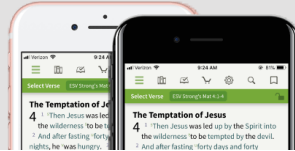




OLIVE TREE *BLOG*

FREE *BIBLE* APP



DOWNLOAD

TOPICAL

5 Greek & Hebrew Words for Love





Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

-MATTHEW 22:36-40 KJV

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE WORDS FOR LOVE: WHAT IS LOVE?

We are called to love God and love others, but how do we understand what love really is?

Studies of **5 Hebrew and Greek words** for love help us understand what loving someone really means.

Want to read the verse references in context or change the translation? Tap and you'll be taken to our online Bible where you can read these Bible verses about love.

1. AHAB – HEBREW WORD FOR LOVE

Hebrew word for love. Describes a variety of intensely close emotional bonds. So Abraham loved his son Isaac ([Gen. 22:2](#)), Isaac loved his son Esau ([Gen. 25:28](#)), and “Israel loved Joseph more than all his children” ([Gen. 37:3](#)).

In a more romantic manner, Isaac loved his wife Rebekah ([Gen. 24:67](#)), and Jacob loved Rachel ([Gen. 29:18](#)), but Delilah manipulated Samson by challenging his love for her ([Judg. 14:16](#)). We are all called to love the Lord, by expressing obedience to His commandments ([Deut. 6:5](#)), and to “love thy neighbour as thyself” ([Lev. 19:18](#)). Moreover, “he that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul” ([Prov. 19:8](#)).



- **Genesis 24:67:** And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.
- **Exodus 20:6:** And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
- **Deuteronomy 4:37:** And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt
- **Job 19:19:** All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me.
- **Psalms 4:2:** O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.
- **Proverbs 1:22:** How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?
- **Ecclesiastes 3:8:** A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.
- **Song of Songs 1:3:** Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.
- **Micah 3:2:** Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones;
- **Zechariah 8:17:** And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord.
- **Malachi 1:2:** I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob

2. AGAPAO – GREEK WORD FOR LOVE

God's love is described as the Greek word *agapao*, which means unconditional love, preferential love that is chosen and acted out by the will. It is not love based on the goodness of the beloved, or upon natural affinity or emotion. Rather this is benevolent love that always seeks the good of the beloved.

This type of love is exclusive to the Christian community because it flows directly from God's love: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:7,8).

GREEK WORD FOR LOVE: OTHER USES OF AGAPAO



- **Luke 6:27:** But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you
- **John 3:16:** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
- **Romans 13:8:** Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.
- **1 Corinthians 2:9:** But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.
- **Ephesians 2:4:** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
- **2 Thessalonians 2:16:** Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,
- **James 1:12:** Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.
- **1 Peter 1:8:** Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:
- **1 John 3:10:** In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.
- **3 John 1:1:** The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

3. AGAPE – GREEK WORD FOR LOVE

Although common in both the Septuagint and the New Testament, the word rarely occurs in existing secular Greek manuscripts of the period. Like its synonym *philia*, it designates love between persons (**John 13:35**), or people for God (**1 John 2:15**), of God for humanity (**Rom. 5:8**), and of God for Christ (**John 17:26**).

Whereas *phila* emphasizes the idea of love arising from personal relationships, *agape* is founded upon deep appreciation and high regard. It is perhaps for this reason that *agape* is the love which God commands.

GREEK WORD FOR LOVE: *OTHER USES OF AGAPE*

- **Matthew 24:12:** And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.
- **Luke 11:42:** But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.



Revelation 13:10: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

- **2 Corinthians 6:6:** By pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned
- **Ephesians 2:4:** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us
- **Philippians 1:16:** The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds
- **1 Thessalonians 5:8:** But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.
- **1 Timothy 1:5:** Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned
- **Titus 2:2:** That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.
- **3 John 1:6:** Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well
- **Revelation 3:4:** Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

4. PHILEO – GREEK WORD FOR LOVE

One of four greek words for love, this one signifies friendship, fondness, affection, delight, and personal attachment. This word is on a feeling – a heart of love – whereas *agape* is a matter of benevolence, duty, and commitment. We are commanded to have *agape* love (**Matt. 5:44**) but not *phileo* love because feelings cannot be commanded.

Phileo is also the word for “kiss.” Jesus asked peter if he had unconditional, sacrificial *agape* love, but Peter responded that he had *phileo*, or brotherly love. Peter’s love deepened, and he wrote of *agape* love in his later books.

GREEK WORD FOR LOVE: OTHER USES OF PHILEO

- **Matthew 6:5:** And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.



- **John 5:20:** For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.
- **1 Corinthians 16:22:** If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.
- **Titus 3:15:** All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.
- **Revelation 3:19:** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

5. PHILADELPHIA – GREEK WORD FOR LOVE

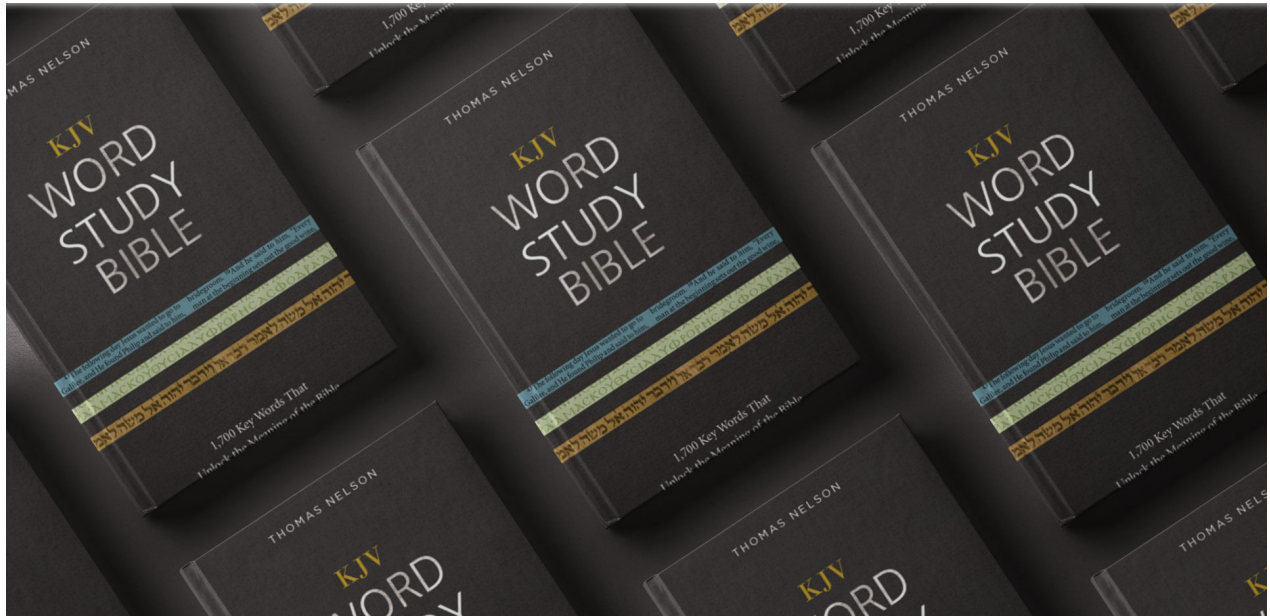
With the roots words *phileo*, “to love,” and *adelphos* “brother,” this word signifies loving someone like a brother or sister. We might think of it as fraternal affection.

This is not the love God has for us, but rather love between brothers and sisters in Christ. It implies that a familial bond between people who would not otherwise share affection is possible through Christ.

GREEK WORD FOR LOVE: *OTHER USES OF PHILADELPHIA*

- **Romans 12:10:** Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another
- **1 Thessalonians 4:9:** But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.
- **Hebrews 13:1:** Let brotherly love continue.
- **1 Peter 1:22:** Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently
- **2 Peter 1:7:** And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

LEARN MORE



This blog on Hebrew and Greek words for love was adapted from the [KJV Word Study Bible](#). It is a great resource for digging deeper into God's Word. Check out our [look inside post](#) for more information. ([Also available for NKJV](#))

GET IT TODAY

What does “*Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*” mean to you? Let us know in the comments!

BEST OF BLOGS

STRONG'S

WORD STUDY BIBLE

RELATED POSTS



Learning More about the Words God Inspired

AUGUST 23, 2023



Does the Old Testament Law Still Apply?

APRIL 16, 2023



Delivered Over and Betrayed

NOVEMBER 17, 2022

28 COMMENTS

John Murphy

6 YEARS AGO

I noticed you say Philemon and Philadelphia are both different yet they are from the same root and you omitted Eros (sexual love)

John Murphy

6 YEARS AGO

Sorry that should have been phileo not Philemon.

Frances

4 YEARS AGO



guess it is best to check with Rick Renner who study Greek as his second language.

**Anstey Jeremiah**

5 YEARS AGO

Didn't Eros remain a conventional Greek word but did not make it as part of Koine

Loversier

5 YEARS AGO

Eros is not a word found in the Bible

**Nix Lekorere**

6 YEARS AGO

What about eros and storge?

Nix, from Kenya.

Patrick

6 YEARS AGO

I was also wonder the same, however I think this I just an excerpt from the whole study which is included in the purchased package.

Cierra Klatt

6 YEARS AGO



Steve

6 YEARS AGO

Love conquers every thing,nice article,would also be interested in a topic about faith,thanks.

Zoe

6 YEARS AGO

Love ... Thank you for this well explained article, have you published other articles or books on the subject?

Have you published any articles on Sanctification – New Testament sanctification of believers in Christ? I would love to learn more on that too.

Keep up the great work

Donna Brooks

6 YEARS AGO

Thank you enjoyed this article and am going to use it for my “at home” bible study today. Since it is the Sabbath.

joshua mutuku

6 YEARS AGO

Thank you so much, have learned, love carriers all the other commandments



Donald . Cayman islands

6 YEARS AGO

I enjoyed the simplicity of your explanations. But I think it would be nice to include the Eros. its explanation is just as important to be mentioned here.

Robert Thomas

6 YEARS AGO

Why Agapao Can Not Mean, “The Unconditional, Divine Love of God” – and Phileo Can Not Mean, “Brotherly Love”

https://archive.org/stream/AgapaoCantMeantheUnconditionalDivineLoveOfGod-AndPhileo/LoveCantMean-ImbedLinkAndRBox_djvu.txt

Robert Thomas

6 YEARS AGO

“And this is the judgement; that the light has come into the world, and men loved (agapao) the darkness rather than the light...” – John 3: 19.

Julia

6 YEARS AGO

Yes, my view as well. About the story with Jesus and Peter, the response of Jesus to Peter's answer speaks against this translation of friendship love: Jesus gives Peter an enormous responsibility to be shepherd to his sheep and lamb.

Also, the conversation was most probably originally in Aramaic, and in Aramaic there is not that kind of variation of the word love. (Friendship/God's love)



Benjamin Wong

6 YEARS AGO

A word study in the Bible is just that, discovering how the word is used in the Bible. Eros and storge are not used in the Bible. There are two root words used in the New Testament; agape and philos; and they do not mean God's love and man's love. see Robert Thomas.

So what are the difference of the two greek words. In a study of the use of the words, philos is never commanded where as agape is

Benjamin Wong

6 YEARS AGO

(I was interrupted with my earlier comment. continuing-) In the usage of the words, agape and philos, it is interesting to note that philos is never commanded to do, whereas the command to love is always the word agape.

Consider this as the difference between the two words: We are motivated by our emotions and by our mind. Love is one (not two) and love is motivated by both our emotions and our minds, but not equally. If the strength of that love is in our emotions it is philos. If it is strong passion, one cannot control it.

If the strength of that love is in our mind it is agape. This love is controllable by our mind. For instance, it consider the benefits of darkness, or of this world to choose to love it. It is also that which God commands us to do, as "love your wife", "love one another", "love God with all your heart"



Tony Reynolds

6 YEARS AGO

Anyone interested in this subject should read CS Lewis' "The Four Loves". He goes into detail about the four Greek words for love. It also can be listened to. being the only surviving recorded example of a talk by Lewis. Fascinating to hear him speak. Highly recommended.



Rev. Dr Alfred ABU-FRIMPONG

6 YEARS AGO

Man of God, I appreciate all the efforts to dig the meanings of this all important WORD. may the knowledge and wisdom of God be endowed upon you in JESUS name amen

Angela

6 YEARS AGO

Oh yes, GOD’S LOVE for us is in FACT Also a Brotherly Love.

GOD’S LOVE FOR US IS A VERY PASSIONATE LOVE IT GOES FAR DEEPER THAN BROTHER AND SISTER BUT IT IS ALSO AS BROTHER AND SISTER.

Matthew 12:48-51

Luke 8:21

John Piper explains this well.

Jesus Is My Brother — But What Does That Mean? | Desiring God

<http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/jesus-is-my-brother-but-what-does-that-mean>

NOT ONLY THAT BUT...

GOD LOVES US WITH THE LOVE OF A HUSBAND TO A WIFE.

36 Bible verses about Marriage, Between God And His People

<https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/Marriage,-Between-God-And-His-People>

He Also Love’s us as His children, for He is our Father.

Topical Bible: Beloved – Bible Hub

Bible Hub › topical › beloved



1 John 3:1 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be ...

Bible Hub › 1_john

See how very much our Father LOVES us, for He calls us His Children, and that IS what we are! 2Bel
now Children of GOD, and what we will be has not yet been revealed.

Asim

6 YEARS AGO

Thank you, The love of Our Father is not from this world, it has nothing to do with all the words in all the languages. The love of the father can not be earned, it is priceless& it is only experienced the moment your heart breaks& He fills His Holy unseen Love in our hearts. We must experience His Love with tears of joy

Bruce Steventon

5 YEARS AGO

“This type of love is exclusive to the Christian community because it flows directly from God’s love...”
You may want to check which word is translated as “loved” in John 3:19. You may be surprised. This shows that agapao is better defined as a love for which one will make a priority of the beloved to the point of some kind of sacrifice. Men will make the darkness a priority to keep themselves and their sin in the darkness.

Bruce Steventon

5 YEARS AGO

The verse I listed is not an isolated case; please also see 2 Timothy 4:10 and 2 Peter 2:15.



Daniel

5 YEARS AGO

I was having a discussion with a brother about AGAPE being used when God referenced Abrahams love for Isaac. He mentioned this has little significance because that's how fathers referenced their sons – but what about STORGIE Love (familial love)?

Stephen

4 YEARS AGO

I just love doing word studies in the Bible.
Recently I looked up the synonyms for Character, Glory, Honor and other words.
I wrote them down here, if you are interested;
<http://www.bread4life.eu/gospel/other-biblical-words-for-character/>

Jennifer

4 YEARS AGO

To love the Lord with all our heart, mind and soul is to keep our minds always on Him, acknowledging Him in all our ways.

Joseph mwila

3 YEARS AGO

I thank almighty God to find this topic about love the meaning in Hebrew and Greek i ask one book if you have



CATEGORIES

Select Category





^ TOP