

THE HOLINESS PODCAST

Podcast #5 - The Marks of Jesus - Agape Love

SUMMARY:

Agape Love is the supreme mark of Jesus in a Christian's life. The character transformation which holy living brings is built on and fueled by *agape* love. This lesson explores *agape* love and holiness through the lens of Romans 12:9 - "(agape) love must be un-hypocritical." In other words, let it be genuine, without pretense, not phony!

KEY STATEMENTS:

"We are face-to-face with one of the most counter-cultural truths about the Christian life. *Agape* love does not come naturally. It can't be produced by humans. It is a love rooted in the personality and makeup of God. Only God can place it in our lives by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit."

"Like grace, *agape* love shatters the perception of a fair world. It is not based upon anything that is deserved – it is offered freely and unconditionally."

"When God begins to re-form our character and make us holy, He plants the real thing in us – a love that isn't faked, isn't based on feelings and isn't manufactured."

"Jesus' instruction to 'love your enemies' in Matthew 5:44 had no counterpart in the Old Testament nor in the other religions of the Mediterranean world. It is an aspect of *agape* love that is beyond revolutionary – it is no less than earthshaking. Paul repeats it in Romans 12:17-21."

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

- I. In the podcast, the teacher connected the Romans 12:9 description of *agape* love as "without hypocrisy" to 12:2 and the command to "not be conformed to the pattern of this world." The verb "conformed" is in the passive voice which indicates that the world is doing the action. It is in the present tense indicating that it was a problem ongoing in the church at the time. Here is Chip Ingram's expanded translation reflecting these grammatical insights:

"Stop allowing yourselves to be molded by the influences and pressures of this present world we live in. Stop allowing Satan to dupe you, con you, use you, trick you, promise you life and love and power through a seductive world system that will only deliver disappointment, defeat, depression and make you a slave to sin." (True Spirituality, Chip Ingram, p.63)

- A) Can you identify specific areas or influences in our culture that tempt Christians to be popular or accepted but are not Christlike?

B) Reflect on a time when you were given the opportunity to love the unattractive or undesirable person like those shared about Major Julie, Charles Colson or Jack Eckerd in the podcast. What did you do?

II. John 13:35 says “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” Discuss the commentary by Rev. Stan Key which was quoted in the podcast:

“Just as a zebra is known by its stripes, a follower of Christ will be recognized by the way he loves. I may wear a cross around my neck, have a fish on my car, and attend church every Sunday, but if my life is not characterized by self-giving love, I am a hypocrite.”
(Face to Face, Stan Key p.44)

III. Meditate on the following passages and discuss the ways they give content to *agape* love:

I Corinthians 13

John 14:15-24

I John 4:7-21

IV. Let us pray:

- for Christians to embrace *agape* love in their lives and to seek out those whom God has prepared to receive His unconditional love from them.
- that God will transform your character with an infusion of His power resulting in humility and *agape* love for others, especially the poor and marginalized.
- that believers will resist the temptations to let the world shape their desires and activities but will, rather, allow the Holy Spirit to renew their minds and transform their lives from the inside-out.