

HOW TO DWELL IN THE FIRE OF GOD

Life quote: **Without the baptism of Fire, your love will be Eros and not Agape.**

Isaiah 33:14 The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the godless: "Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?"

Isaiah 33:15 He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of oppressions, who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,"

1 John 4:16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

I have put these two verses together because, striking as is at first sight, the contrast in their tone, they refer to the same subject, and they substantially preach the same truth.

It may be assumed by a careless reader who values sound over meaning that the serious terms "the devouring fire" and "everlasting burnings" refer to hell, but the context clearly reveals that they refer to God. The individual who is destined to "dwell in the devouring fire" is in fact, the virtuous person who "walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly," who spurns "the gain of oppression," rejects "bribes," abhors "hearing of blood," and turns away from "seeing evil."

In this passage, the prophet is describing how the sinners in Zion become seized with anxiety upon witnessing the great act of divine judgment. They question their ability to withstand the flashing brightness and purity of God in their sinful state. The prophet explains that a holy God must have holy companions, and those who walk in righteousness and speak uprightly will be able to abide in His presence without being consumed.

Moreover, the fire of God is not only the fire of purity but also the fire of love. John comes with an answer that deepens and expands this notion by explaining that a loving God must have loving hearts clustered around Him. Only those who

enter into a deep and true friendship with God are capable of experiencing His love. Altogether, this passage challenges the reader to walk in righteousness, uphold virtuous values, and cultivate a loving heart if they seek to experience God's presence in their lives.

The world's question is one of fear and anxiety. It is the question of sinners in Zion who feel unworthy and unable to withstand the judgment of God. It is a question that looks at one's own shortcomings and doubts their ability to be in the presence of a holy God.

The prophet's answer is straightforward - a holy God must have holy companions. One must walk in righteousness, speak truthfully and uphold values that align with God's principles. This answer provides direction for those seeking to abide confidently in the presence of God.

John's answer expands upon the prophet's answer. He declares that a loving God must have loving hearts clustered around Him, and only those who dwell in love can dwell in God. This answer emphasizes the need for not only righteousness but also a love-filled heart and genuine friendship with God.

In summary, these texts paint a picture of God's judgment and the types of hearts that can be present in His presence. The fear and anxiety of the sinful heart are juxtaposed with the promise of righteousness and God's love. The teachings inspire us as believers to seek righteousness and love so that we may confidently abide in the midst of God's glory.

The World's Question.

1. The text discusses the use of fire as a symbol of the divine nature in the Old Testament, specifically the idea of divine wrath against evil. The Bible shows that a God who does not hate evil and fights against it is a God with a fatal suspicion of indifference to good. However, the fire that represents the destructive force of perfect purity can also be the fire that quickens and blesses, as God's wrath is a form of God's love, and the two are one. The question arises, then, of who can dwell with the devouring fire and everlasting burnings of God. To dwell with everlasting burnings means both to hold familiar communion with God and to bear the action of the fire, both in the present and in the future judgment. The author encourages the reader to ask themselves what sort of person they must be to dwell near God and how they can face future judgment. The text urges the reader to settle the question of how to come into the presence of the devouring fire on reasonable principles that will stand.

Hebrews 12:29 for our God is a consuming fire.

Psalms 15:1 O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent?
Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

Psalms 24:3 Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?
And who shall stand in his holy place?

Isaiah 33:15 **He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly,
who despises the gain of oppressions,
who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe,
who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed
and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,**

Psalms 15:2 He who walks blamelessly and does what is right
and speaks truth in his heart;

Psalms 24:4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false
and does not swear deceitfully.

Psalms 119:37 Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things;
and give me life in your ways.

1 John 4:16 **So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has
for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God
abides in him.**

John 6:69 And we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy
One of God.”

1 John 4:8 Anyone who does not love does not know God because God is love.

1 John 4:12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in
us, and his love is perfected in us.

1 John 3:24 Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him.
And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

**** Jeremiah 15:19** Therefore thus says the LORD:
“If you return, I will restore you,

and you shall stand before me.
If you utter what is precious and not what is worthless,
you shall be as my mouth.
They shall turn to you,
but you shall not turn to them.

I starting to appreciate my understanding of how every time we pray in Jesus' name, we reveal at least one of His seven character traits. Furthermore, the message about Agape finding a way to reach hurting people resonated with us.

The concept of Agape is essentially a divine love that comes directly from God's nature. It is a love that is not based on external factors such as beauty or value but is rather an exercise of God's divine will.

Agape is the ultimate reality and can be seen as the measuring rod by which all things are judged. Essentially, the bible emphasizes that God uses Agape as an instrument of His love and compassion toward those in need. The Bible highlights that the concept of Agape unfolds in **three progressive steps**, which include **loving God, loving oneself, and loving others** in the same manner and degree that God loved us and gave Himself for us. Lastly, the text notes that Agape always reveals God's own character and ultimately reveals our need for Christ, who is Agape incarnate.

Eros, in Greek philosophy, came to mean that which is loved for the purpose of personal satisfaction.

A person in an Eros prison says, “Bless me, help me, visit me, show me, pray for me, teach me, work with me,”—it is truly a spiritual black hole. While we are in our prison, we cannot understand why God would possibly resist us because we see ourselves as eager to do His will.

Eros says, “Look what they are doing to me!” Agape says, “Forgive them, Father; they don’t know what they are doing.” Eros seeks to be like God; Agape is God.

The differences between Eros and Agape.

Eros is defined as the desire to possess or control, while Agape is selfless love. Eros is linked to pornography and selfishness and is seen as the cause of all sins. The text argues that Christianity without self-renunciation and the Cross of Christ is a result of Eros.

Eros

Eros is a Greek word, but it is not used in the New Testament because of its sexual corruption.

The essential meaning of Eros is the desire or intention to possess, acquire, or control. Eros does not seek to be accepted by its object but to gain possession of it.

1 Eros has an appetite or yearning desire that is aroused by the attractive qualities of its object.

Eros, in Greek philosophy, came to mean that which is loved for the purpose of personal satisfaction. It is from this posture that the word Eros took on its sexual and, ultimately, pornographic connotation. The word is not primarily sexual but has more to do with living for our own personal advantage.

The Greek word

“**evil**” in many places in the New Testament is “porneia” (Strong’s #4190), where we get the word pornography.

Porne is the link that joins Eros and original sin.

Moffatt translates porne, the King James word for “evil”, as “selfishness”. “If your eye is selfish, your whole body will be filled with darkness” (**Matthew 6:23**).

Because the New Testament uses porne for its description of evil, it is saying something like,

“All evil is love for God that has been twisted and sold for something else.” Paul explained evil as the fallen man “exchanging God’s glory” for his or her own desires (see **Romans 1:23**). Love that has personal reward and self-satisfaction as its motive (see **Philippians 2:21**) has the tendency and capacity to annul the Agape of God. “Self-will, that which is self-pleasing, is the negation of love to God.”

2 If my love is twisted, everything is twisted. This takes us to the center of all Christian truth, namely that our love for God must be accompanied by renunciation of our old self.

Eros is self-referential, causing us to lose the central appeal of Jesus Christ to “take up your cross and follow Me” (**Matthew 16:24**). The loss of Agape and its demand for self-renunciation leads us to Cross-less Christianity (see **Philippians 3:18**). Christianity, apart from the Cross of Christ, has reappeared frequently in Church history.

Eros is the mother of all sins. It can be recognized because it is always self-referential. It is not only self-centered, but it becomes self-consuming, turning increasingly inward upon itself in a tighter and tighter spiral.



The Greek symbol for Eros is actually a serpent consuming its own tail. It is a highly refined form of self-interest and self-seeking. It is a love that has become so distorted that its only purpose is to meet its own needs. When Jesus referred to religion that turned us in upon ourselves, He said, “how great is that darkness” (**Matthew 6:22-23**). He was talking about selfishness, which leads to a form of darkness that has deadening results. Jesus challenged the deadening effect of Eros-motivated religion with these words,

“But blessed are your eyes because they see; and your ears, because they hear” (Matthew 13:16). If that light reverts to darkness, we are then like the serpent who is eating his own tail.

The nature of evil is selling or sharing our love that belongs to God in an illegal manner. God

jealously asks for all our love—heart, soul, mind, and strength—to the limit of our capacity because He knows it is the one force that releases us from ourselves and exerts the capacity to keep us from evil. We do, indeed, become what we love. We are faced with the inexorable truth that no one can set us free from that which we still love—especially an illegal love for ourselves!

If you follow Agape

to its fullest extreme, you find God. God is not faith or hope; God is love (Agape). If you take

Eros, out to its full end, you come to Satan, who wants to possess, acquire, and control. The father of lies passed the whole package of evil desires on to us when Adam and Eve sinned against God.

1) There is no evil in the world other than Eros manifested as selfishness.

2) There is no good in the world other than Agape as God's Own Person revealed.

3) All of life can be reduced to three arrows: straight, crooked, or a mixture of the hook and arrow.



A bent arrow or hook illustrates Eros because it is always self-referential, turning back upon itself. Eros is the cause and the result of the original fall. It causes us to run, hide, and shift blame. When sin entered the world, the effect was that the very nature and center of our being became self-serving and was changed from God to ourselves. Eros can be overtly worldly or very religious. This hook can be blatant or very subtle.



Agape is illustrated by a straight arrow. If you take Agape out to its full end, you arrive at the seven hidden attributes of God's own nature—His DNA is not faith or Hope. It is Love Agape.

Jeremiah 15:19 talks about extracting the precious from the worthless. The dividing of soul and spirit is a biblical description of straightening the hook (**see Hebrews 4:12**). This is not easy. The separation is delicate and can be very painful. We cannot and must not attempt this separation in ourselves or for someone else. The Father has reserved the separation and pruning process for Himself. All we have to do is be willing to be brought to maturity in Agape.

If we could see ourselves as participators “with god” rather than being used for the purpose of another, most of us would be willing to embrace difficulty and deprivation.

John 15:13-18. No Greater Love

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command you.

15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

17 These things I command you so that you will love one another.

John 15:18 “If the world hates you, know that it had hated me before it hated you.

Life quote: Without the baptism of Fire, your love will be Eros and not Agape.