⁶⁸ [i.e. It forgives and disregards the offences & unkindnesses of others]
- It is to be added on top of brotherly kindness.⁶⁹
- It does not love the world.⁷⁰

43 – Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:33

44 – Luke 6:35

45 – Luke 6:35

46 – John 13:34; 15:9

47 – John 15:13

48 – Galatians 5:13

49 – 1 Corinthians 8:1

50 – Philippians 2:1

51 – Colossians 2:2

52 – 1 John 5:2-3; John 14:23-24; 2 John 1:6

53 – Romans 12:9

54 – Romans 12:10

55 – Romans 13:10

56 – Romans 14:15

57 – 1 Corinthians 16:14

58 – Galatians 5:6

59 – Galatians 5:13

60 – Colossians 3:14

61 – 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22

62 – Hebrews 10:24

63 – 2 Thessalonians 2:10

64 – 1 Timothy 1:5; 1 Peter 1:22

65 – John 13:35; 1 John 4:7-8, 16

66 – Titus 2:4; Ephesians 5:25, 28

67 – 1 Peter 4:8

68 – 1 Peter 4:8

69 – 2 Peter 1:7

70 – 1 John 2:15

- It has no component of fear in it.⁷¹
- It is our response to Jesus loving us.⁷²
- It cannot hate other believers.⁷³
- We can't hate our brother believer and love God at the same time.⁷⁴
- It is the love that believers are to keep themselves in.⁷⁵
- Those who “abide” in it “abide” in God.⁷⁶
- We love Father when we love his Son this way.⁷⁷

Liberty in Action

The Law of Love is the Law of Liberty, and the two are intrinsically intertwined. **All the liberty we have in the Kingdom must be tempered with *agapé* love.**

Here is how liberty works out, according to the NT:

- We must be careful that our liberty isn't a stumbling block for others.⁷⁸
- Our liberty shouldn't be nullified by another person's conscience.⁷⁹
- We have liberty because the Spirit of the Lord is present.⁸⁰
- We have liberty in Jesus Christ which others want to remove so they can take us back into bondage.⁸¹
- We have been called into liberty.⁸²
- We are not to use our liberty as an excuse for unrighteousness.⁸³
- We are to be active doers of the Law of Liberty.⁸⁴
- In everything we do and say, we need to remember that we are judged by the Law of Liberty.⁸⁵
- Everything is lawful for us.⁸⁶
- We are free to do whatever is righteous.⁸⁷
- We are free from all men, but we serve all men.⁸⁸
- We are free to eat what we like, provided it's done with thanks.⁸⁹
- We are free to choose to do what is beneficial,⁹⁰ provided it's what builds us up as well as others.⁹¹
- We are free to choose to do what we like, provided it doesn't bring us into bondage to anything.⁹²

71 – 1 John 4:18

72 – 1 John 4:19

73 – 1 John 4:20-21

74 – 1 John 4:20

75 – Jude 1:21

76 – 1 John 4:16

77 – 1 John 5:1

78 – 1 Corinthians 8:9

79 – 1 Corinthians 10:29

80 – 2 Corinthians 3:17

81 – Galatians 2:4; 5:1; 2 Peter 2:19

82 – Galatians 5:15

83 – Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 2:16

84 – James 1:25

85 – James 2:12

86 – 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23

87 – Romans 6:18

88 – 1 Corinthians 9:19

89 – Romans 14:1-3, 6

90 – 1 Corinthians 6:12

91 – 1 Corinthians 10:23

92 – 1 Corinthians 6:12

- We are free to be all things to all men.⁹³
- We are free to observe special days if we want, provided it's done by faith.⁹⁴

Learn to operate out of *agapé* so that God's Law is fulfilled as you do it with Father's heart and in his will.

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10-6-2016

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93 – 1 Corinthians 9:22

94 – Romans 14:6