

# A Scriptural Response to Homosexuality

## Lesson 4: God-Defined Love (Part 2)

### INTRODUCTION

In our previous session we learned that *agape* love acts in self-sacrifice for the best interest of the one loved. As Christians this love is to be the foundation and the drive behind every expression of love among us. However, not all forms of love are identical in origin, relationship, or object. What are some other kinds of love?

### STORGE (στοργή)

- Greek Definition: Instinctual love and affection as between parents and children, siblings, etc.
- This Greek word is not used in the New Testament, but it is illustrated repeatedly in Scripture.

1.) Some examples of God's love for us expressed in familial terms:

**Psalms 103:13** As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.

**1 John 3:1** How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

**Galatians 4:6** Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."

**Jeremiah 31:20** "Is not Ephraim my dear son, the child in whom I delight? Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him," declares the LORD.

**Hebrews 12:5-8** You have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.

2.) How does God's love inform, transform, and expand the horizons of our familial love?

**Psalm 127:3** Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him.

**Ephesians 6:4** Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

**Proverbs 13:24** He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.

**Mark 3:34-35** Then [Jesus] looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

**Ephesians 2:19-20** Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

**1 Corinthians 4:14-17** I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord.

3.) Can you ever have TOO MUCH familial love for another person?

**1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, 11-12** We [apostles] were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. ...For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

**Galatians 4:12-16** I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong. As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. What has happened to all your joy? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?

4.) Gift of God that it is, familial love is not the highest form of love. How can such love be misdirected or abused by our sinful nature? How does the *agape* love of God surpass it?

### PHILIA (φιλία)

- Greek Definition: Friendship love, a love that is reciprocal/shared, based on commonality

1.) What makes for a good friendship?

2.) David and Jonathan: a case study in godly friendship. (cf. 1 Samuel 18 – 2 Samuel 1)

**1 Samuel 18:1** After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself.

**1 Samuel 20:41-42** After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together—but David wept the most. Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘The LORD is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.’”

**1 Samuel 23:16-17** Saul’s son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. “Don’t be afraid,” he said. “My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this.”

**2 Samuel 1:17, 25-26** David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan, ...“How the mighty have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies slain on your heights. I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women.”

3.) God’s love expressed in terms of friendship:

**Job 17:21-22** “My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God; on behalf of a man he pleads with God as a man pleads for his friend.”

**John 15:12-15** “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

4.) Some may wonder, since we are called to love all people, is it “wrong” for a Christian to have friends? Can someone be too good or too much of a friend?

**Mark 5:37** [Jesus] did not let anyone follow him [into Jairus’s house] except Peter, James and John the brother of James.

**Matthew 17:1** After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain.

**Matthew 26:37-38** He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, “...Stay here and keep watch with me.”

**John 11:1, 5** “Lord, the one you love (φιλεῖς) is sick.” ...Jesus loved (ἠγάπα) Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

5.) As with *storge*, why does *philia*, also need to be infused and supported with God’s *agape*-love?

## CONCLUSION