

## A Wiseman's Lessons on Love

Proverbs 19:8

### I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** Any preacher worth his salt has a sermon on “love.”
  - A. In fact, if he has any experience at all, he could probably lay his hands on a several sermons on this important Bible topic.
  - B. Why? Because God has a lot to say about “love.”
    - (1) The word “love” appears 361 times in the New King James version of the Bible, so there’s a great deal of material from which to choose.
    - (2) The word “love” was the apostle John’s favorite word (26 times in the gospel of John, 68 times in his three epistles, and four times in the Revelation; total = 72).
2. Further, we as humans have a big problem with “love.”
  - A. There are just a whole host of things that we call “love” that are really not “love.”
  - B. Conversely, a whole host of thing are indeed “love,” but we don’t realize they are “love.”
3. **\*\*** In the Greek language the English word “love” is translated from four words:
  - A. Eros: is used to describe “sexual love,” or “sexual passion.”
    - (1) This word is not used in the New Testament.
    - (2) *Eros* is the root word of the English word *erotic* (and its derivations).
  - B. **\*\*** Storge: Is the natural, familial love such as the love between a parent and child.
    - (1) This word, in and of itself, is not used in the New Testament.
    - (2) In the New Testament, the negative form (prefix “a”) of *storge* is used twice.
    - (3) *Astorgos* means “devoid of natural or instinctive affection, without affection to kindred.”

**Rom. 1:31:** “Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.” (KJV)

**2 Tim. 3:1-3:** “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection...” (KJV)
    - (4) *Barnes’ Notes* on *astorge*: “This expression denotes the lack of affectionate regard toward their children. The attachment of parents to children is one of the strongest in nature, and nothing can overcome it but the most confirmed and established wickedness. And yet the apostle charges on the pagan generally the lack of this affection. He doubtless refers here to the practice so common among pagans of exposing their children or putting them to death. This crime, so abhorrent to all the feelings of humanity, was common among the pagan, and is still.” (cvt: Kind of reminds you of the pro-choice crowd!)
    - (5) The word *philostorgos* is used in Romans 12:10 (“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;” KJV).
      - (a) The word combines *philos* and *storge* and means “to cherish one’s kindred.”
      - (b) Believers, children of the same heavenly Father, should “be devoted to one another in love.”

(c) As part of God's family, we should show loving affection toward each other and be prone to love.

C. **\*\* Phileo:** is used 25 times in New Testament.

(1) *Phileo* is used to describe affection for someone:

**Jn. 11:3:** "Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, 'Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.'"

(2) Affection for doing things one finds pleasant:

**Matt. 6:5:** "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward."

(3) Strong defines *phileo* "to be a friend to (fond of (an individual or an object)), i.e. have affection for (denoting personal attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling.

D. **\*\* Agape:** is used 143 times in New Testament.

(1) The most common word for love in the New Testament is *agape*, *agapao*.

(2) Ironically, this is one of the least common words in classical Greek, where it expresses, on the few occasions it occurs, the highest and noblest form of love which sees something infinitely precious in its object.

(3) *Agape* (noun) and *agapao* (verb) are used in the New Testament (Vine):

(a) Used to describe the attitude of God toward:

☛ His Son: **Jn. 17:26:** "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." (KJV)

☛ The human race: **Jn. 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." (KJV)

☛ Believers: **Jn. 14:21:** "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." (KJV)

(b) Used to convey God's will to His children concerning their attitude toward:

☛ One another: **Jn. 13:34:** "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (KJV) **Col. 3:14:** "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." (KJV)

☛ All men: **I Thess. 3:12:** "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you." (KJV)

(c) Used to express the essential nature of God: **I Jn. 4:8:** "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

(4) *Agape* is a love that can be known only from the actions it prompts.

(a) We see God's *agape* love expressed in the gift of His Son: **I Jn. 4:9:** "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

(b) *Agape* love is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it is not drawn out by any "loveableness" in its object: **Rom. 5:8:** "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

- (c) *Agape* love was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause except that which lies in the nature of God Himself (1 Jn. 4:8).
- (d) *Agape* love (highest form of love) can be distinguished from *phileo* love because *agape* love is wider, embracing especially the judgment and the deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty and propriety. *Phileo* is chiefly a love of the heart, while *agape* is of the head.
- (e) *Agape* love is the love described in 1 Corinthians 13; without which Christians are an empty, vain, hypocritical disaster:

**1 Cor. 13:1-8a:** *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. 4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails...”*

4. **3** Today I want to consider several things about “love.”

- A. I believe this lesson is a unique lesson on “love.”
- B. We will not focus on John or Paul’s writings, but on the writings of the wiseman Solomon.
- C. We usually do not think of the Proverbs as a book teaching us about “love.”
- D. However, the Proverbs have a lot to say about “love” that will benefit us if learned and applied.

## II. DISCUSSION:

### **One thing the wiseman Solomon teaches us about love is that we should**

I. **4** Love our own soul: **Prov. 19:8:** *“He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; He who keeps understanding will find good.”*

A. **\*\*** If we love our own soul, we will be diligent to do several things regarding our soul:

- (1) Protect it: **Prov. 19:16:** *“He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, But he who is careless of his ways will die.”*
- (2) Guard it: **Prov. 22:5:** *“Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse; He who guards his soul will be far from them.”*
- (3) Preserve it: **Prov. 16:17:** *“The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who keeps his way preserves his soul.”*
- (4) Avoid destroying it: **Prov. 6:32:** *“Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul.”; **Prov. 21:23:** *“Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.”**

B. **\*\*** Men often ignore the wiseman’s advice; most are foolish not caring for their own soul:

(1) People of the world: non-Christians

**1 Cor. 1:18:** *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”*

**1 Cor. 1:26-28:** “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are”

**2 Cor. 4:3-4:** “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”; Cf. Matt. 7:13-14; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Phil. 2:9-11

(2) Christians:

**Jas. 4:4:** “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

**Lk. 19:14:** “But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We will not have this man to reign over us.’”; Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11; Matt. 7:21-23

**2 Tim. 3:1-5:** “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”

C. Are you wise? Do you really love your own soul?

**Another thing the wiseman Solomon teaches us about love is that we should love to...**

2. **5** Nourish our soul:

A. No living thing can survive without nourishment:

(1) Plants must be nourished with sunshine, water, minerals from the soil.

(2) Our physical bodies must be nourished by water, food, and sunshine.

B. **\*\*** Likewise, one who loves his own soul will love that which is designed to nourish his soul—the knowledge, wisdom, and understanding that comes only from God’s word.

(1) God’s wisdom: **Prov. 19:8:** “He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; He who keeps understanding will find good.”

(2) Understanding God’s word: **Prov. 4:5-9:** “Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. 6 Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you. 7 Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. 8 Exalt her, and she will promote you; She will bring you honor, when you embrace her. 9 She will place on your head an ornament of grace; A crown of glory she will deliver to you.”; **Prov. 2:6-7:** “For the Lord gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding; 7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly;”

(3) Fools despise wisdom and understanding: **Prov. 1:7:** “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

(4) Fools wrong their own soul: **Prov. 8:36:** “But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; All those who hate me love death.”

C. \*\* Again, men so often ignore the wiseman's advice; most of us are very foolish and fail to nourish our own soul:

(1) People of the world: non-Christians

**1 Cor. 1:18:** "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

**1 Cor. 1:26-28:** "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are"

**2 Cor. 4:3-4:** "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them."

**1 Cor. 4:8:** "We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now."

**1 Cor. 4:10:** "We are fools for Christ's sake,"; Cf. Heb. 9:27; Eccl. 12:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:10; Phil. 2:9-11

(2) Christians:

**2 Pet. 1:5-11:** "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Thess. 5:17; Heb. 10:24-25

**Phil. 4:8-9:** "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things. 9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."

**1 Pet. 4:17-18:** "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 Now

*'If the righteous one is scarcely saved,  
Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?'"*

D. Are you wise? Are you nourishing your own soul? Or, are you starving it to death?!

**Another thing the wiseman Solomon teaches us about love is that we should...**

3. **6** Love rebuke:

A. Note the wiseman: **Prov. 3:12:** "For whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights."

(1) If the Lord does this for us, shouldn't we do the same for those we love?

- (2) Thus, one who truly loves his own soul will love those who rebuke him: **Prov. 9:8-9:** “Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. 9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.”
- (3) How can we claim to love someone when we don’t have the courage to turn them back to the truth? **Prov. 27:5:** “Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed.”
- B. \*\* Recall the movie “A Few Good Men.” “You can’t handle the truth!”
- (1) Can we handle the truth about our own sin? Our own spiritual weaknesses? Our own blind spots?
- (2) If we “can’t handle the truth” we are fools! **Prov. 15:32:** “He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding.”
- C. \*\* When we rebuke others, we most certainly must to do it in the right spirit:
- (1) Examine ourselves first: Matt. 7:2-5
- (2) Speak the truth in love: Eph. 4:15
- (3) Spirit of gentleness: **Gal. 6:1-2:** “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”
- D. \*\* If we fail to warn others of sin and its dire consequences, we neither love their soul or our own souls: **Ezek. 33:7-9:** “So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me. 8 When I say to the wicked, ‘O wicked man, you shall surely die!’ and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. 9 Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.” (The “affirming” church movement.)
- E. \*\* If one loves his own soul, how can he be angry with someone who is trying to save it? **Gal. 4:16:** “Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?”; **Psa. 141:5:** “Let the righteous strike me; It shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me; It shall be as excellent oil; Let my head not refuse it.”;
- F. Are you wise? Do you love to be rebuked? Love one who loves you enough to rebuke you?

**Another thing the wiseman Solomon teaches us about love is that love...**

**4. 7 Forgive and forgets:**

- A. Note the wiseman: **Prov. 28:13:** “He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”
- (1) \*\* A clear conscience is worth more than anything! **1 Tim. 1:5:** “Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,”; **Acts 23:1:** “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.”
- (2) \*\* The only way to have a clear conscience when we sin is to confess our sin:
- (a) Private sin: **1 Jn. 1:9:** “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
- (b) Public sin: **Jas. 5:16:** “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”
- (3) \*\* When God forgives our sin, He forgets!

**Heb. 8:12:** “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

**Heb. 10:16-17:** “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,’ 17 then He adds, ‘Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’”

- B. \*\* If, when our brethren sin, they can count on God forgetting it; wouldn't it be a shame if they didn't receive the same from us?
- (1) Again, the wiseman said: **Prov. 10:12:** “Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins.”
  - (2) James said: **Jas. 5:19-20:** “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”
- C. This doesn't mean that God expects us to tolerate and condone sin, He doesn't (Isa. 59:2).
- (1) He doesn't allow us to tolerate sin either (Eph. 5:11; 2 Jn. 9-11).
  - (2) But He offers His mercy freely (**Heb. 4:16:** “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”).
  - (3) Neither should we make our brethren crawl on their hands and knees for our forgiveness (**Eph. 4:32:** “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”).
  - (4) Neither should we hold our forgiveness of other's sins over their heads like the “sword of Damocles.” **2 Cor. 2:6-8:** “This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, 7 so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. 8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.”
- D. Are you wise? Do you forget when you forgive? Are you like God in this regard?

**Another thing the wiseman Solomon teaches us about love is that a life without love is...**

5. **8 Useless:**

- A. It doesn't matter how much one has in terms of worldly wealth, knowledge, wisdom, etc.; if he doesn't have love his life is one gigantic waste!
- (1) \*\* The old saying goes something like this, “Money can't buy you love.
  - (2) You just can't put a price tag on the genuine love (*agape*) we both extend and receive.  
**Prov. 15:17:** “Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a fatted calf with hatred.”  
**Prov. 22:1:** “A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favor rather than silver and gold.”
- B. \*\* This is one of Paul's primary points in I Corinthians 13:1-8a (read).
- (1) \*\* Sadly, so many mistake toleration of anything and everything for love.
  - (2) In reality, that is not love at all! **Ezek. 33:7-9; I Jn. 5:16-17:** “If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. 17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.”
    - (a) \*\* If we see someone sinning, how are we going to “give him life”?

- (b) By ignoring his sin? Or, by properly rebuking and encouraging him to repent? (recall “affirming” church movement, MDR problems, attendance problems, etc.).

### Another thing the wiseman Solomon teaches us about love is...

#### 6. **9** When is love, love?

- A. Not everything that is called love is really love, at least not as God defines it.
- (1) Listen to the adulteress in **Proverbs 7:18**: *“Come, let us take our fill of love until morning; let us delight ourselves with love.”*
  - (2) She may call it love, but it’s not.
  - (3) She doesn’t love God’s word; nor does she love her own soul, the soul of her husband, or the soul of the one whom she enticed.
  - (4) Love and lust are not the same, and it’s high time we learned that lesson.
  - (5) So very many people have totally ruined their lives by mistaking lust for love!
  - (6) Don’t be a fool and make this common mistake!
- B. **\*\*** Any “love” that acts in conflict with truth is not really love.
- (1) I don’t want to “re-preach” my previous points.
  - (2) **\*\*** But it is not love to allow sin to go unchallenged, unrebuked, to say nothing or do nothing. God holds us accountable!

**Ezek. 33:7-9**: *“So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me. 8 When I say to the wicked, ‘O wicked man, you shall surely die!’ and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. 9 Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.”*

### III. CONCLUSION: **10**

1. Have you learned Solomon’s lessons on love and are you willing to apply them to your life?
2. **\*\*** Do you:
  - ☛ **Love your own soul?**
  - ☛ **Nourish your own soul?**
  - ☛ **Love those who rebuke you?**
  - ☛ **Love to forgive and forget?**
  - ☛ **Realize you are useless without love?**
  - ☛ **Know when love is love?**
3. **\*\*** Remember: **1 Cor. 13:1-3**: *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”*
4. Invitation

Adapted from an article (Seven Lessons on Love) by Bryan Gibson.