

# What is Jesus Doing?

## LOVE – THE WORLD VS THE REAL THING

*“Maybe there’s a God above  
But all I’ve ever learned from love  
Was how to shoot at someone who outdrew you  
And it’s not a cry that you hear at night  
It’s not someone who’s seen the light  
It’s a cold and it’s a broken Hallelujah”*

These lyrics appear in Leonard Cohen’s beautiful and haunting song Hallelujah. In this poetic, seemingly hopeless verse, we may not see so much the poet’s personal view of love, but a near perfect representation of what the world’s view of “love” is... It mostly knows the heartbreak of romantic, erotic love which is so easily broken and causes terrible, even sometimes generational brokenness.

Perhaps surprisingly, the Greek word “eros” , which is the Greek word used for sexual and/or romantic love is never used in the Bible, not even as a cautionary word. Biblically, I believe that the closest concept to “erotic” or eros-driven is the Hebrew word “zanah” which is used to describe both fornication (sexual gratification without affection) between partners and is used in the Old Testament to describe prostitution, incest and rape and also, interestingly, it describes the idolatrous acts of apostate Israel (the harlot) because Israel is considered by God in the OT to be His beloved bride and by worshipping idols his beloved people are committing spiritual fornication/adultery which God detests.

There are several types of love found in the two major languages of the Bible, Greek and Judeo/Aramaic which is an early form of Hebrew.

The Old Testament uses the word Ahava or Hova (Judeo/Aramaic) to portray a love that a man has for a woman (The word used in Genesis 29:30 for Jacob loving Rachel more than Leah is that all purpose word ahavah which in its root means I will give. Jacob ahavah Rachel but he hovah Leah.

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He loved Leah only out of obligation.) Sometimes the word Ahava is used as Ahab or Ahaba (Hebrew) and can also denote the Love that God has for His people.

The New Testament as we now have it, uses these primary descriptive words for love:

- Phileo or Philadelphia (Greek): Best understood as friendly affection or “brotherly” love.
- Storge (Greek): Natural affection as a mother has for a child or a father his children.
- Agape: The highest form of love such as God’s Person (“God is Love” – 1 John 4:8 & 16), His love for His people, also the love that a person has for God which is rooted in a willingness to submit fully to the other’s authority.

Here is an example of a subtle difference between phileo and agape love in John 21.

*Peter, Do you love ( ἀγαπάω/agape ) me?*

*You know that I love (φιλέω/phileo) you.*

*Do you love (agape) me?*

*You know that I love (phileo) you.*

*Do you love (agape) me?*

*You know all things. You know that I love (phileo) you.*

Jesus is asking Peter if he loves Him as Lord and Peter keeps responding that he loves Him as his brother. Jesus overlooks Peter’s obtuseness and gives him the instruction to “Feed His lambs, et al. In so doing, the implication is that by actively loving his brothers (phileo), Peter will be loving/serving Jesus/God as his Lord and Master (agape).

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But I digress... Back to the world's problem. What the world mostly teaches of love is the hopelessness of inordinate affection and the obsessive addiction of sex and sexuality on the human psyche. Like a rat in a lab test, we tend, without the Spirit's leading, to repeat the same mistakes over and over again as we look for "love in all the wrong places" and take our physical comfort where we can find it, offered or not. This always leads to dysfunction in relationships which brings harm to all parties involved.

This is not to say that there is not the ability of the unregenerated (Godless) human being to be kind or compassionate. However, the Lord says that "there is none good but God the Father, not one".

Interestingly, the word Chrestotes (Greek) is used in the New Testament to denote the goodness that leads to repentance because of the kindness of God. Romans 2:4 shows us that it is through the richness of God's goodness that we find repentance. The Greek word here signifies more than goodness as a quality—it is goodness in righteous action, goodness expressing itself in deeds. It was God's/Jesus' goodness that led Him to take the Cross for us. We who have chosen to receive Christ must first choose to acknowledge and repent of our inherent sin. That is as close to Chrestotes as we can get.

My opinion here is that this type of goodness or kindness is always God-breathed, even in the unregenerated human being. However, it may come and go in that person in the same way that the Holy Spirit came and went among the OT prophets.

When "the called according to His purpose" is awakened to Christ and receives Him as Lord, the Holy Spirit then comes to dwell with and in that person. Their part is to offer the hospitality of obedience to Him.

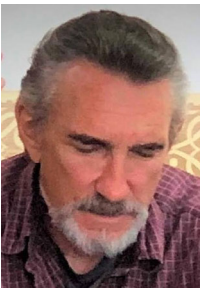
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Jesus will never leave or forsake that person and will continue to draw him/her to Himself but if that person hardens their hearts to the Lord's Ephesian 2:10 invitation to walk in the good works prepared beforehand for them to do, and continues leaning on their own understanding, serving idols like Mammon (love of and/or trust in money), Astoroth (eroticism in all forms), Hedonism (self-worship), and even inordinate affections like Politics, Sports, Fandom and even work or family obligations when they overshadow God's Presence through His Spirit, then eventually they will grieve the Holy Spirit that is calling them even as one who refuses the invitation of the Cross. You cannot love the Lord, in other words, and not "follow Him". That was true for Ancient Israel and it is true for the Israel of God (known today as Christians but originally "The Followers of The Way of Christ") as well.

*Let us then "Love the Lord our God with all of our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind"*

- Matthew 22:37

Remembering that He loved us first, this is the love of God that He deserves in return from us, those who believe and follow Him.



*In His Amazing Grip of Grace,*

*- John Henry Raskin, Roadhouse Rabbi*