

3 kinds of Love

Justin thought he was in love with three different girls at the same time!

Karen was a member of his church

and they saw each other often at church services. There was something different about this girl! She was completely sold out to her Lord and totally unselfish—always thinking of other people. When Justin was with her, he thought big thoughts and dreamed big dreams. He felt inspired to go out and do things for others and for his Lord.

Then there was Sandra. She lived next door and Justin had grown up with her. He could talk over anything with Sandra. She was a good sport and fun to be with. Best of all, she really understood him. When he

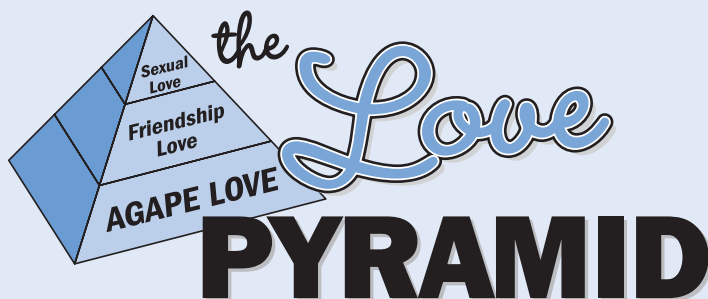


needed advice or wanted to talk over some problem, Justin headed straight for Sandra. Though he cared deeply for her, Justin had never kissed her. In fact, he had never even felt like it. His love for Sandra was that of a friend.

The third girl in Justin's life was Linda. She was a real knock-out! She not only had a beautiful

face, but she also had a lovely figure. Justin felt proud when he escorted Linda to a party. But when they were out on a date, Justin couldn't think of much to discuss with Linda. The attraction was mostly physical.

Justin's three "loves" illustrate the fact that there are different kinds of love.



Most young people dream of being married some day and, of course, they want a happy and successful marriage. But such a marriage is not easy to come by. In fact one out of every two marriages ends in divorce.

This means that half of these people, who thought they were "in love," quickly became disillusioned, bitter, unhappy, and ready to call it quits on their marriage.

Is marriage just a big gamble in which most people are losers? Do most partners end up hating each other, while a few lucky

ones manage to have a good relationship? No, it is not that way at all. There are certain specific ingredients in a happy marriage.

In a happy marriage, there are three kinds of love. It will help us if we think of them as three parts of a pyramid. The base of the pyramid is a special kind of love which is called "agape" love. The middle portion of the pyramid is friendship love, and the top portion is physical or sexual love. Let us consider these three kinds of love. We will start with "agape" love.

1 AGAPE LOVE

The word “agape” (pronounced ah-gah-pay) is a Greek word which is used to describe a special kind of love. The reason we are using this Greek word is that there is no single word in the English language for this kind of love.

What is agape love? *Agape love is that love which gives and sacrifices for the highest good of another person.*

Agape love has two main characteristics: (1) It is completely unselfish—it seeks that which is best for the one it loves, and (2) it is committed love—it keeps on loving regardless of what happens.

Agape love is not just a wonderful feeling; it is the definite choice of the will. One of the amazing things about agape love is this: When you choose to love a person unselfishly and act lovingly toward them, in time you will have the feeling of love toward them.

God has given us a wonderful place in which we learn agape love. That place is the home. If you are living at home, God wants you to begin to show unselfish love to the other members of your family. Remember, you do not have to wait until you *feel* love toward the others in your family. You can *choose* to love them and begin acting unself-

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THE LOVE CHAPTER

Chapter 13, of 1 Corinthians, is called the “love chapter” because it tells us how agape love acts. Here is the way such love expresses itself:

Love suffers long.

Love is kind.

Love does not envy.

Love does not parade itself.

Love is not puffed up.

Love does not behave rudely.

Love does not seek its own.

Love is not provoked.

Love thinks no evil.

Love does not rejoice in iniquity.

Love rejoices in the truth.

Love bears all things.

Love believes all things.

Love hopes all things.

Love endures all things.

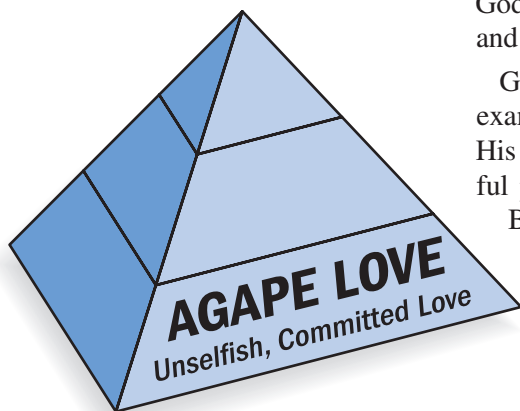
Love never fails.

ishly toward them. This is excellent training for marriage.

Any girl or fellow can act lovingly toward someone that he or she is planning to marry. It is in their interest to do so. But once they are married and the routine of daily living sets in, their basic nature will express itself. If they are selfish and self-centered in their present family situation, they will be the same way in their marriage.

One of the biggest mistakes young people make is rushing into marriage because they cannot stand to live at home. But until you learn to live at home, accepting and loving the other members of your family, you are not ready for marriage.

Before considering marriage you need to know that you have agape love for that special person and that he or she has the same kind of love for you.



A happy marriage is not a marriage between two “perfect” people who just happened to meet each other and get married. There is no such thing as “perfect” people!

A happy marriage is a marriage between two imperfect people who love each other with unselfish, committed love. Agape love is not blind—it sees the faults of the other person, but it covers them with love.

When you really love someone, you don’t try to change them. You accept them and love them as they are. Agape love says, “I love you, no matter what happens, and I always will.” You can see why this kind of love is so essential in a happy and successful marriage.

Agape love is not just for marriage. We should develop agape love for all people. Every person is the object of God’s love. Every person is exceedingly precious to God. His love includes all people, and ours should also.

God has given us the perfect example of agape love. He gave His Son to die on the cross for sinful people like you and me. The Bible says,

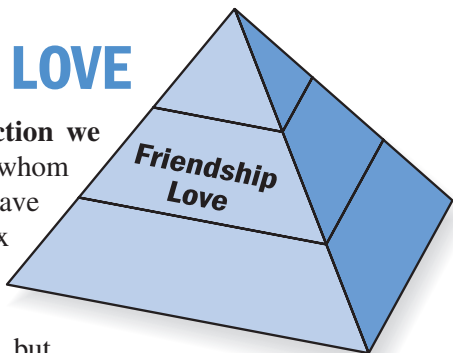
“God shows His [agape] love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

2 FRIENDSHIP LOVE

This is the warm love and affection we have for good friends—people whom we like and enjoy. We should have such friends both from our own sex and from the opposite sex.

Christians should develop unselfish agape love for all people, but we cannot be close friends with all people. The pyramid illustrates how the objects of our affection begin to narrow when we get to friendship love.

To have a successful marriage, you need friendship love for your mate so that you enjoy being together, talking and sharing things with each other. A marriage without respect and tender affection between husband and wife will be unsatisfactory, even if there is a lot of passion in the bedroom.

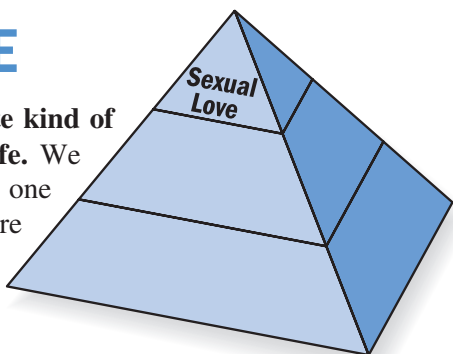


3 SEXUAL LOVE

This is that special, most intimate kind of love between a husband and wife. We should have sexual love for only one person—the one to whom we are married. The pyramid illustrates how our affections should narrow to one person when it comes to sexual love.

In the beginning God created one man and one woman. They were committed to each other for life. This is God's design for marriage and sexual love—one man and one woman committed to each other for life.

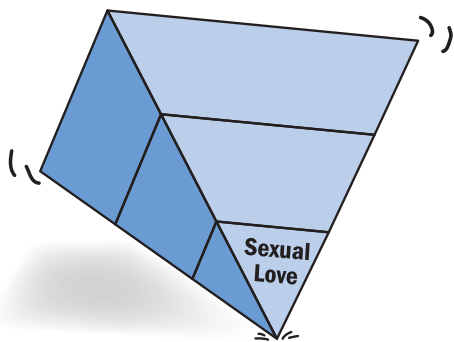
God gave sex both as a means of producing children and as a source of pleasure. Through sexual intercourse a husband and wife are able to express to the fullest their love for each other. This is one of the great blessings and privileges of marriage.



To protect this blessing of sexual love within marriage, God gave this command—“You shall not commit adultery.”

This command forbids all sexual impurity. Fornication is sexual intercourse between an unmarried man and woman. Adultery is sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than his or her marriage partner. Both fornication and adultery are forbidden by God, along with all other sexual sins.

God is not against sex. He is against the wrong use of sex. After all, sex was God’s idea in the first place. Within marriage, it is one of the most wonderful blessings we can enjoy. That’s what God intended it to be!



As wonderful as sexual love is, it can never be the foundation for a successful marriage. Many couples try to build their marriage on the foundation of physical or sexual love. The marriage may last for a while, but when the storms of life come, their marriage fails. They discover too late that you cannot build a happy and successful marriage with sexual love as the foundation.

We Need all 3 Kinds of Love

We have discussed the three kinds of love—agape, friendship, and sexual love. Which of these three do you think are most needed in a happy, successful marriage? The answer is all three! It is like a three-legged stool—you need all three legs to keep it from falling!

However, it is very important that these three kinds of love come together in the right order. First, for a happy and successful marriage, you must have agape love—the unselfish love which desires the best for the other person. Then you need friendship love—the love that enables a hus-

band and wife to enjoy being together. Finally, in a happy marriage there is satisfying sexual love.

Unfortunately, most young people put the emphasis on physical or sexual love. They rush into physical intimacy without finding out if they have agape and friendship love for each other. It may seem more exciting, but it's like trying to build a pyramid upside down! It will not work.

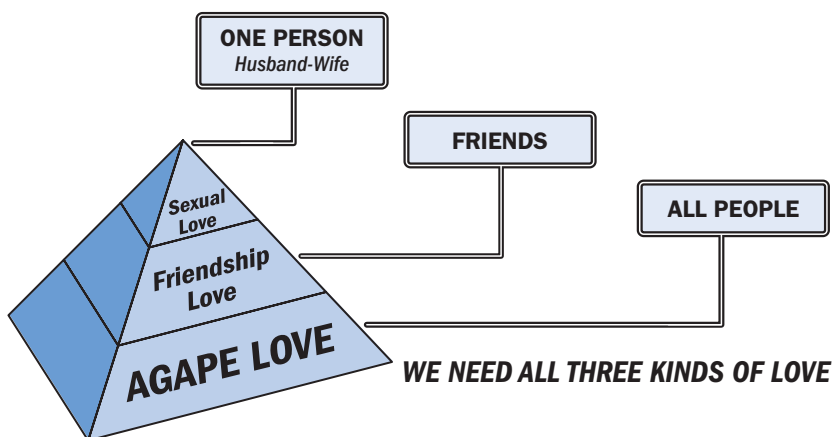
One girl, whose marriage lasted only five months, explained the situation to her friends by saying of her husband, "He was not capable of real love." She was not talking about sexual love. That was the big attraction in the first place. And there was some degree of friendship love because they enjoyed

going to games together and listening to certain kinds of music.

What was missing? Agape love—the kind of love that is unselfish and seeks what is best for the other person. This kind of love produces commitment and enables people to stay together and work out their problems.

If you value your future happiness, stay away from physical involvement before marriage. And do not get married until you are sure that you and your future mate have real agape and friendship love for each other.

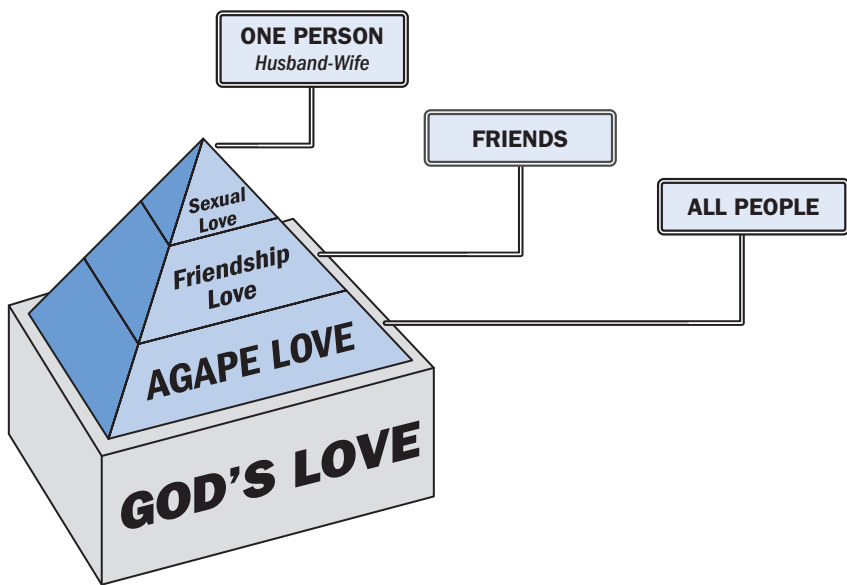
We have considered the three kinds of love as three parts of a pyramid. But a pyramid cannot be built on shifting sands. It needs a solid foundation.



The solid foundation for our “pyramid” is God’s love. In ourselves, we cannot love other people as we should. But one of the wonderful things that happens when we take Jesus Christ as our Savior is that God gives us His Spirit. God’s love is poured into our hearts. The Bible says, “...the love of God is shed abroad in our

hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us” (Romans 5:5).

God’s love in us makes it all work! It enables us to love other people as we should. It enables us to love our friends as we should. And it enables us to love our marriage partner as God intended so that our home can be a little bit of Heaven on earth.

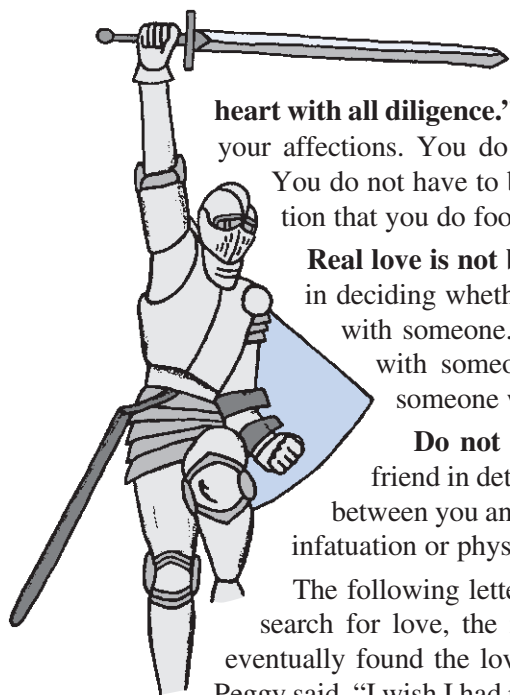


THE SOLID FOUNDATION IS GOD'S LOVE

WE ALL NEED

Love

Every person desperately needs to be loved by someone who is important to him or her. Because this need is so great in young people, they often seek love in the wrong way.



The Bible says, “Keep your heart with all diligence.” This means: Above all else, guard your affections. You do not have to be “blindly in love.” You do not have to be so carried away with an infatuation that you do foolish things.

Real love is not blind—you should use good sense in deciding whether or not you want to be involved with someone. You do not have to “fall in love” with someone. You can choose *not* to love someone who is not right for you.

Do not be in a hurry. Time is your best friend in determining if there is real agape love between you and the other person, or if it is just an infatuation or physical attraction.

The following letter from “Peggy” tells of one girl’s search for love, the mistakes she made, and how she eventually found the love she was so desperately seeking. Peggy said, “I wish I had received a letter like this nine years ago, but I didn’t. I am writing this letter of my experience to teenage girls who want the true love of a man.”

Dear Teen,

"All around me I see people falling in love, walking in love, growing with the love they have found—and it accentuates my aloneness. For here I am, having conceived two children, given one away, about to bear another one alone.

"All I ever wanted was love. All I ever longed for was a home and strong arms to hold me so I could sleep through the night. I wanted someone who would be there with me to meet the morning.

"When I was fifteen, I never thought the next nine years would bring me such despair, emptiness and sorrow. Now, at twenty-four, I am still alone. While you are waiting for love to come to you, I have destroyed that hope of waiting because I was never willing to wait. I was so hungry for love that I tried to taste it all too early, too fast—and now there is little left.

"The fear you feel when you love someone and say 'No' to him, and the pain that could come if he leaves you for saying 'No' seem awesome and devastating to you now. But the greater pain comes when you say 'Yes' and he tires of you, calling you "not the kind of girl he wants to marry." You may choose not to believe me, but it is true.

"A man who truly loves you will not ask for your body first. He will wait and ask you to marry him. He will ask to be the one to provide for you and meet your needs so you can give him, in all trust and confidence, the secrets of your soul. He will see the sacred beauty of your gift and will handle it with the gentleness of the man beholding the pearl he has sought so long.

*The man who truly loves you
will not ask for your body first.*

“**Value yourself**, for you are very precious. Do not sell out. Any price you’re given less than a love willing to commit itself and willing to wait—that price is too cheap.

*Value yourself!
Do not sell out.*

“**Waiting may seem very hard** for you. You think so because you are young and still have the impatience of a child. Learn patience; it is the beginning of self-discipline, a lesson that must be learned sooner or later. The sooner you learn it, the greater your joy, and the lesser your sorrow. I know. I have to learn it now, and I wish I had learned it then.

“**There is only one Man now between me and total disaster.** That Man is Jesus Christ. He loves me as I am: scarred, twisted, and often broken, not very pretty anymore, with eyes that tell the secret of my solitude. But in His eyes alone I’m still a fresh young girl with eyes that catch the twinkle of stars and a smile that does not show any hurt.

“**His love does not go away.** It rises with me in the morning and helps me pull aside the shutters and let in a new day. His love helps me bear the pain of never seeing my child again this side of Heaven. It sustains me as I bear this child who never should have been—the result of the sin of selling myself out.



"I think I've finally learned that I cannot sell out and win. Right now there is only One to whom I can give my everything without having my gift turned into a vain sacrifice. Now there is really only One who knows who I am. There is only One who sees me as beautiful. I am His.

"Learn love from Him. Don't learn it on the streets or in the back seat of a car. What you will be given there in the name of love is poison—a perversion of something very sacred.

"Learn about true love from Him who is Love. He told you about

it long ago, and if you can grasp this simple truth (the one we teach children) you will understand that He is the foundation of all you ever long for. God is Love. Know this and let it expand you into the beauty of true womanhood."

*Jesus loves me, this I know,
for the Bible tells me so!*

*With love,
Peggy*



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