

The Agape Journey of Intimacy



To the Father

Amanda Buys' Spiritual Covering

This is a product by Kanaan Ministries, a non-profit ministry under the covering of:

- River of Life Family Church, Vanderbijlpark
Pastor Edward Gibbens
(Contact: Sharmain Joubert
Personal Assistant to Ps Edward and Dalene Gibbens)
River of Life Family Church
Vanderbijlpark
South Africa
Tel: +27 16 9823022
Fax: +27 16 9822566
Email: sharmain@rolfc.co.za

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For further information or to place an order, please contact us at:

P.O. Box 15253
Panorama
7506
Cape Town
South Africa

27 John Vorster Avenue
Plattekloof Ext. 1
Panorama 7500
Cape Town
South Africa

Tel: (+27) (21) 930 7577

Fax: 086 681 9458

E-mail: kanaan@iafrica.com

Website: www.kanaanministries.org

Office hours: Monday to Friday, 9 am to 3 pm.

Kanaan in Europe - Basel:

Larwin and Silvia Nickelson
Oikos International Church
Reinacherstrasse 3
CH-4142 Münchenstein
Basel, Switzerland

Co-ordinator: Lydia Wenger

Office hours: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 8 – 12 .

Telephone: +41(0)61 332 15 40

Email: kanaanministries@bete.net

Website: www.kanaanministries.org

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THE AGAPE JOURNEY OF INTIMACY TO THE FATHER

INTRODUCTION:

This study is a follow-up to “Concealed and Loved”.

It is very important to understand that this is an advanced study which is based upon the understanding that you have worked through the foundational courses which include the Soul Care School, Inner Healing, etc.

Working through these courses will help you to remove all the blockages from your past which could have been separating you from intimacy with the Father.

This study is about a journey on the Road of Unconditional Love – Agapé Love – into the Arms of Abba Father God. It is literally impossible to know God as He really is and not love Him!

**It is also very important to understand that:
God’s Love is Unconditional
BUT
His Promises are Not!**

Every promise in the Word of God is **conditional**.

“If you will obey Me...**then** I will...(the blessing/promises follow)”

John 14:5,21 *“5 Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where You are going, so how can we know the way?
21 The **person who has My commands and keeps them** is the one who **[really] loves Me**; and whoever **[really] loves Me** will be **loved by My Father**, and I **[too] will love him and will show (reveal, manifest) Myself to him. [I will let Myself be clearly seen by him and make Myself real to him.]”***

To **love** Him means to **obey** Him!!

PART A: BARRIERS TO INTIMACY

In order to deal with barriers to intimacy, we must put the things that hinder us from having an intimate relationship with God and with others into a personal context.



1. The Satanic and Demonic Hindrances.

Satan is very real regardless of what our culture, modern philosophy, or liberal Christianity thinks. Satan's goal, whether he uses us against ourselves or attempts to push us into thoughts or behaviours that are cruel or unusual, is to keep us from the Father.



2. The Original Fall

This has caused us to turn in upon ourselves. We live in a fallen world. The result is unpredictable people and unfulfilled expectations. God often gets blamed for life not working out as we might expect.

3. Human failure

This predicament is the result of the first two. Human failures are mistakes and injuries whose origin and source, for the most part, come from us. They take their toll on us.

The Journey Begins...

The moment we are born again, we do have intimacy with God, but it is sporadic, and often interrupted. This intimacy is new and immature:

1 Peter 2:2 "2 Like **newborn babies** you should **crave** (thirst for, earnestly desire) the **pure** (unadulterated) **spiritual milk**, that by it you may be nurtured and grow unto [completed] salvation,"

It needs to be cultivated into an abiding relationship.



Agape is the Greek word for love and the Agape Road is just that - a road of love that He created to bring us to Himself.



It is important to understand that Heaven is not the goal. If you are a Christian and you die, you have to go to Heaven, there is no place else to go! I believe in Heaven it is real and beautiful.

It is everything and more than we could imagine. But, many people have mistakenly made Heaven to be the **goal** or the **object** of their life. There is life after being born again.

God, as a Father, wants to know us (**1 Corinthians 8:3**) and longs for us to know Him in this present life on earth.

John 17:3 says, "3 And **this is eternal life**: [it means] **to know** (to perceive, recognize, become acquainted with, and understand) **You**, the only true and real God, and [likewise] **to know Him**, Jesus [as the] Christ (the Anointed One, the Messiah), Whom You have sent."

It is such an important theme in the New Testament that Jesus uses the term "sent Me" 40 times.

He wants us to be **comfortable** in God's Presence. As a Father, God wants to be known and experienced (**2 Corinthians 6:18**). Jesus was sent to reintroduce us to our Loving Heavenly Father.



Intimacy

Another way of understanding the word "intimacy" is into-me-He-sees. God's heart cry is that we know Him and open ourselves so that He can know us. Agape is a way of knowing. Learning the principles of the Agape Road facilitates our finding each other. He is the One who planted in us the Eternal Seed.

The Eternal Seed is the ultimate Source of intimacy by reason of the New Birth (**1 Peter 1:23**).

When Christ is formed in us (**Galatians 4:19**) intimacy between God and us becomes possible. We now seek to nourish, cultivate, and protect it until it comes to maturity and fruitfulness.

Intimacy is so important to God that He made a promise which reveals His Father's heart:

Hebrews 8:11 *"11 And it will nevermore be necessary for each one to teach his neighbor and his fellow citizen or each one his brother, saying, Know (perceive, have knowledge of, and get acquainted by experience with) the Lord, for all will know Me, from the smallest to the greatest of them."*

We can see His basic intent in the Scripture

2 Corinthians 6:18 *"18 And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."*

We do not have to wait for this intimate relationship with our Father to happen until we are in Heaven. The **abiding** relationship gained on the Agape Road allows God to see into us and for us to see into Him. Out of this comes a joining or a **heart relationship**.

This intimate relationship with God is a **mystery** that is difficult to define, but very much the normal Christian life which belongs to every one of us as believers.

When my awareness of Who the Father is and what He is really like began to increase, the fear and anger within my person began to subside.

I began to **experientially** understand that Jesus was eager for me to walk this Agape Road to come to a relationship with His Father. When we begin to know what the Father is really like, we start to love Him.



As one of the early Church fathers said, "It is impossible to know God as He really is, and not love Him."

How God Wants to be Known

My concept of God's Glory was splendour, like an extraterrestrial glow or the power of God coming in some supernatural way. I never thought it had anything to do with His **Character** or **Nature**.

When Moses asked God to show him His glory, God said He would proclaim the Name of the Lord before him (**Exodus 33:18-19**).

God then, in self-revelation, explains to Moses the content of His glory which is His **Seven Hidden Attributes**:

Exodus 34:5-7 "And the Lord descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the Name of the Lord. Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, **compassionate and gracious, slow to anger** and abounding in **lovingkindness [mercy]** and **truth**; who keeps lovingkindness [faithful] for thousands, who forgives **iniquity, transgression and sin....**"



God's DNA:

Compassion

Grace

Slow to Anger

Mercy

Truth

Faithful

Forgives:

- Iniquity
- Transgression
- Sin

God's Character or DNA is the content of His Glory and the significance of His Name. The breadth of meaning in these seven words that God uses to reveal Himself is spectacular.

Romans 1:20 "20 For ever since the creation of the world His **invisible nature** and attributes, that is, **His eternal power and divinity**, have been made intelligible and clearly discernible in and through the things that have been made (His handiworks). So [men] are without excuse [altogether without any defense or justification],"

It is God's personal revelation of Himself. If God had not revealed Himself, we could not know Him (**2 Corinthians 2:8-16**). God's *Glory* is the manifestation of His communicable attributes that are *hidden* from the world (**John 17:25**).

God is a Spirit; He cannot be known unless He chooses to reveal Himself. Of course, the depths and complexities of God are ineffable or impossible to clearly explain.

God also has **incommunicable attributes:** He is Eternal, Omnipresent, Omniscient, Immutable, and Self-revealed (we cannot know Him unless He reveals Himself).

When Jesus was on earth, He laid aside the incommunicable attributes, picking them up again after His death and resurrection (**John 17:5**).

When sin entered the world, it released the **twisted desire** for us to be like God, grasping for the incommunicable attributes and essentially rejecting the communicable.

For example, stubbornness is actually exchangeability perverted. The communicable attributes consist of the image of God that is restored to us in Christ. These are the aspects of His Person that Father God wants the world to know about.

The only way the world can see God's hidden Nature or what He is actually like is by means of the Person of Christ revealing Himself through the Body of Christ – you and me (**Hebrews 1:3; John 14:9**) – as Christ is "formed in us" (**Galatians 4:19**),

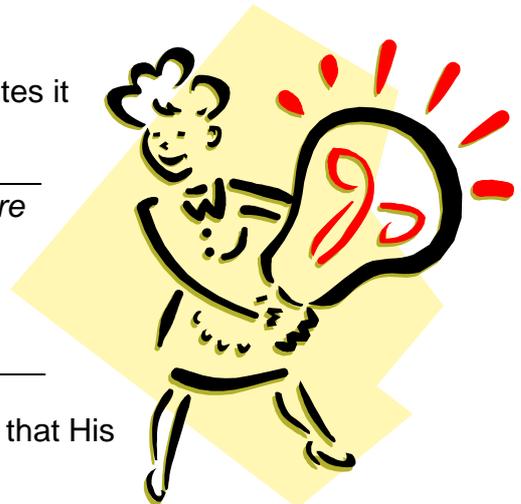
God's personality becomes evident in us. **Matthew 5:43-48** teaches us to love our enemies that we may be the sons and daughters of our Father.

This shows us the necessity of God's love being replicated. Without the effective and active presence of His attributes, we are not allowing His Glory to come through our own person.

Jesus, in teaching us the implications of this, states it clearly:

Matthew 5:16 "16 **Let your light so shine** before men that they may see your **moral excellence** and your **praiseworthy, noble, and good deeds** and **recognize and honor** and praise and **glorify your Father** Who is in heaven."

The objective evidence that God is our Father is that His DNA is revealed in us as His very own family.



God's Seven Communicable Attributes:

1. Compassion (Strong's #7349 / #3628).

It is pity or empathy, inward affection, and tender mercy. The Greek word *splagchnon* – splangkh'non is used 111 times in Scripture and means bowels of compassion or mercy



Philippians 2:1 *"I SO BY whatever [appeal to you there is in our mutual dwelling in Christ, by whatever] strengthening and consoling and encouraging [our relationship] in Him [affords], by whatever persuasive incentive there is in **love**, by whatever participation in the [Holy] Spirit [we share], and by whatever **depth of affection** and **compassionate sympathy**,"*

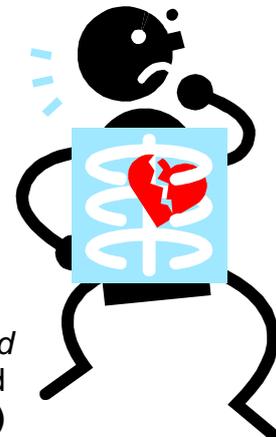
Webster's Dictionary gives us the best explanation of compassion without attempting a full word study:

- Suffering with another; painful sympathy; a sensation of sorrow excited by the distress or misfortunes of another; pity; commiseration. **Compassion is a mixed passion**, compounded of love and sorrow; at least some portion of love generally attends the pain or regret, or is excited by it. Extreme distress of an enemy even changes enmity into at least temporary affection.

Compassion means my insides are moved for you in a supernatural way. It is different than sympathy, which is easier to experience.

Scripture says that Jesus *"being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity"* (**Psalm 78:38**).

The father of the prodigal son *"had compassion, and ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him"* (**Luke 15:20**). Paul asked for compassion to be present in the Philippians' church (**2:1**) wondering at its lack or absence.



Compassion was missing in the Levite but not in the Samaritan. The New Testament states clearly that compassion is something we should be **exerting** (**Colossians 3:12**).

God knows everything you're going through and He is **with** you. He is **for** you, He is **on your side**. He never leaves us nor forsakes us throughout all our suffering. He stands with us in our pain. He is moved by our distress. Compassion is love and sorrow mixed in our hearts for another. Compassion is an action that takes the weight off another person.

Ps. 78:38 *"38 But He, full of [merciful] compassion, forgave their iniquity and destroyed them not; yes, many a time He turned His anger away and did not stir up all His wrath and indignation."*

Compassion is a vital ingredient of fellowship in the Body of Christ.

2. Grace (Strong's #2587 / #5485).

This is one of the most beautiful words in Hebrew, but it is not easily translated into English. This word is the very source of understanding God's Person.

It means to find favor, kindly, friendly, generous, courteous, disposed to show or dispense grace and forgive offenses, and to impart unmerited blessings.



Nehemiah 9:17 *"17 They refused to obey, nor were they mindful of Your wonders and miracles which You did among them; but they stiffened their necks and in their rebellion appointed a captain, that they might return to their bondage [in Egypt]. But You are a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great steadfast love; and You did not forsake them."*

Luke 4:22 *"22 And all spoke well of Him and marveled at the words of grace that came forth from His mouth; and they said, Is not this Joseph's Son?"*

Graciousness is the mark of the Lord Jesus who is the exact representation of God's Character (**Hebrews 1:3**). Christ was gracious because God is gracious.

To release favour to another person when they least deserve it, to act kindly, be friendly, be courteous. God loves being gracious and kind.

He wants you to have a testimony of what He is really, really like. Your testimony is not your history. Your testimony is: *"this is what God is like to me all the time."*

God is **for** you. You need to be so confident that you are loved.

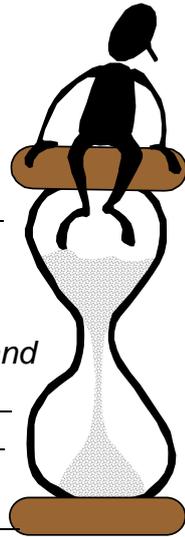
3. Slow to anger (Strong's #639/ #750 / #3115).

Longsuffering is fortitude, forbearance, or patience. It means not being easily provoked and able to patiently bear injuries.

Numbers 14:18 "18 The Lord is **long-suffering** and **slow to anger**, and **abundant in mercy and loving-kindness**, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and fourth generation."

Romans 2:4 "Do you think lightly of the **riches of His kindness** and **tolerance** [forbearance] and **patience**..."

James 1:19 "19 Understand [this], my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear [a ready listener], slow to speak, **slow to take offense and to get angry.**"



Nothing causes me to press into Jesus more than my own weakness of **anger**. When we understand how slow to anger God really is and then see ourselves, we can be overwhelmed by the chasm.

When we think that we are a representation of Father God to our children and others close to us, it is no wonder they often struggle to find Him. As Living Epistles, we fail to reveal God's Glory to the very ones He loves so deeply.

It was anger that caused Moses, the meekest man on earth, to miss God's highest – or his own life. When Moses struck the rock in anger (**Numbers 20**), it was a distortion of the Glory of God.

Moses misrepresented God as One who was easily angered. Amazingly, the water flowed irrespective of Moses' anger; however, he was refused the privilege of entering the Promised Land with the people whom he had led.

It is important to note that Moses did not lose his salvation - he appears later on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus (**Matthew 17:3**), but he lost the opportunities and privileges which were part of his earthly inheritance.



God is **patient** and **long-suffering**.

1 Cor. 13:4 "4 Love endures long and is **patient** and **kind**; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily."

God is not easily provoked, is able to bear with us patiently. God loves worship where you proclaim back to Him the very things He says about Himself.

God loves to listen to each one of us. We are living Epistles of His Nature.

We get to reveal the Glory of His Nature to other people, to be confident about who God is for yourself.

4. **Mercy** (Strong's #2617 / #1656).

Mercy is **mildness** and **tenderness** of heart which disposes a person to overlook injuries or to treat an offender better than he deserves.

There is no word in English precisely synonymous with mercy in its original language.



Numbers 14:18 *"18 The Lord is long-suffering and slow to anger, and **abundant in mercy and loving-kindness**, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and fourth generation."*

Matthew 9:13 *"13 Go and learn what this means: **I desire mercy** [that is, readiness to help those in trouble] and not sacrifice and sacrificial victims. For I came not to call and invite [to repentance] the righteous (those who are upright and in right standing with God), but sinners (the erring ones and all those not free from sin)."*

Luke 6:36 *"36 **So be merciful** (sympathetic, tender, responsive, and compassionate) even as your Father is [all these]."*

Again, the appeal is for us to **reveal mercy because God is merciful**. This is the essence of the Christian life, leading us on the journey to the freedom that He promised.

The injury of the Church toward a hurting world has been failing to give mercy after receiving His mercy in such abundance. Behaving like this is a fast way to get into trouble with the Father.

Mercy treats the offender better than they deserve.

God is bountiful and lavish about being merciful. Our faith needs to come up to the level of who God really is.

What is it that you need right now? God wants to be that for you.

The Good News is always linked to the revelation of God's fullness towards humanity. God always wants to reveal His Glory.

Your worship is always tied to your witness / testimony.

God's love is sent to **transform us**, it is a **process** – not a once-off event.

A process is a series of steps that takes us from where we are now our past / sinfulness to where we want to be and where the Lord wants you to be (future) / life of righteousness.

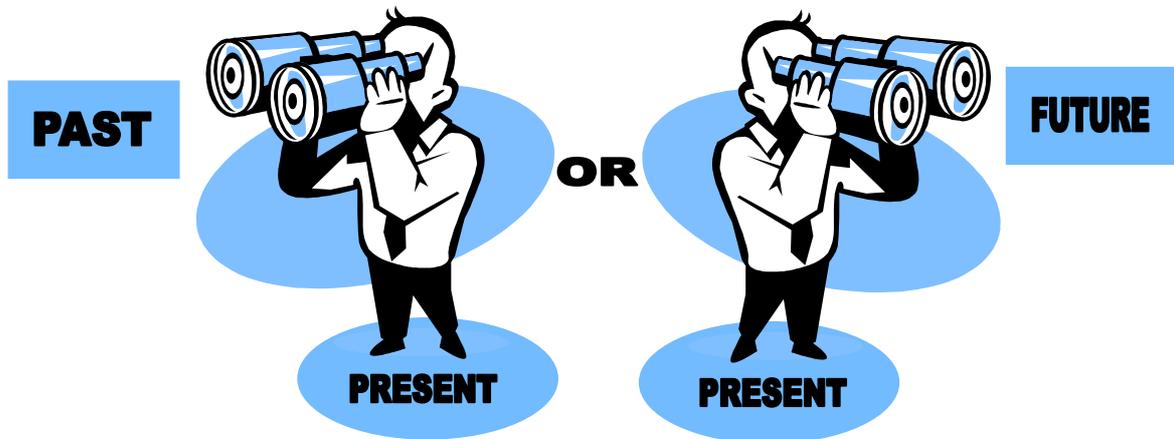
God is "present-future".

He stands in your future and tells you: *"I know the plans I've got for you."*

God sees you in the future and you look much better than you look right now!

Prophetic word is God standing in your future and telling you the plans He has for you – You've got a future!

Align yourself with what God says about you. Your relationship with the Lord works from the present to the future. If you choose to live from your present into your past you are going to miss so much of who God is.



We need to move from being ignorant about who God really is to being intimately related to Him.

We need to move from a mindset of **unbelief** to a place of **fully trusting** in whom the Father really is and what the Father says.

Baggage and Luggage:

There is a difference between **baggage** and **luggage**.

We all come into a relationship with God carrying **baggage from our past** –hurts and wounds, curses, inner vows, low self esteem, humiliations, sins that have scarred us in our minds and hearts, abuses that we've suffered, anger that we feel justified in having, bitterness, rejection, hatred, etc.

These things keep me in a place of cynicism and unbelief while they remain.

You can be locked into a present-mindset, a present-past lifestyle and a present-past perception that says: *"Nothing is ever going to change. It doesn't matter what I do, nothing is going to ever work for me."*

Your current experiences will reflect the past in constant replays, in a life that is a **self-fulfilling prophecy**.

You are guaranteed that your past is going to repeat itself.

What you **focus** on keeps coming back in constant replays.

If you live a life where your **expectation comes from your history**, you're in big trouble.

Do not allow your present-future to be clouded by your past. Get rid of the baggage and pick up your luggage!

Many of us have **negative announcements** of what life has taught us. We need to be taught of the Lord by the Holy Spirit.

The **Cross** is our deliverance from our present-past life.

Part of dying to self is **crucifying** the parts of us that we really don't like, the bits that are governed by your past and by your history.

God's future plans for you is for your welfare and not for your calamity – to give you a future and a hope.

He seeks to create a straight path from your current present life with Him to the future that He's got planned for you.

Walking with the Spirit means getting rid of the baggage.



Your baggage is always packed **by somebody else!** Imagine your worst enemy packing your bags for a vacation! You're headed towards the beach and he puts all ski-clothing in your suitcase!



That is what life is like when you live from the past. All your bags are being packed by somebody else!

Question: Do you really want to continue living with somebody else's perception of you that's going to kill you?

NO!!!

Part of going on vacation is you get to pack your favourite clothes! You pack for the things you're going to do, not for the things that have been done to you.

Do not let your bags be packed by someone who does not like you, does not understand you, has no time for you, who does not seek your highest good, who only intends harm and ill-will in your life.

What would it feel like to live in an airport but never get out of Baggage Claim?

A present-past lifestyle is like you are trapped in Baggage Claim. God has given you a ticket out of there – you need to leave that baggage behind – go upstairs to a different level!

We live with other people's words in our heads that make us feel **worthless, useless** and **of no value**. Our memories are full of **pain, abuse** and **humiliation**.

The Cross is God drawing a line – He does not want our bad, painful past to go into our future.

You will die a disappointed person unless you get rid of the pain in your past.

Somebody else has packed your bags and you are still living with the consequences – guilt, shame, condemnation – you're still a victim.

The Cross sets you free from all of that. The Father has so much to give you.

We need to exchange our baggage for luggage!

The Holy Spirit has your identity safe. You need to recover it and **live** it!!

Unless your identity comes from the Lord, you're living your life as a mistake – a mistaken ID!!



So, the result will be mistake upon mistake!

The Holy Spirit restores our true identity. It's about displacement. God is making room in your life for more – that might be why you're going through some of the stuff you're going through. He is putting His finger on some stuff that you must give up.

As you let go and give up the things you've been holding onto as false security, He has something better to give you in return.

He knows where He is going with you and exactly what you need for the journey.

Our growing up in Jesus and maturing is all about exchange – displacement.

God gives us His love through the process of change.



God loves it when you see who you are becoming and you start to walk into that place with a BIG smile on your face because you walk into the future with **hope, faith** and **confidence** because you know God is waiting for you and also He is actually walking with you.

He's with you now and He's waiting for you in your future to get there. He sees you in a particular way.

The critical thing is not only what you think about God but also what you think about yourself in terms of how He sees you. Your identity has to be confessed to God: *"This is who I am."*

When the Holy Spirit puts His finger on parts of your life that are no longer appropriate, you get to stand before the Lord.

The Holy Spirit only puts His finger on stuff that He wants to exchange for a gift. God will never put His finger on you without having a gift in view. That's Agape love!!

The enemy is unconsciously helping the Lord. So when the enemy comes along and accuses you of something, then you know its time of an exchange.

When God puts His finger on things in our life, it's time for GIFTS!

We start to learn about our true identity in Jesus.



You don't become a new person by changing your behaviour. You discover the person you already are in Christ and you start to behave accordingly.

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter and the Spirit of Truth. They go together – the Holy Spirit will never tell you the Truth without giving you a hug!

To grow in the Spirit we need to see ourselves as God sees us.

Whose got baggage? Make a list of everybody that has ever hurt you. Make a list of all the **ungodly beliefs** and **false identities** that you have carried with you from your past.

Drop it at the foot of the Cross!!



PRAYER:

Father, we ask You for an anointing of forgiveness to come into our hearts. Lord, we forgive every evil word spoken against us, every criticism, every humiliation, every bit of sarcasm, sinicism, every bad and negative statement and pronouncement, we forgive it and the person who gave it.

We ask You to bless those people. Change their hearts and minds. Would You come into their life and touch them and change them.

We forgive every negative act against us spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally and financially. We forgive all the betrayals. We forgive the abuse, verbal, physical and sexual, in Jesus Name.

We forgive every act that took something from us and robbed us of part of our identity and personality. We are letting it go, in Jesus' Name!

We ask You to forgive every person who has done something against us physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

They deserve Your forgiveness too, Lord.

All those things together have stolen my identity from me.

I want to be a New Creation. I don't want to be a present-past person. I don't want baggage. I want some new luggage. I know Lord that in that luggage You will help me pack. You will give me prophetic words, verses of scripture that will come alive about my identity. Please give me friends who will talk to me with words that are faith-filled and positive.

Please give me a New Identity. I receive it now by faith. I have lived in a place of mistaken identity for too long.

Thank You, Father, I now start walking into my future with no more baggage from my past!

In Jesus Name, AMEN!

If you drop your baggage at the Cross, you can't pick it up again. Drop it forever!

Isaiah 43:19 "19 Behold, I am **doing a new thing!** Now it springs forth; do you not perceive and know it and will you not give heed to it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

5. Truth (Strong's #571 / #225).

Truth is conformity with fact or reality; exact accordance with that which is, has been, or shall be.

Jesus said in **John 14:6** " ...I am the Way and the **Truth** and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me."

Truth is a **Person**, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Word of God.

Proverbs 8:7 "7 For my mouth shall utter **truth**, and wrongdoing is detestable and loathsome to my lips."

John 17:17 "17 Sanctify them [purify, consecrate, separate them for Yourself, make them holy] by the **Truth**; Your Word is **Truth**."

Truth is the Nature of God because God is reality. The closer we get to reality, the closer we are to God. It was Truth, Jesus said, which would make us free (**John 8:32**).

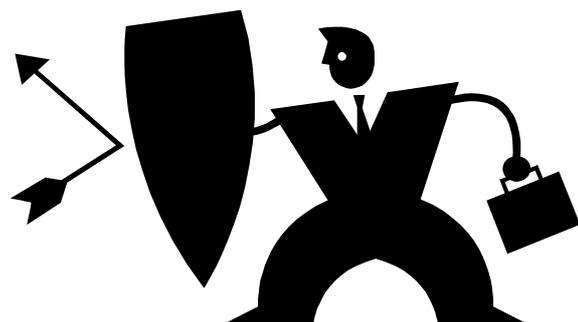
Established in Truth:

In order for us to be established in the Truth, you need to understand there are always **two battles** that you face over every single issue:

- 1) One battle to get free.
- 2) Another to stay free!

Keys to Staying Free:

Truth is established in times of crisis and difficulty.



How do I **keep** my new identity in Christ? God knows everything that you are about to face and He has a plan. You have to conform yourself to that plan and that purpose.

Romans 8:28 *“28 We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are **called according to [His] design and purpose.**”*

God’s purpose is to establish you in the Truth. God allows in His wisdom what He could easily prevent by His power.

We have to learn the **discipline of focus**.

Hebrews 12:2 *“2 Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith...”*

In every circumstance we come into we have to learn to focus on Him only!

Everything that comes against us is designed by God to establish and to drive you to run to God who is your refuge for Agape love provides:

- security
- identity
- belonging

When facing a battle your first reaction should not be to go marching out against a situation but to **retreat** into your fortress until God tells you what to do.

Proverbs 18:10 *“10 The **Name of the Lord** is a **strong tower**; the [consistently] righteous man [upright and in right standing with God] **runs into it** and is **safe, high [above evil] and strong.**”*

God has provided for you a place of refuge which is His Name and His Nature.

Something happens to you on the inside when you turn to God for help. You enter the refuge door of God but march out against the enemy from the Fortress of God. You come out to attack.



We have to learn how to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and this takes discipline!

He wants to be your **security**. He wants to establish your **identity** and to totally convince you that you **belong** to Him and no other.

You are His peculiar possession.

God is very jealous over you. God allows the enemy to come against you so that He can establish you in who He is.

He will allow the enemy to contest the ground of Truth you are standing on so that He can establish the Truth in you.

There is no reason to panic! God has everything under control!

Anything that comes against us is designed to establish **security, identity** and **belonging**. You need to learn how to respond to God as your refuge. You need to learn to **hide** in God.

1 John 4:18 *“18 There is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror! For fear brings with it the thought of punishment, and [so] he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love [is not yet grown into love’s complete perfection].”*

There is no fear in Agape. You have to learn that for yourself.

Responding to God as my Refuge.

He is my:

- security
- identity
- belonging.

Spiritual maturity: Abiding in who God is for me.

Abiding means:

- to continue to be present with;
- to hold onto God when there is nothing and no-one to hold onto;
- to be embraced by God in the same moment.

God has love planned for you in every situation you encounter. Even in crisis, even in the contradiction of your circumstances, whatever comes to you on your journey, God has made provision for that.



One of the keys to life in the Spirit is that God's very Nature is your promise. Who He declares Himself to be for you, that is your promise for life and of life.

God is Sovereign

1 Chron 29:11 *"11 Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and the earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and Yours it is to be exalted as **Head over all.**"*

God loves you with His Sovereign Nature. That means His love must **rule** over your life. His love, therefore, is in control of your circumstances.

God is Righteous

That means He will always do the right thing.

God is Just

He can only do what is fair for you. All His ways are just.

God is Love

He is motivated solely by love towards you.

God is everywhere

I AM is in every place you are.

God is the Truth

He'll never lie to you.

He is Unchangeable

He is the One Constant you can always depend upon.

He is Faithful

You can trust Him to be and to do what He says. He never makes empty promises. Your prophetic word over your life demonstrates His intentions towards you.

He is Holy

Everything He does in your life will be in harmony with His integrity.

He is all-knowing

He knows everything about you in regards to past, present and future. He knows how to work everything out and how to develop your character within your circumstances.

God has not come just to rescue us but to **transform** us as part of the package.

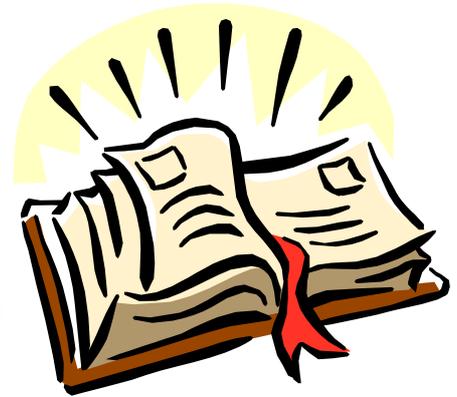
PRAYER:

“Father, what is it that You want to be for me in these circumstances and how do I position myself to receive that?”

Our journey with the Father begins and ends with His **Word**. We must **see** Him in the Written Word in our physical being – in our soul, spirit, body.

Knowledge of scripture alone, study of the Word, memorizing verses, will **not** transform you.

Experiencing what God says is your God-given right in Christ. There has to be a performance of the Word in your life. This does not happen if you're running away.



Don't turn your back on your circumstances, wasting time **whining** instead of **worshipping**. If you are focussing on the bad and you are allowing your thoughts to be negative – STOP – it's not going to happen to you if you put your trust in the Lord.

You have to learn how to face the Lord to receive the goodness and the nature of God that He wants to bestow upon you.

Whatever God shows you in the scriptures, you must experience in life. We must see ourselves how He sees us.

You are responsible for your own identity being established. It's your relationship with the Holy Spirit who will declare to you who you are and this is who God is going to be for you in these circumstances.

The Holy Spirit is brilliant at making the Truth become established as part of your identity.

“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”

The Truth must become true in us. The Truth must become the way we live in this world. The Truth must give us life to lead in all our circumstances. That is what we call sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

We come to see ourselves as God sees us and our intimacy is involved with how you get to worship Him.

Our worship is growing all the time because our understanding of who we are in Christ is being formed in every set of circumstances we come to.

We come to a place of peace and rest where you're not worried about anything. You know who God is, you know what He is like, you know what God can do and there is a rest that overtakes you.

There is a power in resting in the Lord. The enemy comes to steal the life in the Spirit, to destroy faith, etc. The Holy Spirit comes to keep you strong and always fresh!

There is a place set aside in the spirit for you where you can make the enemy tired, you can discourage him, because nothing works against you.

Do not allow yourself to be pulled out of this place of **abiding** and **resting** in the Spirit.

If there is no such place, Jesus cannot be Lord.

“My peace I give to you.”

There is a peace of God that surpasses all understanding. There is a rest in the Lord that is amazing! There is a well of water on the inside of you, we just need to unblock the well and keep it flowing. You have enough to do more than survive. You have enough life in the Spirit to **prosper**, no-matter what circumstances you’re in.



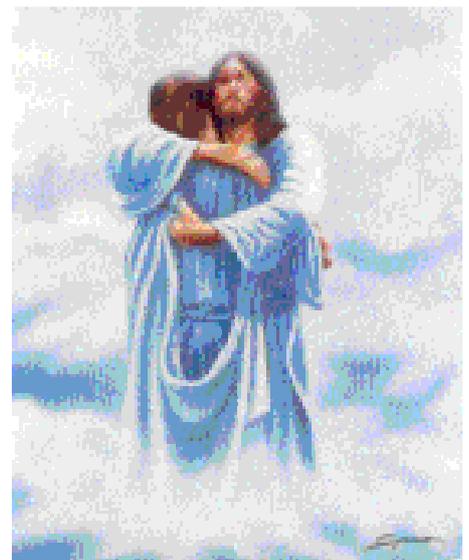
If that isn't true then we might as well live our lives just as we want to! If He isn't Lord of those things, He isn't Lord at all.

He is Lord of **everything** or He is Lord of nothing.

NON-NEGOTIABLE:

You start from the place where He is Lord of all. Therefore He must be Lord of my current circumstances. The question you need to ask whenever you are going through trials and tribulations is: *“Therefore where is His Lordship **now** in this current situation?”*

I will not allow myself to be moved away from my hope in the gospel! What is my hope? **You are the Lord!**



6. Faithfulness (Strong's #2617 / #4103).

The Greek word is **“hesed”** meaning fixed, determined love, to be kept, guarded, watched over, and preserved.

This is Covenantal Faithfulness. Once God gives Himself Covenantally, it is **impossible** for Him to **desert** or **abandon** the person or the Covenant



Hebrews 13:8 "8 Jesus Christ (the Messiah) is [always] the same, yesterday, today, [yes] and forever (to the ages)."

Definition:

It is firm adherence to truth and duty, true to allegiance, careful to observe all compacts, treaties, contracts, or vows.

In other words, true to one's word. God's affection is what makes the Covenant.

Deuteronomy 7:9 "9 Know, recognize, and understand therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the **faithful God**, Who **keeps covenant and steadfast love and mercy** with those who love Him **and keep His commandments**, to a thousand generations,"

No one reading the Old Testament could ever doubt the Covenantal Faithfulness of God.

We need only read **Nehemiah 9** or **Psalms 78** to be overwhelmed at the manner in which God is seen faithfully cultivating the relationship with Israel who does nothing but violate the relationship and rebel against Him.

Christ is the **Covenant Maker** - the agreement is between Him and His Father, not between God and us.

Hebrews 7:20-22 explains that the Covenant between the Father and the Son is forever. This arrangement cannot and will not change.

Jesus explains that "no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me" (**John 14:6**)

This exclusive place of coming to God by means of Christ, the Son is seen in Paul's writing when he uses the phrase "**in Christ**" 88 times.

Christ keeps the Covenant on our behalf; we enter as participants of His **grace** and recipients of His Covenant Faithfulness. No matter where we go or what we do, God will remain Faithful to love, cultivates us out of our sin, and, if necessary, disciplines us into the freedom of His Kingdom.

In light of this, the Scripture, " I will not in any way fail you nor give you up nor leave you without support." (**Hebrews 13:5**) can be seen as more of a **threat** than a **promise**.

If we think we are going to escape God, we are mistaken. When He sets His Covenant Faithfulness on us, we only have two ways to go: the easy way or the hard way.

His Lordship is real, strong and powerful. He will never leave you nor forsake you!

We must move away from the thought that the enemy is more powerful than God.

Many of our experiences have taught us that the devil is more powerful than God.



We do not live our lives as more than conquerors. We survive by the skin of our teeth but we do not prosper.

When I am going through difficulties, God will come to me in such a way that not only am I changed, but the people around me are touched also.

That is part of my prosperity and part of my revenge. God has called us to a good fight and a good fight is one that you win! Sometimes a victory simply means that last man standing; you're still on your feet in spite of all the odds against you.

Sometimes a victory is the fact that you just did not run, you did not quit, you stayed with it.

This is war!!

The very Heart of Agape love is that you become fully intimate with the Lord Jesus Christ of your **identity**. You need to say the same things about yourself as He says about your identity and then you **live** in that.

Stay there even if the heat is on. You must live to be extraordinary because Jesus deserves excellence. He deserves the very best that you have to give Him.

So, your **identity** and your **intimacy** must always combine. Your worship this year must be better than last year. You have to **grow in your praise** and **thanksgiving**. **Learn to live a life rejoicing**. Sometimes you may sow in tears, sometimes you may rejoice, you may give thanks with tears streaming down your face.



When there is a lack of thanksgiving in your life there will be a lack of faith as well.

When you don't learn the lesson of rejoicing, you will quit when the going gets tough, you'll turn aside. You'll settle for success rather than going on in your destiny.

You must pay attention to your **thanksgiving**, your **praise**, your **rejoicing**, and to your **worship**.

You must give thanks until you become thanks! Thanksgiving is not casual. You must seek God with all of your heart. Coming late to church after the worship has started, shows you are casual about worship and do not fear the Lord. Many go to church to receive and not to give – your worship is about **giving**. When that is what our heart is about you will not be able to **keep** the Word you receive.

Intimacy is when you are able to keep what God gives you. Lack of intimacy means you will not be able to take hold of what God wants to give you because your heart is not engaged with who He fully is.

The Word is not even going to work for you because your heart attitude is already working against you.

We come to Church to worship the Father. Sometimes we make a **sacrifice of worship** to the Lord – we have to stand in our pain and worship the Lord.

If you have not learned the art of ministering to the Lord, your ministry will hit a ceiling and level off. Your authority will hit a ceiling and level off.

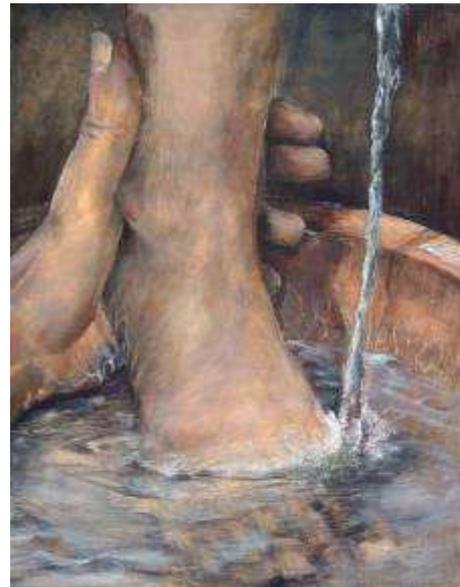
The only way that you can get into a high place of authority is through the low place of humility.

PRAYER:

Lord, as I stand before You and all is against me, I want You to know You are worth worshipping and my trust is in You.

This is called a **LAMENTATION** – it is the **most powerful form of worship** that exists.

A “though” and a “yet” is what a Lamentation is all about.



Habakkuk 3:17-18 “17 **Though** the fig tree does not blossom and there is no fruit on the vines, [though] the product of the olive fails and the fields yield no food, though the flock is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls,
18 **Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the [victorious] God of my salvation!**”

Job 13:15 “15 [I do it because, though He slay me, **yet** will I **wait for** and **trust** Him and] behold, He will slay me; I have no hope—**nevertheless**, I will maintain and argue my ways before Him and even to His face.”

God doesn't ask us to deny the existence of the negative; He just wants to say to us there is a higher level of Truth than the facts.

Look beyond the pain and the warfare and see God. Worship Him! Worship Him in the face of what the enemy is doing and stay refreshed! God is demanding it!

If you want maturity, if you want the things of the Kingdom, then get in God's face with worship.

Do not only go to God when you feel good, but also go to God when nothing works; when everything is against you; when people have left you; when everyone thinks you've lost your anointing; **stand in God's Presence and worship Him!**

If you don't, you'll want to defend yourself and you'll just lose everything anyway.

There is nothing to defend! God chooses failures! BUT there is everything to receive and to gain because of Who God is!

This is the way into the high places of ministry, wisdom and authority.

You learn about it in the everyday life, in the valleys and on the mountain top experiences, you learn to be how God is: UNCHANGING.

Question:

How do you love when love is not returned? You let God love you. You respond to Him when nobody else is responding to you.

Identity does not fail. Just as love never fails. God shows you your identity so that you will always know where He is.

You will also always know exactly where you are in Him.

His **Character is His identity** – it is ROCK SOLID! He is the Rock of your salvation!

When things are not working the way you think they should, you are unchanging still.

You don't love people because they love you. You love people because love is the right thing to do!

We love because God is love. His very Nature in us causes us to love as He loves in and through us if we allow Him to do exactly that.

It doesn't matter whether things work out or not – that is irrelevant. The issue is that you **remain** and **abide** and you are the **unchanging one**.



Agape love occurs when His Identity becomes yours.

You don't become a new person by changing your behaviour. You discover the person you already are and then behave accordingly.

We need to be conformed to the person of Jesus. The experience for you allowing God to do that is very intimate – the Potter and the clay.

If your heart gets broken in the process, you will always end up with a bigger heart! **Intimacy involves an act of passionate surrender.**

Passionate surrender is the act of giving yourself to the Lord and saying: *“Do with me what You will.”*

Salvation is being saved by God in every situation you encounter. The person you need to be saved from most is you! You are your own worst enemy!

People can only kill in you the things that need killing! Nobody can kill the Life of the Spirit in you. **The only thing they can kill is the flesh.** So watch for your flesh rising up in you when people do or say things to you – that is what needs to die!

If someone says something nasty to you and something rises up in you, then it shows there was something nasty in you!

Nasty speaks to nasty! Flesh only speaks to flesh!

If something reacts inside of you, then know it was there all the time! Maybe your flesh attracted their comment in the first place!

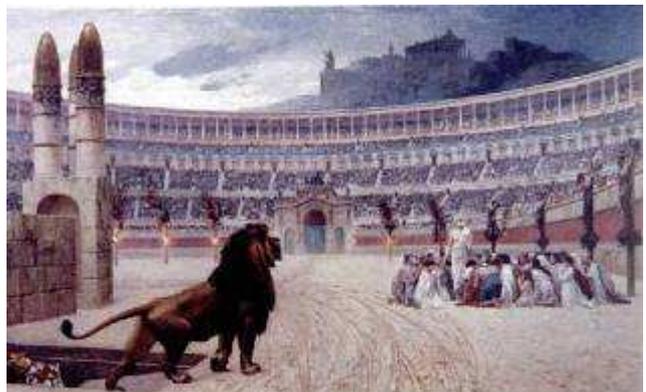
Your flesh cries out to be killed by the Spirit. The flesh is enmity against the spirit and the spirit is enmity against the flesh.

When you bless those that persecute you, you are choosing to crucify the flesh. The way you react when you get persecuted and falsely accused will determine how dead you are!

A corpse cannot be killed!

If nothing in you needs killing, nothing will harm you. Bless those that persecute you, criticize you, etc.

Agape love is Heaven on earth in our circumstances. That does not guarantee that your circumstances will work out quite how you expect. It does guarantee that **you** are going to work out!



Paul said: "Do it **in** me first Lord and then do it **through** me."

God's love is not **situational**. He loves you for your own sake. He loves you no matter how some things will work out. He is totally committed to you as a person.

7. Forgive (Strong's #5375 / #5746).

This word means pardoning, remitting, disposed to forgive, inclined to overlook offense, mild, merciful, and compassionate as a forgiving temperament.

Matthew 6:12 "12 And **forgive us our debts**, as we also have forgiven (left, remitted, and let go of the debts, and have given up resentment against) our debtors."

Someone said to me, "God doesn't forgive intentional sin."



Well, I don't know any other kind! We wanted to do it, so we did. How thankful I am that God, as a Father, made provision for all our failures in the Person of His Son.

God forgives because it is His Nature; it's why the redemptive plan was executed in the Person of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:19 "19 It was God [personally present] in Christ, reconciling and restoring the world to favor with Himself, **not counting up and holding against [men] their trespasses [but cancelling them]**, and committing to us the **message of reconciliation** (of the restoration to favor)."

Psalms 51 allows us to see three distinctions of failure:

Psalms 51:1-3 "1 **HAVE MERCY** upon me, O God, according to Your steadfast love; according to the multitude of Your tender mercy and loving-kindness **blot out my transgressions**.

2 Wash me thoroughly [and repeatedly] **from my iniquity and guilt** and cleanse me and make me wholly **pure from my sin!**

3 For I am conscious of my **transgressions** and I acknowledge them; my **sin** is ever before me."



Sin has degrees of intensity and varying amounts of accountability which elicit different responses from Father God.

Note the words: “**iniquity, transgression, and sin**” and how David deals with each separately in **Psalm 51**.

His iniquity is washed, his transgression is blotted out, and his sin is cleansed.

1. **Iniquity** (Strong's #5771 | #458).

There are 11 different words translated as ‘iniquity’ in the Old Testament. The New Testament uses ‘lawless.’ The most prominent in the Old Testament is “**awon**” used some 215 times meaning crooked, that which is not straight, to bend, go astray, or deviation from the right path.

2. **Transgression.**

The word ‘transgression’ occurs 80 times and it's meaning is essentially a **rebellious attitude**. This is intentionally going beyond known limits, breaking or violating a law, principle, or relationship. It is deciding that the “No Parking” sign is for other people, not for us, so we intentionally go beyond the known limit and park there anyway.



3. **Sin.**

The Hebrew root of this word means ‘to miss the mark’ or what is more commonly understood as failing, omitting, or refusing to do what we ought to do.

All of these result in our inability to reveal God's Glory or as Paul stated, “*all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God*” (**Romans 3:23**).



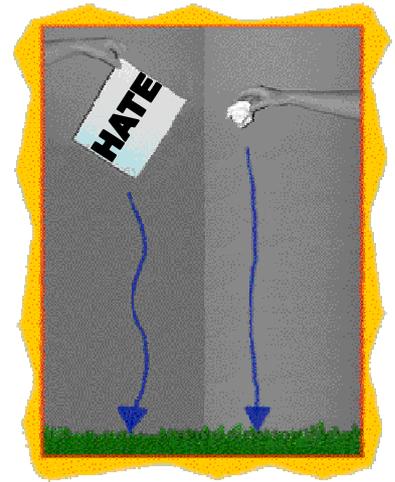
Sin is used 430 times in both the Old and New Testaments and includes both Jews and Gentiles.

To use the word sin is important because, unlike ignorance or chance, it involves **some degree of choice, intention, and responsibility**. Answers for sin and evil lie outside the sphere of education; we are talking moral responsibility which does not resolve itself by more learning.

How thankful I am that Father God has made provision for all of these in the Person of His Son. God forgives because it is His Nature. This is why the redemptive plan was executed in the Person of Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:19**).

The only part of the **Lord's Prayer** that Jesus took time and effort to more thoroughly explain was the urgent need for us to understand the necessity of forgiveness.

Matthew 6:14-15 *"14 For if you forgive people their trespasses [their reckless and willful sins, leaving them, letting them go, and giving up resentment], your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
15 But if you do not forgive others their trespasses [their reckless and willful sins, leaving them, letting them go, and giving up resentment], neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses."*



When we receive forgiveness from the Father but **refuse, withhold, or fail to give it to others**, we may find ourselves in trouble with the Father. Many of us have serious difficulty forgiving.

People do us wrong and we simply do not want to forgive them, yet we wrong others and then expect them to forgive us. We consciously jeopardize our journey toward intimacy when we refuse to forgive.

Our **stubbornness** causes us to fail to reveal Father's hidden attributes to others and to misrepresent Him to those who are seeking to know Him. This we do much in the same way as Moses striking the rock in anger, misrepresenting the Father Whom we serve.

When Israel failed God miserably (**Numbers 14**), God comes on the scene, and though He was slow to anger, He was quite displeased because the Israelites disfigured His Glory and contaminated everything He intended the nations to see.

Then God swore an oath:

Numbers 14:21 *"21 But truly as I live and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord,"*

It is inevitable that the hidden attributes of His Glory are going to be revealed in the earth. This declaration describes and defines God's unchangeable purpose in the earth.

When people are able to see through us a Father who is **compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, merciful, truthful, faithful, and forgiving**, their lives will change. This is and will be the source of society's renewal.

When I rediscovered God as a Father, I stopped measuring all fatherhood by an earthly standard.



After experiencing such rejection from my earthly father, I found myself wanting to know how to love and enjoy unlimited access to my Heavenly Father.

Having an intimate relationship with Father God is what the Agape Road is all about.

He made this clear when He instructs us to love Him *“with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength”* (**Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:30**).

The Father is compassionate to you, gracious, slow to anger, merciful, truthful, faithful and forgiving.

He will always display those attributes towards you unconditionally. God will not command you to do anything that He is not willing to do for you.

If God says: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength”* – then that is the way He loves you!

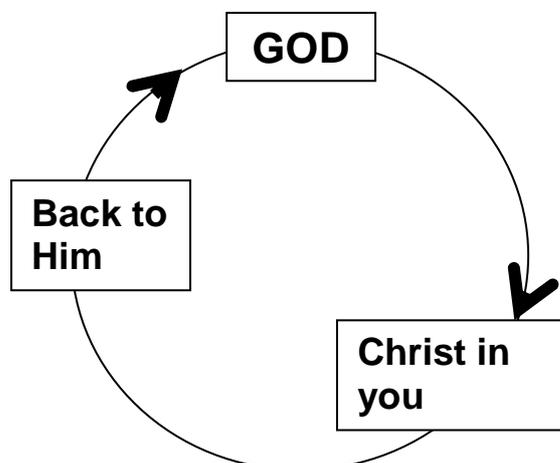
God will never ask us to do anything that actually originates in us. It’s impossible for you to love God unless He has loved you first. Everything comes down from the Father of Lights in whom there is no shadow and no variation of turning.

He never changes His mind about anything. God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Rom. 11:35-36 *“35 Or who has first given God anything that he might be paid back or that he could claim a recompense?
36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. [For all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and to end in Him.] To Him be glory forever! Amen (so be it).”*

God plans to give you the very thing He wants from you.

From Him – through Him (Christ in you) – to Him:



How many of you have given your children money to buy you a birthday present? Where do you get that from?

It is in your DNA! What God wants from you, He plans to give you first.

Every command of God is preceded by a gift. He seeks to be our Source for every experience with Him that He plans for us.

God looks you in the eye and says: *"I know the plans I have for you, plans for your future and for your welfare. Not for you calamity but for you future – to give you a future and a hope."*

Hope = confident expectation.

God is the Source for you and He wants to release to you everything you need to live in Christ. He does not give love as a gift. He gives Himself. He is the Gift of Love.

He gives to us as a gift His own Presence, Nature, Character that He bestows upon us.

Christ, who lives in us allows us to have all that God has for us in the Name and for the sake of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is the manifestation of Agape love that proceeds from the Father to the Son in each of us.

We have a **three-fold cord** of Agape in our lives that makes the bond we have with the Father unbreakable.

Love = a longing and an intention towards another person.

God's Agape creates a longing and an intention in us towards Himself. His love draws us to Him. When you get touched by the love of God, you have to love Him. He loves the invitation of love.

He is always making the first move. God's making a move on you!!

The love of God is not put off by failure, because God is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters. He is not embarrassed by us. He adores us! His love absorbs failure and keeps on loving regardless.

God is not obsessed by sin. When He looks at you, He does not see sin if you are hidden in Christ.

God has dealt with sin once and for all. When He was hanging on the Cross, all your sins were in the future. Your sin, past, present and future has been dealt with once and for all.



Jesus is not going to die again. When God looks at you, He does not see what is wrong. He sees what is missing out of your experience of Jesus.

God is concerned about sin in the world, but not in you.

When you have come to Christ and confessed Him as Lord and Saviour, He puts you into Jesus at that point and the Father looks at you through the Son.

It means He is happy and satisfied by the sacrifice of Jesus. He sees you complete in Christ. He looks at what is missing in your current experience of Jesus and He intends to supply that.

When the Holy Spirit convicts us of something wrong in our lives, He always has a gift. It's an endless cycle of relationship.

You need to get away from condemnation because there isn't any.

For example: the woman caught in adultery (**John 8:4-11**).

When Jesus is faced with having to make a judgment, He started writing on the ground. After everyone had left, He asked the woman: *"Is there anyone who condemns you?"*

She said: *"No"*

He then said: *"I don't condemn you either."*

No pit is too deep – then God is deeper still!

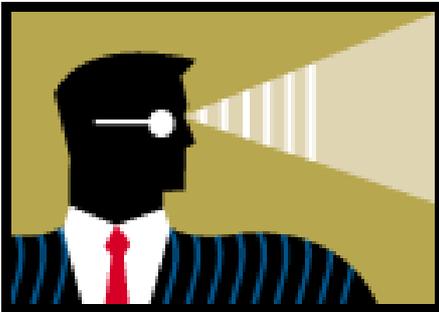


PART B: JESUS, REVEALER OF GOD'S GLORY

One of the most beautiful, unfolding insights into Christology is Jesus coming as Agape Incarnate for the express purpose of **introducing us to the Father**

John 1:14 "14 And the **Word (Christ) became flesh** (human, incarnate) and tabernacled (fixed His tent of flesh, lived awhile) among us; and we [actually] saw His glory (His honor, His majesty), such glory as an **only begotten son receives from his father**, full of grace (favor, loving-kindness) and truth."

Because the incarnation was for the sole purpose of allowing us to see what God was like, when Jesus said:



"If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father" (John 14:9), we know that **what Jesus really came to do was reveal His Father to a hurting world.**

He was "*the radiance of His glory, the exact representation of His character*" (Hebrews 1:3).



A **paradigm shift** is needed in the definition of the word love. In order to understand the full meaning of the word, we need to understand that love has several "faces." Determining exactly which type or definition of love we are dealing with is important.

Four Faces of Love

The Greek language, from which our English New Testament was translated, has several words for "love" while the English language has only one.

We use the same word when we say "I love God" and "I love my dog," but they certainly do not have the same depth of meaning.



While we will be focusing on Eros and Agape in this study, it is important that we have a basic understanding of each of the Greek words for love: **Storgos, Phileo, Agape, and Eros.**

1) Storgos

The essential meaning of **Storgos** or **Astorgos** (Strong's #724 / #845) is without love, heartless, or without family or natural affection.

It speaks of the hardening and loss of affection toward our kin or relations. It is used twice in the New Testament, both in negative connotations.

In **Romans 1:31**, the word "unloving" is used, implying that the natural bond a mother has for her children has been lost or destroyed.

This can be seen in our day in the increase of abortion to avoid personal inconvenience. In **2 Timothy 3:3** it is used to describe a degenerating society.



2 Timothy 3:3 "3 [They will be] **without natural [human] affection** (callous and inhuman), relentless (admitting of no truce or appeasement); [they will be] slanderers (false accusers, troublemakers), intemperate **and loose in morals and conduct, uncontrolled and fierce, haters of good.**"

2) Phileo

The essential meaning of Phileo (Strong's #5387 / #5384) is "tender affection."

It is a love that is reciprocal, expressing friendship, trust, and openness.

Phileo is friendship moved by qualities inherent in the one loved.

The word is used most remarkably of Father and Son in **John 3:35 and 5:20**.

Phileo is essentially reciprocal – I love you because you love me. **John 12:25** states that "he who loves (Phileo) his life loses it."

To love (Phileo) life from an undue desire to preserve it, forgetful of the real object of living, causes us to lose our life.

To love (Agapao) life as used in **1 Peter 3:10**, is to explore with confidence and risk the true interests of living. Here the word Phileo would be quite inappropriate.



3) Agape

God is Agape

1 John 4:16 “16 And we know (understand, recognize, are conscious of, by observation and by experience) and believe (adhere to and put faith in and rely on) the love God cherishes for us. **God is love, and he who dwells and continues in love dwells and continues in God, and God dwells and continues in him.**”

The essential meaning of Agape (Strong's #25) is an exercise of the Divine Will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the Nature of God Himself (**Deuteronomy 7:7-8**).



It is God's absolute by which He measures all things (**Acts 17:31**). It is ultimate reality. It is used both as a noun and a verb.

Agape does not love because of **beauty** or **value** discovered; it is a love that comes out of His own Nature.

While Phileo is give-and-take, Agape always reveals God's own Character. Agape, when understood, quickly reveals our need for Christ, who is Agape Incarnate.

Agape unfolds in three progressive steps:

1. Love God with all of my heart, soul, mind, and strength (**Mark 12:30**).
2. Love myself because God loves me (**Matthew 22:39; Romans 5:8**). He has given me **value** and **worth** by pouring His Own love into me while I was yet a sinner.
3. **Love others**, even our enemies, in the same manner and degree that He loved us and gave Himself for us (**Matthew 5:43-48**). This is God's love replicated in His own.



In this chapter we will look at what happens when we fail to understand in our mind and grow in our capacity to love in all three of these ways.

4) Eros

Eros is a Greek word, but it is not used in the New Testament because of its sexual corruption.

The essential meaning of Eros is the desire or intention to **possess, acquire, or control**.

Eros does not seek to be accepted by its object, but to gain possession of it.

Eros has an appetite or yearning desire that is aroused by the attractive qualities of its object.

Eros, in Greek philosophy, came to mean that which is loved for the purpose of personal satisfaction. It is from this posture that the word Eros took on its sexual and ultimately pornographic connotation.

The word is not primarily sexual, but has more to do with living for my own personal advantage.

The Greek word "evil" in many places in the New Testament is "porneia" (Strong's #4190) where we get the word pornography. Essentially "porneia" is a love which is bought and sold. This is no love at all.

"Porne" is the link that joins Eros and original sin. Moffatt translates "porne", the King James word for 'evil', as 'selfishness'.

Matthew 6:23 *"23 But if your eye is unsound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the very light in you [your conscience] is darkened, how dense is that darkness!"*

Because the New Testament uses "porne" for its description of evil, it is saying something like, *"all evil is love for God that has been twisted and sold for something else."* Paul explained evil as fallen man *"exchanging God's glory"* for his or her own desires (**Romans 1:23**).

Love that has personal reward and self-satisfaction as its motive (**Philippians 2:21**) has the tendency and capacity to annul the Agape of God.

Self-will: that which is self-pleasing, is the negation of love to God.

If my love is twisted, everything is twisted. This takes us to the centre of all Christian truth, namely that our love for God must be accompanied by renunciation of our old self.

Eros is self-referential, causing us to lose the central appeal of Jesus Christ to *"take up your cross and follow Me"* (**Matthew 16:24**).



The loss of Agape and its demand for self-renunciation leads us to "Cross-less Christianity"

Philippians 3:18 "18 For there are many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, who walk (live) as enemies of the cross of Christ (the Anointed One)."

Christianity, apart from the Cross of Christ, has reappeared frequently in Church history.

Eros is the mother of all sins. It can be recognized because it is always self-referential. It is not only **self-centred**, but it becomes **self-consuming**, turning increasingly inward upon itself in a tighter and tighter spiral.

A very good example of the manifestation of Eros love is actually a serpent consuming its own tail. It is a highly refined form of self-interest and self-seeking. It is a love that has become so distorted that its only purpose is to meet its own needs.



When Jesus referred to religion that turned us in upon ourselves,

He said, "how great is that darkness" (**Matthew 6:22-23**).

He was talking about **selfishness** which leads to a form of darkness that has deadening results.

Jesus challenged the deadening effect of Eros-motivated religion with these words,

Matthew 13:16 "16 But blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied) are your eyes because they do see, and your ears because they do hear."

If that light reverts to darkness, we are then like the serpent who is eating his own tail.

The nature of evil is selling or sharing our love that belongs to God in an illegal manner.

God jealously asks for all our love-heart, soul, mind, and strength-to the limit of our capacity because He knows it is the one force that releases us from ourselves and exerts the capacity to keep us from evil. We do, indeed, become what we love.

We are faced with the unchangeable truth that no one can set us free from that which we still love-especially an illegal love for ourselves!

Three Arrows:

If you follow Agape to its fullest extreme, you find God. God is not faith or hope; **God is love (Agape).**

If you take Eros out to its full end, you come to Satan who wants to **possess, acquire, and control.** The father of lies passed the whole package of evil desires on to us when Adam and Eve sinned against God.

Redemption has to do with God straightening what was bent.

Understanding this has helped us to interpret both the Old and New Testaments and has led us to three very interesting truths:

- 1) There is no evil in the world other than Eros manifested as selfishness.
- 2) There is no good in the world other than Agape as God's Own Person revealed.
- 3) All of life can be reduced to three arrows: straight, crooked, or a mixture of the hook and arrow.



Eros is illustrated by a **bent arrow or hook** because it is always self-referential, turning back upon itself.



Eros is the cause and the result of the original fall, causing us to **run, hide, and shift blame.** When sin entered the world, the effect was that the very nature and centre of our being became self-serving and was changed from God to ourselves.

Eros can be **overtly worldly or very religious.** This hook can be blatant or very subtle.

Agape is illustrated by a **straight arrow.**



If you take Agape out to its full end, you arrive at the Seven Agape Arrow Hidden Attributes of God's own Nature -His DNA.

Again, God is not faith or hope; **He is love.** Unfortunately the word love has semantically lost its meaning. With four different Greek words, meaning 'love', we have to decide what we mean when we say, "I love you."

Most of us are a **mixture** of the **hook and the arrow**, rather than a full-blown representation of one or the other.



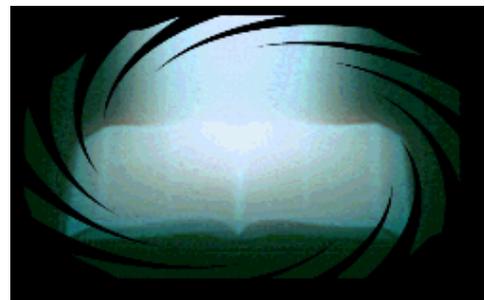
Jeremiah 15:19 “19 Therefore thus says the Lord [to Jeremiah]: **If you return** [and give up this **mistaken tone of distrust and despair**], **then I will give you again a settled place of quiet and safety, and you will be My minister; and if you separate the precious from the vile** [cleansing your own heart from unworthy and **unwarranted suspicions concerning God’s faithfulness**], **you shall be My mouthpiece.** [But do not yield to them.] Let them return to you—not you to [the people].”

It talks about extracting the precious from the worthless.

The dividing of soul and spirit is a Biblical description of straightening the hook



Hebrews 4:12 “12 For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any **two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line** of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], **exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging** the very thoughts and purposes of the heart.”



This is not easy. The separation is delicate and can be very painful. We cannot and must not attempt this separation in ourselves or for someone else.

The Father has reserved the separation and pruning process for Himself. All we have to do is be willing to be brought to maturity in Agape.

As we look around, we become increasingly aware of the hooks existing in all sorts of relationships-friendships, marriage, business arrangements, social life, and Christian fellowship.



If we are not careful, we can become so cynical that we think everyone who approaches us has a hook. We become suspicious thinking, "**What are they after? Why are they saying that?**"

Love in the Church infected by Eros:

It is an arrow with a hook welded onto the end. I am now doing things in the Name of Jesus but still hoping to get something out of it, e.g. Ananias and Saphira.

Eros causes us to betray people – like Judas. For three years he walked with Jesus.

Eros is all about **image**.

People go to church to see what they can get out of it instead of contributing.

Many churches are into advertising to draw the people – “we have the best children’s ministry, worship team, etc.” They are saying that self-interest is okay!

Like Jesus, we endure the Cross with the joy that is placed before us.



Eros is a **virus** that can mutate and it becomes more resistant to the Truth. One act of repentance and submission will not kill it. If you get born-again but refuse to be disciplined properly, it can be a disaster! You will not stand when trials and tribulations come your way.

If the Eros virus is not destroyed, your gifts and talents when used in the church and will be infected by the Eros virus as it mutates and re-immerses in religious clothes quoting Bible verses. This we call a **Pharisee!** Their relationship with God was in their heads, not 18 inches lower in their hearts, nor in their deeds.

Many churches today are run on secular leadership principles.

We find a good example of a First Century Church Leader – Diotrephes who has been corrupted by the Eros virus. In fact he is being driven by unbridled Eros!

3 John 9-11 “9 I have written briefly to the church; but Diotrephes, who likes to take the lead among them and put himself first, does not acknowledge my authority and **refuses** to accept my suggestions or to listen to me.
10 So when I arrive, I will call attention to what he is doing, **his boiling over and casting malicious reflections** upon us with **insinuating language**. And not satisfied with that, **he refuses to receive and welcome the [missionary] brethren himself, and also interferes** with and forbids those who would welcome them, and **tries to expel** (excommunicate) them from the church.
11 Beloved, **do not imitate evil, but imitate good**. He who does good is of God; he who does evil has not seen (discerned or experienced) God [has enjoyed no vision of Him and does not know Him at all].”

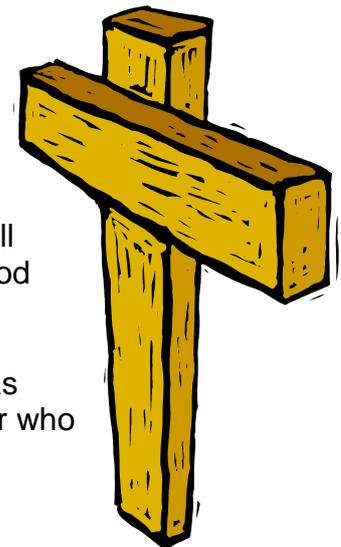
The Pharisees stole people’s dreams, put them under a religious system / a yoke that would not allow them to develop a relationship with God for themselves and by themselves.

Why did Jesus not preach His life message (**Is. 61**) during the Sermon on the Mount? All the people sitting in front of Him were trapped in a religious system which was keeping them from becoming all that God wanted them to be.

James 3:13-18 “13 *Who is there among you who is wise and intelligent? Then let him by his noble living show forth his [good] works with the [unobtrusive] humility [which is the proper attribute] of true wisdom.*
 14 *But if you have bitter jealousy (envy) and contention (rivalry, selfish ambition) in your hearts, do not pride yourselves on it and thus be in defiance of and false to the Truth.*
 15 *This [superficial] wisdom is not such as comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual (animal), even devilish (demoniacal).*
 16 *For wherever there is jealousy (envy) and contention (rivalry and selfish ambition), there will also be confusion (unrest, disharmony, rebellion) and all sorts of evil and vile practices.*
 17 *But the wisdom from above is first of all pure (undefiled); then it is peace-loving, courteous (considerate, gentle). [It is willing to] yield to reason, full of compassion and good fruits; it is wholehearted and straightforward, impartial and unfeigned (free from doubts, wavering, and insincerity).*
 18 **And the harvest of righteousness** (of conformity to God’s will in thought and deed) **is [the fruit of the seed] sown in peace** by those who work for and make peace [in themselves and in others, that peace which means concord, agreement, and harmony between individuals, with undisturbedness, in a peaceful mind free from fears and agitating passions and moral conflicts].”

We should be going to Church to make a contribution.

We should go to Church to worship the Lord – to embrace the Cross – seek first the Kingdom – if you want God to rule in your life.



God also wants to kill your flesh – the old man. If we don’t kill Eros, we will never discover the Glory and Majesty of who God really is.

Jesus loved Judas and called him friend, even knowing Judas would betray Him. Jesus loved him with Agape love – not for who he was (a betrayer) but for who Jesus was.

Nature of Original Sin:

The following presumptive statements may help us better understand the nature of original sin:

1. An evil ground of being exists in my nature as seen in

Romans 7:20, " 20 *Now if I do what I do not desire to do, it is no longer I doing it [it is not myself that acts], but the sin [principle] which dwells within me [fixed and operating in my soul]."*

2. Eros exists in my will, mind, and emotions affecting my consciousness, thinking, decisions, feelings, and plans. **Everything I think and do is self-referential.**



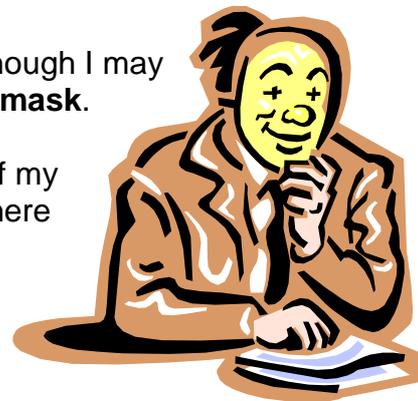
3. Eros is forerunner to any choice or act. It is a source or motivation of the act or choice itself.

4. Eros permeates my person and was there before any assignable moment in time.

5. Eros is a **mystery** difficult to understand, but alive and active nonetheless. It is implicit **rebellion** which produces **real guilt**.

6. Eros is an aspect of my true personality even though I may try to hide my humanly-created personality with a **mask**.

7. Eros is encompassing, it affects every aspect of my being. **It is at the centre of my person**, so that there is nothing deeper within me that will enable me to conquer or change it.



8. **I am Eros**; I do not merely "do" Eros.

We have all created a **personality** or a **mask** for others to see while the real person is permeated with the **self-referential hook**.

Lack of Capacity:

When we experience the lack of capacity to love God, others, and ourselves, we are presented with two choices:

1. Fake it.

This is stated in **Romans 12:9**, "*let Agape be without hypocrisy.*" Hypocritical, religious love has destroyed many in the Body of Christ, embarrassing God and effectively injuring His reputation.



2. Face it.

Take an honest look at our lack of ability to love God, ourselves, and others on command as God instructs us. This reveals our need for Christ, Who alone can increase our capacity.

Honestly **admitting this lack**, without condemnation or guilt (**John 13:34-35**), puts us on the Agape Road, so that our capacity to love as God loves can be increased, allowing Agape to be perfected in us.

The word Agape has to do with the Nature of God.

1 John 4:8 says, "*God is Agape.*" God is not only the Origin of the Command to love; He is also the Source to release that love.

He does not give love as a gift; He gives Himself because He is the Source of Agape. The Son is the begotten Agape Incarnate.

The Holy Spirit is the manifestation of Agape proceeding from the Father and the Son. Love, Biblically understood, is a longing and intention toward another person, object, or experience.

God's Agape creates a longing and intention toward Himself. He is the One who retains the initiative.

Agape does not need to be discovered or observed.

- It **absorbs** our own failure as well as the failure of others;
- it **seeks** to be there in someone's need or crisis;
- it **depends** upon truth and faithfulness;
- it **functions** as a team in mutuality; it seeks to **build up, release, and encourage**.

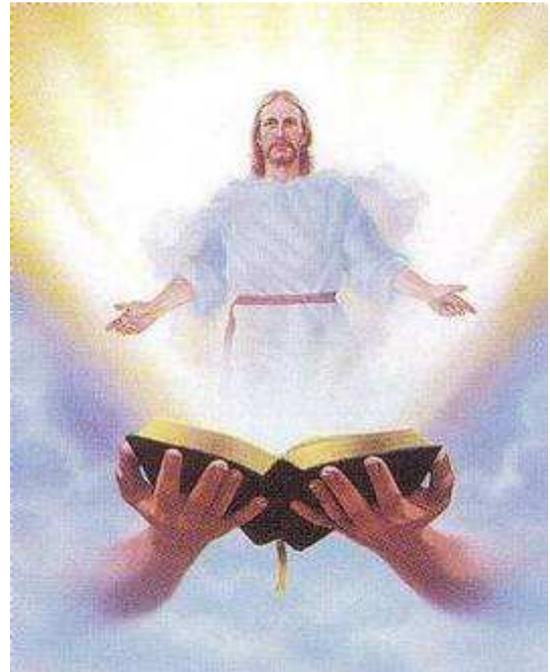
Agape is an inner authority that is not controlling or possessive. One cannot receive God's command to love and remain unchanged.

In **1 Corinthians 13:4-7** (Message) Agape is personified. Agape is the character traits of Jesus (**Hebrews 1:3**).



These are the **Seven Hidden Attributes** of God's Person, now made Incarnate-the Word made Flesh:

**Love never gives up.
 Love cares more for others than for self.
 Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.
 Love doesn't strut,
 Doesn't have a swelled head,
 Doesn't force itself on others,
 Isn't always "me first,"
 Doesn't fly off the handle,
 Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,
 Doesn't revel when others grovel,
 Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,
 Puts up with anything,
 Trusts God always,
 Always looks for the best,
 Never looks back,
 But keeps going to the end.
 Love never dies.**



1 Corinthians 13 compared to Exodus 34:

Patient	Slow to anger
Kind	Gracious
Not jealous	Merciful
Does not brag	Truth
Is not arrogant	Truth
Does not act unbecomingly	Gracious
Does not seek its own	Compassion
Is not provoked	Slow to anger
No account of wrong suffered	Forgiveness
Not rejoice in unrighteousness	Truth
Bears all things	Faithfulness
Believes all things	Faithfulness
Hopes all things	Faithfulness
Endures all things	Faithfulness
Love never fails	Faithfulness

Eros and Forgiveness:

Eros, by its very nature, refuses to forgive unless it is for self-referential purposes.

God, on the other hand, is always insisting that we forgive others without qualification.



Matthew 6:14-15 "14 For if you forgive people their trespasses [their reckless and willful sins, leaving them, letting them go, and giving up resentment], your **heavenly Father will also forgive you.**
15 But if you do not forgive others their trespasses [their reckless and willful sins, leaving them, letting them go, and giving up resentment], neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses."

Remember, one of the easiest ways to get in trouble with God is to receive forgiveness but refuse or fail to give it.

To receive mercy and fail or refuse to give it because it is personally demanding and disruptive to our comfort level, is what lay behind our Lord's instruction, "*I desire mercy and not sacrifice*" (**Matthew 12:7**).

Can you see the refusal to give needed forgiveness as a clear expression of an Eros payoff? It feels good to reminisce on how badly we were treated.

"Forgive you and lose the joy of revenge? Never!"

Eros leads to Lawlessness:

When Eros is present it brings a viral infection of lies, bitterness, jealousy, etc.

Eros can be accompanied by demonic power because it brings a wisdom that is not from Heaven.

Eros is actually **lawlessness**.

Lawlessness is the failure or refusal to bring my entire personality, including my love and affection, into conformity with Jesus.

Eros-thinking always seeks exceptions to the Cross. It will exploit every personal advantage. It is amazingly clever at using Bible verses to justify or make excuses for itself.

Eros is **competitive** and **self-promoting**. It takes credit for itself by taking ideas and suggestions from other people. It manipulates things – it can out-talk and out-smart people.

Lawlessness in the Old Testament and New Testament is often translated as INIQUITY.

Iniquity is a power, a force or a spirit that must be purged, not forgiven. You have to die to it!

CONTRAST	
EROS	AGAPE
<p>2 Tim. 3:2-5 “2 For people will be lovers of self and [utterly] self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate [greedy] desire for wealth, proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters. They will be abusive (blasphemous, scoffing), disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy and profane.</p> <p>3 [They will be] without natural [human] affection (callous and inhuman), relentless (admitting of no truce or appeasement); [they will be] slanderers (false accusers, troublemakers), intemperate and loose in morals and conduct, uncontrolled and fierce, haters of good.</p> <p>4 [They will be] treacherous [betrayers], rash, [and] inflated with self-conceit. [They will be] lovers of sensual pleasures and vain amusements more than and rather than lovers of God.</p> <p>5 For [although] they hold a form of piety (true religion), they deny and reject and are strangers to the power of it [their conduct belies the genuineness of their profession]. Avoid [all] such people [turn away from them].”</p>	<p>Matt. 7:21-23 “21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father Who is in heaven.</p> <p>22 Many will say to Me on that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name and driven out demons in Your name and done many mighty works in Your name?</p> <p>23 And then I will say to them openly (publicly), I never knew you; depart from Me, you who act wickedly [disregarding My commands].”</p>

People with the **Eros virus** will give you spiritual advice but don't actually take it for themselves.

Eros' outward form is situational.

For example: PEACE

Most people's idea of peace is actually situational – when the situation changes, I'll feel better about it. I should be feeling good / positive in the midst of all things that happen to me.

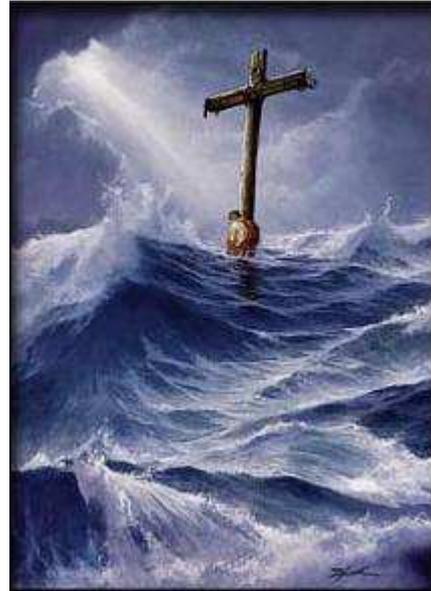
Real peace does not wait until the situation gets resolved.

Peace comes in the midst of the crisis. We seldom grow in maturity to react like this.

So, when some trials / tribulation occur we want to believe it's the enemy. What if it's the Lord doing something?

Can you tell the difference between the times:

- where God is nailing something to the Cross in you,
- adversity,
- sowing what you're reaping,
- spiritual warfare?



These are all present in our lives at one time or another.

When God start to deal with a character attribute in us, we want to take authority over it instead of moving into humbleness and brokenness!

Adversity is training for reigning – how to stand when things are not working. How to press in when its not happening for you. How to stand and fight in God – how to just sit and rest in God.

We need to become very sensitive to the Holy Spirit to find out what is really going on when we are going through trials and tribulations. (See a more detailed study in Concealed and Loved – Walking in the Presence of God available from Kanaan Ministries)



Every time the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin, He has a gift for you – ALWAYS.

It's an exchange. *"Give me your anger, I'll give you My peace."*

Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the deeds of the flesh!

When you are walking in the Spirit you may not just do the things you please. When you justify Eros you actually take sides against the Holy Spirit.

[Finding out what real Agape love looks and feels like – read the **Beatitudes in Luke 6.**]

Eros love is always waiting for a **return**. Agape love does not even expect anything in return.

Real love loves for the sheer sake of loving! That is the Nature of God.

How do you know if your love for God is not an **Eros and Agape mixture**?

1 John 4:20 *“20 If anyone says, I love God, and hates (detests, abominates) his brother [in Christ], he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, Whom he has not seen.”*

If you cannot / do not love your brother / sister for whatever reason, you have mixed seed!

The Church of Ephesus was a vibrant, strong church, but in Revelations 2 the angel of the Lord comes to them and says *“you have left your first love”*. You have fallen away from Agape!

Solution: Remember the place where love was more glorious amongst you. Repent, change your current thinking about love and start to be a contribution to other people around you.

Do the deeds you did at first. Turn to loving out of the Nature and Character of God.

The problem with us is that we send out an arrow expecting it to come back with something!

Truth: When I love with no thought of anything coming back to me, it comes back anyway!

Why? Because the spiritual principle says: *“Give, and it shall be give to you.”* God will give you His love in return.

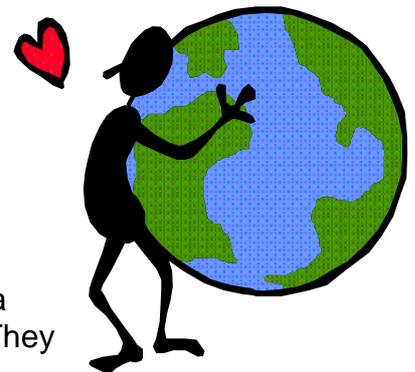
There is nothing I can do that could make God love me more or less! God loves because it's His Nature to love! He seeks to love each one of us in a very unique way!

We will have to start to love the way God loves otherwise we will not be able to impact our world at all.

Our love must not be **situational** or **conditional** or **performance** based.

The Prodigal son and the older brother both did not have a relationship with their father. Neither valued the Father. They both got it wrong!

Whether you are religious and in the house or out there eating pigs food, the revelation can be the same.



Our countries are ruled by crime and evil and the root of it is **selfishness**. We need to arise as the Bride and live in a way that portrays a truthful reflection of who God really, really is. We must start to demonstrate a love that is not of this world – the Kingdom of Heaven.



We need to bring down into earth that which is the Kingdom and to stop offering up to the Kingdom that which we have.

Bring **down** on earth as it is in Heaven.

Questions:

What is it that you believe about God that makes you think that He is not present with you?

What is it that you believe about yourself that makes you think you are not worthy of the presence of God unless some prophet lays hands on you?

Jesus said: *“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

Are you a **consumer** or a **contribution** with regards to love?

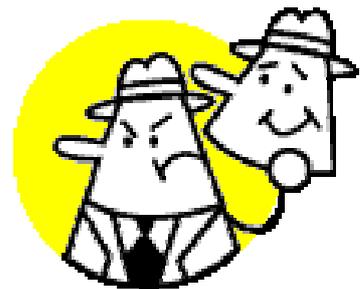
Review:

A critical thing we need right now is to be honest with ourselves as to: *“Where I am?”*

You have to step out from behind your mask.

Take a moment to think of how you have loved the people around you?

Be honest about your current level of selfishness.



To be more unselfish towards someone, you cannot wait for them to change. It starts with you first.

If there are areas in your life that you know that are out of control regarding Eros and selfish love, you need to repent!

Change your thinking about God.

If the way that you’re thinking has brought you to a place that you don’t like – **CHANGE YOUR THINKING!**

We need to re-enter the process of sanctification so that our life is expressed in and through Christ, not ourselves.

Change the way you see yourself and people around you so that you are able to receive from the Father what He wishes you to give away.

God seeks first to love you unconditionally so that you in turn can become completely delighted in how astonishing well you are loved.

Seek to understand how amazingly God loves you!

God does not give you love to give to others. He loves you outrageously for **your own sake**. And the natural outcome of that is that you become open to the possibilities of loving as you have been loved.

Therefore, love is not a ministry – it's a LIFESTYLE!

The Holy Spirit's job is to make you get it! To get it until it radically changes your whole personality – the way you think, speak, stand, etc.

"I am His Beloved son / daughter in whom He is well-pleased!"

Jesus said *"I am the Truth."* Truth is a person.

When you know the Truth of His love for you it makes you free from all the things that you are not.

That's the Glory of being in Christ. **Mercy** and **Truth** have met together, **Righteousness** and **Peace** have kissed each other in your life and mine! The Father does not beat us up with the Truth. He extends the **Truth in Mercy** so that you can be adjusted by it and you can discover His Nature towards you as part of the lesson.

We bear witness to the Truth of what He's really, really like. The Truth is always accompanied by Grace, Mercy, Love, Goodness, Righteousness, etc.

In **Matt. 16** Jesus asks His disciples, *"Whom do the people say that I am."* He hears four distorted answers.

1. Some say that You are John the Baptist.
2. Some say Elijah
3. or Elisha
4. or one of the prophets.

"But who do YOU say that I am?"



What you think about God is the single-most important thing in the world. There is NOTHING more important than that! What you think about God is EVERYTHING!!

It will drive everything in your life. It is the biggest question you will ever answer in your life!

WHO IS GOD FOR YOU?

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

Because on that revelation in your heart, He will build the Church through you.

The Church is built on an individual and collective revelation of who God really, really is.

If we don't get it ourselves, the world isn't going to get it either! The way we live is profoundly shaped by our picture of God.

Are you a **sinner** who **struggles** to love God?
Or are you a **lover** of God who **struggles** with **sin**?

YOUR IDENTITY:

WHO ARE YOU?

The more wrong your view is of God, the more religious and legalistic you will become.

The truth about God's essential Nature will set us free to have incredible experiences of and with Him. His **manifest Presence** is your right because you are in Christ. Above the Truth is His Faithfulness! God loves to be faithful!



Childhood "Tapes":

Childhood "tapes" are **memories** of events from childhood that continue to **play** in our minds and **control our behaviour** long after we have reached adulthood.



They are **strongholds, untruths, or forms of deception** that we hold in a fortified place of defence within our mind.

When childhood "tapes" play, **unexpected emotions** from past hurts are released. We may know intellectually that they are no longer valid, but they still have the **power** to control us.

These **strongholds** stem from our failure to understand the power of Eros and result in self-defeating lifestyles such as **manipulation, passive/apathetic, dependent, hostile, sexually seductive, controlling, handicapped/entitlement, despair, power-seeker, entertainer/joker, irresponsible dreamer, and the ever-present workaholic.**

If we think about it, each of these is severely self-referential: They become **Eros prisons** in our life with **bars stronger than iron**. The good news is that the mental and emotional strongholds of both **pain** and **pleasure** that seek to usurp the Lordship of Jesus in our lives **can be** broken, but it takes more than psychological excavation. Someone observed that childhood is that time we spend the rest of our lives getting over.



The "tapes" of childhood can also be self-defeating. They play in our ears in such a way that they **control our behaviour**.

My father's rejection of me as a young teenager was a "tape" that has played back in my mind for years.

These "tapes" are autonomic in nature and are usually not consciously chosen, but they have the ability to effectively **displace our will and choice in setting our affection on loved ones or even the Lord.**

They are called *hedonic* responses because they seek to **motivate us** toward **preservation of our pleasure** and **avoid further pain by running, hiding, and shifting blame**. Running from pain and ultimate reality is the name of the game in our western society.

Agapé effectively heals us from our childhood "tapes". Agape at the centre of our being exposes all our Eros crazies, restricting or containing that illegal desire from being the centre of attention.

This whole bundle of emotional mixture is then healed by Agapé love, effectively stripping temptation of its strength and power.



PART C: THE SEVEN GIANTS: THE REAL CAUSE OF FAILURE

God led the people of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt to the border of the Promised Land. Upon their arrival at the border, Moses sent 12 spies into the land to explore it and report back to him.

Joshua and Caleb were the only two who, came back with a report that the land could be taken. The others reported how terrified they felt when they saw the giants who lived in the land and how they made them feel like grasshoppers.

Because the people received the bad report rather than abide in God's promise, He refused to allow the older generation to enter the land (**Deuteronomy 1:35**).



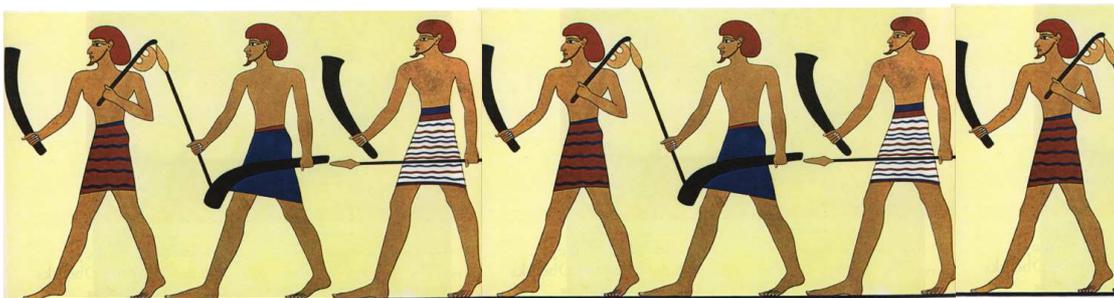
In God's displeasure, their journey became cyclical, wandering around the same mountain in the wilderness for 40 years until the older generation perished.

In order to enjoy the land of milk and honey, they were prepared to milk the cows and fight the bees, but **facing the giants was another matter**. The giants served to obstruct the Israelites from entering into the land God had promised them.



Deuteronomy 7:1 *"1 WHEN THE Lord your God brings you into the land which you are entering to possess and has plucked away many nations before you, the **Hittites**, the **Girgashites**, the **Amorites**, the **Canaanites**, the **Perizzites**, the **Hivites**, and the **Jebusites**, seven nations greater and mightier than you,"*

These literal giants, whose job was to keep Israel out of the Promised Land, were the **shadow or type** of the **internal and spiritual giants** that oppose us from entering the Land of Promises.



The Seven Giants we deal with today are:

1. Look Good
2. Feel Good
3. Be Right
4. Stay in Control
5. Hidden Agenda
6. Personal Advantage
7. Remain Undisturbed

James 4:1-5 “1 *WHAT LEADS to strife (discord and feuds) and how do conflicts (quarrels and fightings) originate among you? Do they not arise from your **sensual desires that are ever warring in your bodily members?***
2 *You are jealous and covet [what others have] and your desires go unfulfilled; [so] you become murderers. [To hate is to murder as far as your hearts are concerned.] You burn with **envy and anger** and are not able to obtain [the gratification, the contentment, and the happiness that you seek], so you fight and war. You do not have, because you do not ask.
3 [Or] you do ask [God for them] and yet fail to receive, because you ask with wrong purpose and **evil, selfish motives**. Your intention is [when you get what you desire] to spend it in **sensual pleasures**.
4 You [are like] unfaithful wives [having **illicit love affairs** with the world and breaking your marriage vow to God]! Do you not know that being the world’s friend is being God’s enemy? **So whoever chooses to be a friend of the world takes his stand as an enemy of God.**
5 Or do you suppose that the Scripture is speaking to no purpose that says, *The Spirit Whom He has caused to dwell in us yearns over us and He yearns for the Spirit [to be welcome] with a **jealous love?**”**

This Scripture gives us the most accurate insight into how these **Seven Giants** are able to confuse, hinder, put us to flight, and create desires and urges that cause conflict and injury within our marriages, families, friendships, and church relationships.

After many years of ministry, we have seen so much strife, discord, feuds, conflicts, quarrels, fighting, jealousy, coveting, envy, anger, etc.

The source was not demonic, but was the result of the presence of the Seven Giants. They are very effective in keeping us from entering and enjoying the milk and honey of the Land of Promises.

Each of these Seven Giants is really bad. They are exceedingly effective especially when we are forced to face them in various combinations.

The Seven Giants are pure Eros. They are the instruments by which the Eros shift is implemented in a life, a family, a church, and in an entire nation.



We are not discussing alcoholism, sexual misconduct, or other external sins; we are at the root of the problem - **ungoverned desire** identified as the Seven Giants.

It is **ungoverned desire that interrupts our abiding relationship and intimacy with God the Father, with our own spouse, our dearest friends, and with people in general.**

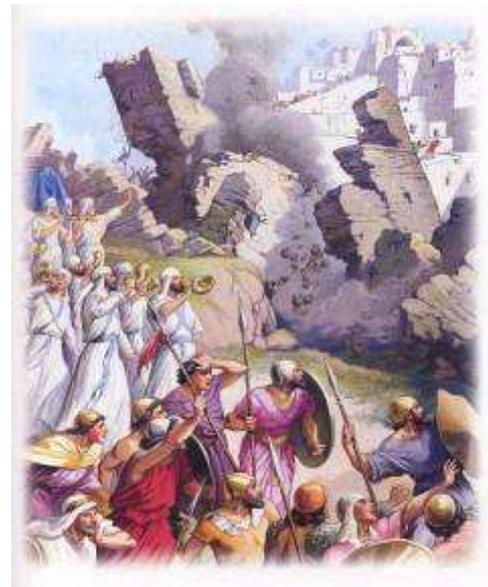
If we do not identify and clearly understand the manner in which these Seven Giants operate, we will be forced to remain in the **borderland of conflict**, like Moses, who saw into the Land but was not allowed the privilege of entering and enjoying it.



It does little good to cut off the head of one of the Seven Giants. The rapidity of their reproduction and their survival rate is like a deadly virus.

In an Eros climate, the Seven Giants can operate undiscovered for a lifetime, then suddenly manifest boldly and with great authority.

These Giants cannot be taught to behave, be domesticated, or disciplined so that they can pretend to do the will of God. They can't just be arrested or subdued; they must be exposed, disabled, and brought to death.



It is within the sphere of the Seven Giants that the satanic accuser escapes and hides from the "heel" of the woman (**Genesis 3:15**).

The Lord promises to show us how to expose and defeat these Giants so that we may live in the Land of Promise and receive our Kingdom inheritance.

Romans 8:37 "37 Yet amid all these things we are more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory through Him Who loved us."

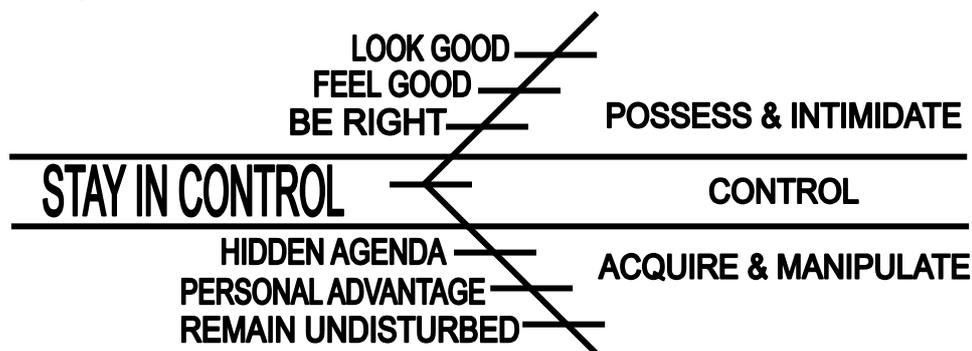


2 Peter 1:5-11 "5 For this very reason, adding your diligence [to the divine promises], **employ every effort in exercising your faith to develop virtue** (excellence, resolution, Christian energy), and in **[exercising] virtue** [develop] knowledge (intelligence),
6 And in **[exercising] knowledge** [develop] self-control, and in **[exercising] self-control** [develop] steadfastness (patience, endurance), and in **[exercising] steadfastness** [develop] godliness (piety),

7 And in **[exercising] godliness** [develop] brotherly affection, and in **[exercising] brotherly affection** [develop] **Christian love**.
 8 For as these qualities are yours and increasingly abound in you, they will keep [you] from **being idle** or **unfruitful** unto the [full personal] knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One).
 9 For whoever lacks these qualities is blind, [spiritually] shortsighted, seeing only what is near to him, and has become oblivious [to the fact] that he was cleansed from his old sins.
 10 Because of this, brethren, be all the more solicitous and eager to make sure (to ratify, to strengthen, to make steadfast) your calling and election; for if you do this, you will never stumble or fall.
 11 Thus there will be richly and abundantly **provided for you entry into the eternal kingdom** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

These Seven Giants can exist quietly and appear subdued, but they are nonetheless very resilient, invasive, and dominant.

Each of the Seven Giants functions in a synergistic manner, one adding strength and compulsion to the next.



They are deceptive and increasingly dangerous in their various groupings.

The kingpin **Stay in Control**, however, is the most dominant of all.

The first three Giants are motivations to **possess** and **intimidate**. When effectively exposed, the Giant of Control will begin to lose its strength.

The last three Giants are manifestations of the need to **manipulate** by **acquiring**. As we set our love upon God, His love fills our entire person.

As a result, we will find that each Giant, with its synergistic companions, begins to lose its grip, freeing us to love God and one another. This is the meaning of Agape perfected.

James says that there is no variation or shifting shadow in the Father of Lights (1:17).

The Lord has called us to freedom and intimacy with Him, but the Giants appear as darkness or shadows between our Father and ourselves.

Because of God's Covenantal Faithfulness, our relationship is still intact, but our quality of intimacy is affected.

When the Seven Giants exert their influence in our lives, we are tempted to leave the Agape Road.

Walking in light rather than in darkness exposes each of the Giants. Because God is Light and "*in Him there is no darkness at all*" (1 John 1:5), if we are walking in His Light, God will expose the Giants within us, not in guilt or condemnation, but lovingly in order to set us free.

God is Agape at all times and under all circumstances. He wants us to walk in His Light by responding to our neighbour, our enemy, the righteous, and the unrighteous (Matthew 5:43-48) in the same manner that He would respond.



Understanding the manner in which the Seven Giants reveal themselves and how they use the **Eros payoff** may be one insight that can save our spiritual life from irreparable damage.

Remember, it is not what comes at us, but what comes out of us that is most damaging.



When I realized that it was not Jesus' rest and His Kingdom but the Seven Giants that were effectively ruling my life and actions, I was shocked and bewildered.

Like many others, I was calling Him "*Lord, Lord,*" but due to forces of which I was not even aware, I discovered myself captured and effectively controlled by the **Seven Giants**.

It is critical that we understand the characteristics of each of them.

1. Look Good

Matthew 6:1 "*1 TAKE CARE not to do your good deeds publicly or before men, in order to be seen by them; otherwise you will have no reward [reserved for and awaiting you] with and from your Father Who is in heaven.*"

The **Look Good Giant** creates the irresolvable issue of **appearance** as opposed to reality.

It is absorbed in the shadow rather than the substance.



Look Good is not just concerned with outward appearance, but with creating a **reputation** that is not established in truth.

Look Good involves an improper or illegal search for originality, uniqueness: in dress, language, automobile, etc: Sometimes it is called "styling" with name **brand clothes** and **designer shoes**.



Don't underestimate the nature of this Giant; it will pay any price and exerts a tremendous amount of effort to preserve its image, especially in contrast to the Biblical view of living in reality.

People tend to explode or implode when so much effort is expended toward preserving their image. This Giant is a particular curse on our whole generation because people are more concerned with how they appear than who they are.

Pastors and Christian leaders are not immune to the **Look Good Giant**.

Pride and personal dignity (**1 Samuel 15:30**) becomes more important than deliverance from that which has captured us. Pride is everything.

This Giant is full of ambition, drive, vows, and promises that cause us to posture and position ourselves in order to keep up appearances.

Look Good wears a mask that includes misrepresentations, half-truths, and false impressions.

Matthew 10:33 says, " *33 But whoever denies and disowns Me before men, I also will deny and disown him before My Father Who is in heaven.*"

One of the reasons someone would deny Jesus would be to continue to look good with those at the office or the club.

If we were subjected to real persecution, we would probably embrace it as long as it did not involve personal shame or embarrassment, which would prevent us from looking good.



Look Good is one of the primary sources of anxiety. It reveals itself as the fear of man and the aberrant search for man's approval.

Look Good is the motivation behind making sure everyone takes us.

Scripture says that this is a snare of the soul (**Proverbs 29:25**).



Looking good may also be the reason we are reluctant or lack the capacity to repent - repentance humbles us. It is difficult to preserve our appearance while apologizing to someone.

The **Look Good Giant** is the source of an immeasurable amount of spiritual damage.

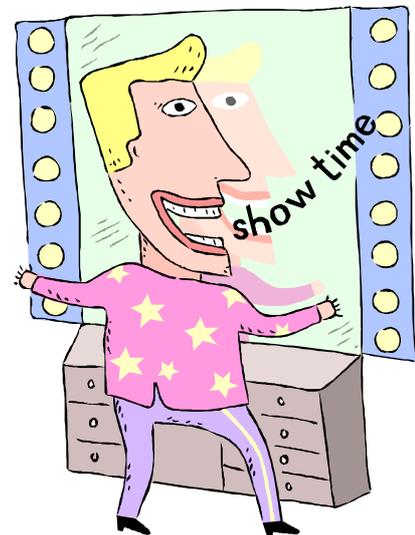
Some people will do anything to look good.

A question that will help discern the presence and strength of this Giant is: Would you rather be a coward with the reputation of a courageous person or be an authentically brave person perceived of as a coward?

Our whole society is moving away from true heroes who live free of others' opinions, toward celebrities whose very existence hinges on what others think. This is an Eros shift.

Similar conduct of Look Good:

- search for position;
- overly concerned with titles: Doctor, Reverend, Bishop, Elder, etc.;
- an insatiable drive for fame and recognition;
- inordinate concern for reputation and image;
- and paralysis when asked to go against the tide of public opinion.



2. Feel Good

James 4:3 " 3 [Or] you do ask [God for them] and yet fail to receive, because you ask with wrong purpose and evil, selfish motives. Your intention is [when you get what you desire] to spend it in sensual pleasures."

The Feel Good Giant wants to control our emotions, mind, and heart. This Giant has kept more people from freedom than we can imagine.

Feel Good involves avoiding pain and discomfort at any cost, is committed to personal pleasure or gain, and is given to the senses or is sensual.



This Giant is the epitome of what Scripture identifies as sensuality, causing us to seek gratification of the senses in such a manner that it controls us, effectively becoming our governing force.

Feel Good operates on the pure pleasure principle.

It is the source or first cause of all compulsive and **addictive behaviour**. Due to the Eros shift, our whole society is quickly moving toward addictive and compulsive behaviours that eventually will touch all of us directly or indirectly.

In psychology it is called the *hedonic* response from the Greek word "*hedone*" (Strong's #2237) meaning related to pleasure.



The individual has trained himself to respond to whatever gives him pleasure. Anyone controlled by substance abuse understands both the authority and the power of **Feel Good**.

Modern psychology and cultural preoccupation with feeling good are the source of much of our anxiety. Our society is rooted in feeling good in one way or another.

This Giant is why we sit in front of the television like "couch potatoes" - we want to escape reality and feel good. Feeling good must be guarded and protected; it cannot be disturbed.

We do not want to hear what God may be saying because, not only will it bother us, but, it may not feel good.



Entire churches and doctrinal bases are constructed on the premise of feeling good.

The **Feel Good Giant** gives us the sense of actually ceasing to exist if we do not feel good. It may be okay to be wrong if we can just continue to feel good.

We may even consider that impossible choice of refusing to look good in preference to feeling good because feelings have now become the ruling force.

Preservation of Feel Good is worth risking anything, because immediate gratification, is the insatiable goal.

Eventually, however, feeling good stops working because there are not enough drugs, alcohol, attention, or sex to meet the ungoverned desires that keep expanding.

This is called the Universal Law of Reduced Return: the more that is used, the less results are produced, leaving us in pain and frustration. The frightening truth is that **God has not designed us to feel good all the time.**



Feel Good is enhanced, enabled, and seems centered on sex, drugs, alcohol, shopping, etc. while the real and deeper problem is that **feeling good** has become **the ruling force.**

Repeatedly, I have watched powerful men and women of God lose their ministry and marriage for a sexual encounter with someone else's spouse.

Someone once said, "The chase is long, the expectation great, the pleasure momentary." These are descriptions of an immature personality, ruled and directed by the pleasure principle.

We all know that sometimes our feelings lie to us. When we are in a situation that makes us uncomfortable, we move toward freedom in the Kingdom of God by opposing the demand of the **Giant Feel Good.**

Similar conduct of Feel Good:

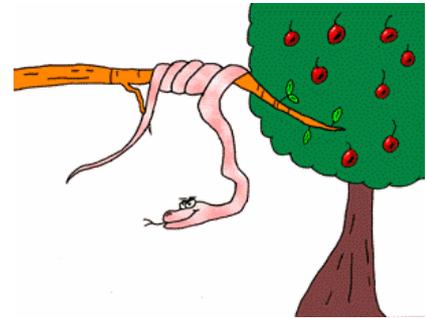
- happiness,
- entertainment,
- fun,
- comfortable,
- pleased,
- pleasurable,
- gratification,
- satisfaction,
- diversion,
- and recreation.

3. Be Right

Job 40:8 "8 Will you also annul (set aside and render void) My judgment? Will you condemn Me [your God], that you may [appear] righteous and justified?"

Be Right is directly related to the Biblical reality of the fall of man.

Original sin left us with an innate longing to enter God's sphere where we have assumed that we possess the needed knowledge of both good and evil.



This Giant leaves us insecure, anxious, and unable to admit being wrong.

The "know it all" is paralyzed by the domino theory - if we are wrong once, how can we be sure we have ever been right?

Since the mind rules our emotions, we are focused, controlled, and overly committed to our own evaluations, ideas, and concepts.

The **Be Right Giant** is fearful of being wrong or challenged, making us increasingly rigid - a form of stubbornness and rebellion.

This Giant has a perverted "gift of all-encompassing knowledge (omniscience), feeling he knows everything", but living with the **shame** and **fear** of being exposed. **Be Right** often uses **anger** as protective mechanism to prevent being discovered.



Be Right may be a primary cause of divorce, because each spouse knows he or she is right and demands special treatment.

Neither have the capacity to admit the possibility of error.

Eros needs to be "right" at all costs. Our minds become so made up that we will not, or cannot, bend.



This Giant is so strong that it refuses to accept reality. It pushes us toward denial, making it very difficult to admit when we are wrong.

It says, "My mind is made up; do not confuse me with the facts!" A parent should not fear admitting a mistake or apologizing to a child; however, many parents simply cannot do this.

The need to be right may even be used as a source of parental authority: "Because I am your Dad, that's why!"

Be Right has been a curse in my own life since childhood. Many times we traumatize our loved ones with the need to be right.

This is a terrible Giant who has caused more destruction, division, and injury to individuals, marriages, families, churches, businesses, and social groups than anyone could imagine or measure.

Think of how many churches have split because of the demanding and controlling presence of this Giant.

To be right, unchallenged, and face life and the future with an unbowed attitude leads to a form of self-righteousness that turns our light into darkness

Matthew 6:23 *"23 But if your eye is unsound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the very light in you [your conscience] is darkened, how dense is that darkness!"*

Many of us controlled by the **Be Right Giant** may have traded God's grace for the bizarre privilege (Eros payoff) of maintaining a facade of being right, even in the face-of God Himself.

God asks Job directly:

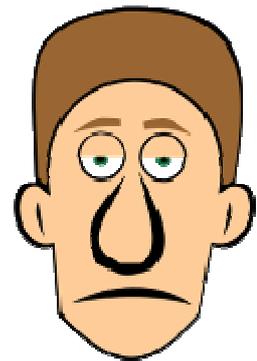
Job 40:8 *"8 Will you also annul (set aside and render void) My judgment? Will you condemn Me [your God], that you may [appear] righteous and justified?"*

We recommend rereading the book of Job with the Seven Giants in mind it will provide new insights into the Giants God exposed in Job and his friends.

We have never met anyone controlled by the **Be Right Giant** who was very joyful. We are incapable of enjoying community when we cannot be wrong.

This is partially due to the fact that the person who must be right approaches every relationship with a determination to win.

If I have eight of something, this person must increase theirs to nine. It is called one-up-man-ship: *"I may not be first, but at least I am ahead of you."*



Be Right injures our ability to interpret the Scriptures, respond to prophetic direction, or obey some specific instruction from the Lord Jesus.

It signifies our commitment to our tradition or system, i.e. Calvinism, Lutheranism, Catholicism, etc., above the over-all authority of God's Kingdom.

Conversely, **Be Right** may be the source of our anger and alienation from the main stream of Christian doctrine called the "*tenor of faith.*"

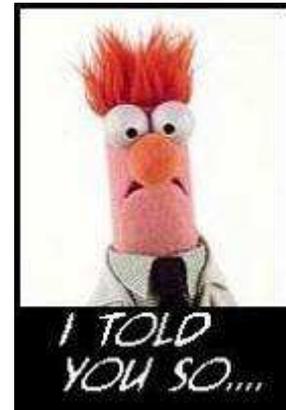
There is a particular danger in personal revelation when we think something is "*of the Lord*" it has the power to capture us.

Have you ever experienced the joy of an Eros payoff when you eventually have been proven right in an argument, a conflict, or a difference of opinion?

The urge to say, "*I told you so,*" is more than addictive; it borders on obsession.

The other extreme is the sheer despair of being proven wrong, to have gambled and lost, or to have put ourselves on the line only to have been mistaken, misled, or deceived.

Be Right seems to be one of the more difficult Giants to identify, expose, and slay because it is so defensible and insidious.



Getting free from the **Be Right Giant** requires grace, space, liberty, and understanding from others; Eros demands grace, but refuses to give it.

Similar conduct of be Right:

- justice,
- duty,
- obligation,
- prerogative,
- privilege,
- responsibility,
- unyielding,
- obstinate,
- self-righteous,
- self-justified,
- and implacable.

4. Stay in Control

Luke 4:6 "And the devil said to Him, 'To You I will give all this power and authority and their glory (all their magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, and grace), for it has been turned over to me, and I give it to whomever I will'"

Desire to control is a major issue – it is also set forth in **Isaiah 14:13-14** in the five "I will's" of Satan.

Stay in Control demands to have his hands on the steering wheel – he always wants to be in control.

He believes that if he is in control, everyone is safe and the results are guaranteed. Because he thinks he is god, **Stay in Control** must determine the outcome of everything for everyone.



There is always anxiety regarding the future, because it may be just beyond their control, questioning or challenging their self-confidence.

Stay in Control simply freaks out when control is relinquished to God.

Attempting to stay in control is one of the greatest traps of the Christian life.

We are afraid that if we really let go, Jesus will ask something of us that is more than we can give.

Stay in Control exceeds the normal pace of life that leads to crash and burn cycles.

Stay in Control refuses to take no for an answer.

This Giant refuses the Biblical limitation that says we must live within God's assigned sphere, walk in our limitation, and not intrude upon the measure of others.

Stay in Control determines to have everything and everyone within their sphere of life in their power and subject to their influence.

People who control will use and consume those who love them. They use the need for human intimacy as the instrument to maintain their control.

Stay in Control believes in the humanistic myth "*I can be anything I want to be.*"

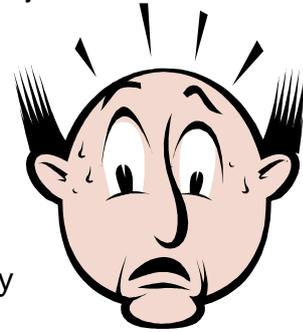


When we get saved, this can reappear under the Bible verse, "*I can do all things*" (**Philippians 4:13**). We leave out the "*through Christ which strengthens me*" phrase.

Because of the **Stay in Control** Giant, we cannot participate in anything with a whole heart that we are not leading. We deceive ourselves into thinking that we are the only ones who know how to correctly do the project.

Anxiety is a major symptom for anyone who has the fear of losing control. If a person is given to anxiety and lack of rest, chances are this Giant is roaming freely in their life.

Anxiety is the sin of our culture. Lie detectors function on the principle of our fear of losing control and consequently being discovered.



Being a loner is one way to stay in control.

We intentionally remain isolated from people because we don't want to lose control.

We think that if we really get to love someone, they are going to hurt us. It is true that we become what we focus on.

Loss of control, with its accompanying rage, violence, defiance, and self-hate, is the first cause of suicide.

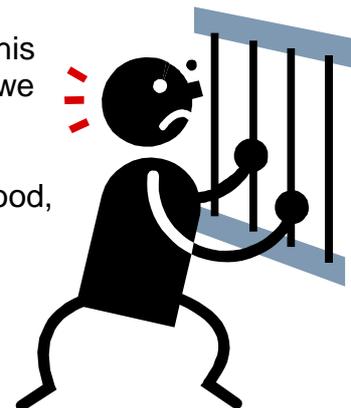
Loss of control leads to the heart-breaking discovery that you are not God.

When we are called upon to confront the Eros prisons of this world and encounter the Giants that guard those prisons, we must do so with grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

However, we cannot confront Eros and continue to look good, feel good, be right, or stay in control.

Similar conduct of Stay in Control:

- arbitrary,
- arrogant,
- autocratic,
- better idea,
- despotic,
- exacting,
- overbearing,
- dictatorial,
- fussy,
- determined,
- and dominant.



5. Hidden Agenda

Jude 12 refers to a Hidden Agenda when it says, "*these men are hidden reefs in your love feasts.*"

Hidden Agenda is covert with words of peace and a heart of criticism. It is like a snowball with a rock in it. It appears to be one thing, but when it unexpectedly hits someone, they are devastated.

With this Giant in operation, we lie in ambush with undisclosed motives, watching for weakness and vulnerability, ready to spring the trap, which has been disguised and then set with lies or half truths.

We hide one thing in our hearts while proclaiming another.

This Giant is a user; it seeks to use life, people, and every event for the express purpose of advancement of our own interests.

In our day, hidden agendas can be found everywhere - in social relationships, in politics, on television, and in the pulpit.

Hidden Agenda may be the most destructive of the Seven Giants to relationships.

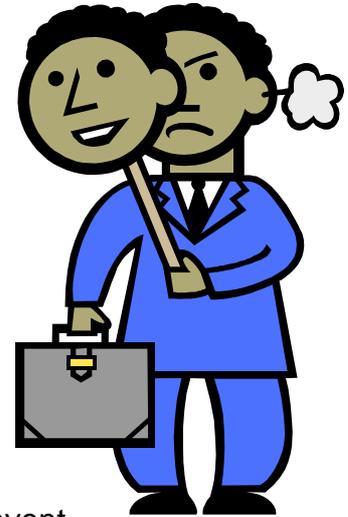
A hidden agenda is making up your mind before you go into a council meeting, then sitting through the whole meeting creating the impression that there is unity in the decision-making process.

This is dishonoring to others. If we are only seeking someone's approval for what we have already decided, we have a hidden agenda. Often the agenda itself is cloaked in Bible verses.

This helps us see the ubiquitous nature of Eros reappearing in ways that only God Himself can detect and destroy (**Hebrews 4:12**). Hidden Agendas destroy the unity and joy of the Church.

Some hidden agendas are overt, short term, and obvious; others are subtle, complex, elaborate, and may require years to play out.

Sayings like "all that glitters is not gold" show the prevalence of Hidden Agenda.



The apostle Paul isolates three hidden agendas in **2 Corinthians 4:1-2**: "*1 THEREFORE, SINCE we do hold and engage in this ministry by the mercy of God [granting us favor, benefits, opportunities, and especially salvation], we do not get discouraged (spiritless and despondent with fear) or become faint with weariness and exhaustion.*

2 We have renounced disgraceful ways (secret thoughts, feelings, desires and underhandedness, the methods and arts that men hide through shame); we refuse to deal craftily (to practice trickery and cunning) or to adulterate or handle dishonestly the Word of God, but we state the truth openly (clearly and candidly). And so we commend ourselves in the sight and presence of God to every man's conscience."



Hidden agendas are maneuvered, cultivated, and nourished in secret, clandestine and often self-deceiving ways. Once engaged; we cannot rest until and unless our hidden agenda has been accomplished.

Similar conduct of Hidden Agenda:

- wile,
- fraud,
- conniving,
- cunning,
- guile,
- crooked,
- perverse,
- twisted,
- calculating,
- devious,
- crafty,
- manipulative,
- shrewd,
- trickery,
- and double-minded.

6. Personal Advantage

Jude 16 "16 These are inveterate murmurers (grumblers) who complain [of their lot in life], going after their own desires [controlled by their passions]; their talk is boastful and arrogant, [and they claim to] admire men's persons and pay people flattering compliments to gain advantage."

With **Personal Advantage** in operation, we are constantly maneuvering for **title, position, or recognition**.

The original Greek word for **Personal Advantage** is translated "selfish ambition" (Strong's #2052).



This Giant uses others for its own purposes. When we are not the center of attention, we suffer envy and pain. We will help others only if it directly benefits us.

This Giant troubled even the disciples. Jesus was going to Gethsemane and the disciples were asking each other who was going to run things when He was gone.

They said:



Matthew 19:27 "27 Then Peter answered Him, saying, Behold, we have left [our] all and have become Your disciples [sided with Your party and followed You]. What then shall we receive?"

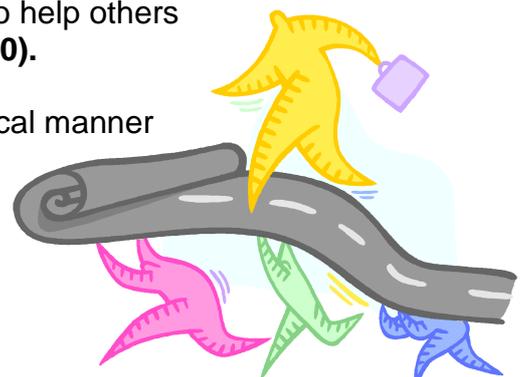
At the Lord's Table they were arguing about who was going to be the leader.

Personal Advantage is the most obviously self-referential of the Seven Giants.

It is purely handy in every relationship. People are used for self-promotion or self-advantage. Every opportunity, friendship, or event is evaluated by "what is in it for me."

This Giant of **Personal Advantage** has the capacity to transform our call to be a dream-enabler of others – one called of God to help others reach their destiny into a dream-stealer (**John 10:10**).

We possess, acquire, and control others in a practical manner so that we can be successful. We are not concerned about their dream, but only about how they can help us bring our vision to pass.



An original idea behind the word **parasite** in ancient Greek was one who arranged to have all of their meals in other people's homes and then paid for these meals by flattering their host or hostess.

The Church is full of people who will take personal advantage of another.

Remember, the Seven Giants operate in groups, several working together synergistically.

Note the innocent sounding statement in:

3 John 9 *“9 I have written briefly to the church; but **Diotrephes**, who likes to take the lead among them and put himself first, does not acknowledge my authority and refuses to accept my suggestions or to listen to me.”*

His efforts to gain personal advantage hindered the apostolic words of John, himself.

Eros appears in Biblical clothes when we use crowds, churches, mailing lists, fund-raising, church-growth, and even evangelism to work the system to our own advantage.



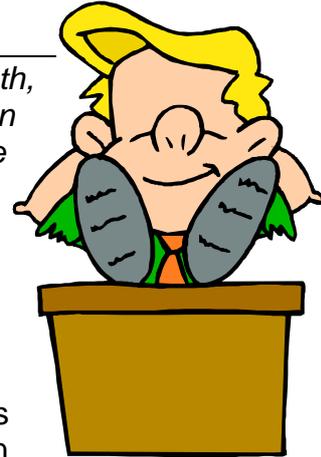
Once **Personal Advantage** is wrapped in Biblical clothing, it is very difficult to challenge and can even be encouraged and assisted. Working the system then takes on the wrappings of success, and no one can argue with success.

Similar conduct of Personal Advantage:

- expedience,
- benefit,
- reward,
- Usefulness to me,
- profit,
- success,
- self-reliance,
- self-absorption,
- self-interest.

7. Remain Undisturbed

Jeremiah 48:11 *"11 Moab has been at ease from his youth, and he has settled on his lees [like wine] and has not been drawn off from one vessel to another, neither has he gone into exile. Therefore his taste remains in him, and his scent has not changed."*



Undisturbed may be the most insidious, secretive, and difficult to expose of all.

Subtle and sophisticated, his presence is not as blatant as the other six. He is far more ominous and demanding than he first appears.

This Giant disguises himself as the need for stability, or the need to preserve his reputation or honor of respectability when more is asked of him than he wants to give.

Becoming Father-pleasers requires that we deal with being undisturbed.

Kingdom rule may cause serious disruption and/or interference with our own plans, desires, and comfort levels.

Undisturbed says, *"I will follow you, but I cannot follow you that far!"*

Undisturbed is that subtle difference between admiration for Christ and identification with Him.

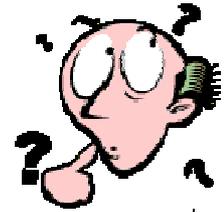
What is particularly offensive and needs to be avoided at all costs by this Giant is that any disturbance created by the demands of the Kingdom not becomes de-centering, troublesome, or course-changing in the possessor's life.

When the **Undisturbed Giant** sees drastic or unpredictable change in his life, he sets his face, hardens his will, and determines to deny or avoid all challenges at any cost.

Note Jesus' evaluation of the power and strength of the **Undisturbed Giant** in **Matthew 13:14-15**:



"14 In them indeed is the process of fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, which says: You shall indeed hear and hear but never grasp and understand; and you shall indeed look and look but never see and perceive. 15 For this nation's heart has grown gross (fat and dull), and their ears heavy and difficult of hearing, and their eyes they have tightly closed, lest they see and perceive with their eyes, and hear and comprehend the sense with their ears, and grasp and understand with their heart, and turn and I should heal them."



The most remarkable insight into the power of being undisturbed is that if they understood with their hearts, it would demand that they change. If they did so, Jesus says He would heal them.

Because disturbance accompanies change, the intentional choice was not to hear.

Because of this Giant, we seek to **avoid** or **manipulate** anything that could result in inconvenience or discomfort.

Undisturbed requires more assurance and confirmation than is reasonably available, consequently we allow inconvenience to become a barrier to our helping others.

The real problem is that we simply can't be bothered, *"Don't ask me to get involved, it's my day off!"*



It is too inconvenient to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, invite the stranger in, clothe the naked, or visit the prisoner (**Matthew 25:35-36**).

As someone once observed, those with modern home entertainment centers do not rise up in revolt.

Undisturbed reared its ugly influence and control when the priest and the Levite passed by the victim of crime who lay stripped and beaten in the road (**Luke 10:30-35**).

It wasn't that the Levite and the priest were not concerned about the man; they just did not want to be disturbed.

The Samaritan was willing to have his day, journey, and pocketbook disturbed in order to act in mercy and compassion.

Undisturbed is a life-style so guarded and protected that we don't let anybody or anything touch it. Every one of us has experienced this.

When we set ourselves to remain undisturbed, we **calcify** and soon become **undisturbable**.



Hosea 4:17 "17 Ephraim is joined [fast] to idols, [so] let him alone [to take the consequences]."

Jesus said of the people about to be judged in the fall of Jerusalem that He made music and they wouldn't dance, He played the funeral songs and they wouldn't mourn (**Matthew 11:17**).

Their unwillingness and inability to be disturbed and respond to Christ and His purpose was symptomatic of what it means to be ruled by this Giant.

Undisturbed can describe a powerful and potentially useful person wrapped in spiritual sloth, apathy, and self-preservation. We can lose our life because of the refusal to embrace the adventure and take the risk.

Analogous conduct of Remain Undisturbed

- unruffled,
- unchanged,
- uninvolved,
- apathy,
- disengaged,
- self-preserving,
- overly cautious,
- Placid.



The Giants' Triggers:

The Seven Giants can be seen throughout Scripture. Here is just one reference:

James 4:8-10

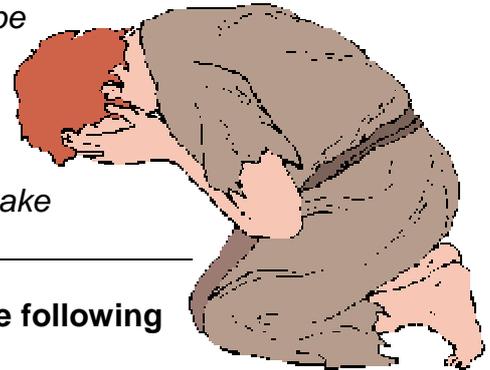
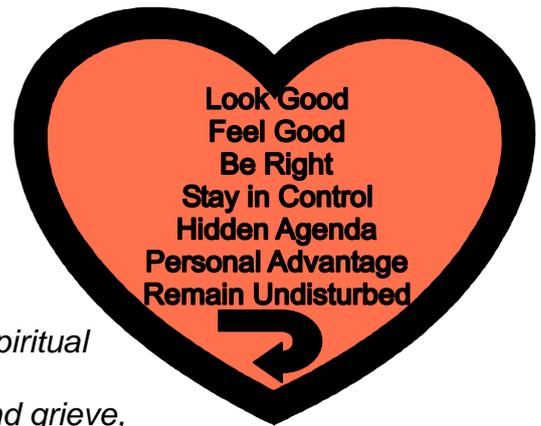
Personal Advantage:

[Recognize that you are] sinners, get your soiled hands clean; [realize that you have been disloyal] wavering individuals with divided interests,

Hidden Agenda: *and purify your hearts [of your spiritual adultery].*

9 *[As you draw near to God] be deeply penitent and grieve, even weep [over your disloyalty]. Let your laughter be turned to grief and your mirth to dejection and heartfelt shame [for your sins].*

Look good / Feel Good: *10 Humble yourselves [feeling very insignificant] in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you [He will lift you up and make your lives significant]."*



They are activated, revealed, and engaged by the following things:

1. Feeling Slighted.

Feeling slighted or overlooked does not have to be real, only perceived to be real.

It includes feelings that we were not received correctly, given the proper seat, honored in the appropriate sequence, or spoken to at the proper time or in an acceptable manner.

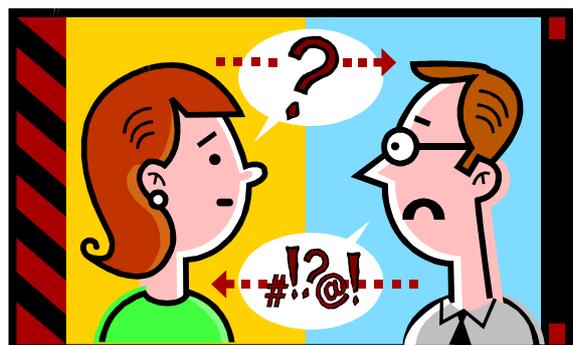
Others were put ahead of us, promoted, or honoured before us.



This list could go on until eventually we see ourselves and our responses.

2. Being Questioned.

Because the Seven Giants have successfully convinced us that we are right and need to be in control, for anyone to dare **question, challenge**, or even **think differently** than us becomes a **major source of conflict**.



There is an increasing type of **false leadership** that demands **total loyalty**. We must sell our soul to the company store for the privilege of being in the inner circle.



Everyone I have known who has failed sexually, financially, or doctrinally surrounded themselves with people they thought were "loyal" to them - "yes-men" who would not or could not disagree or question the status quo.

The Seven Giants thrive in such a climate.

The Hebrew word for **loyalty** is **faithfulness**.

The **Seven Giants** want **loyalty**; Agape wants **faithfulness**.

Our **faithfulness** to the Lord and to one another comes in the form of **support**, which sometimes includes **confrontation** and **disagreement** when the issue is various interpretations of the plain meaning of Scripture.



Pity the leader who does not have anyone with the strength and character to question their impulses and inclinations.

3. Revealed Prejudice.

Prejudice is a strange manifestation of the Seven Giants.

It has a strength that will defy God Himself.

In place of the spiritual Kingship of Jesus Christ, color, social standing, education, reputation, occupation, denomination, geographical origin, etc. (**John 4:9**) seek to control the Kingdom of God.

The Seven Giants gather themselves in synergistic force, bringing pressure to bear on the harmony and intent of the Kingdom itself.

They seek to displace the rule of Christ with cultural values, academic excellence, or denominational preference.

Challenge the Giants in the area of prejudice, and you are dead.



4. Demand for Repentance.

It does not take long to realize that the call to authentic, effective, and Kingdom-type repentance does not leave room to look good or to maintain reputations.

The Seven Giants will often challenge the bona fide presence of repentance.



Asking others to forgive us makes us uncomfortable; it embarrasses us in the community and strips away our **Look Good** image that must, at all costs, be preserved.

We cannot have Kingdom humility without humiliation.

5. Unmet Needs.

Only God can reveal to us the manner, degree, and depth that our needs - whether real or perceived - effectively guide, pull, demand, dictate, and govern our human behavior.

When we are experiencing a perceived need, even one in our imagination, everything and everyone must stop until that need has been satisfied.

Awakened and ungoverned desire has a strength and motivational force many of us do not understand.

Real and perceived needs are easily taken hold of by the Seven Giants and used to create havoc in marriages, churches, and social structures.

Eros and the Seven Giants can easily diagnose and identify the needs that our mate is not supplying.

If allowed, these will be exaggerated until they become grounds for divorce.

Agape, on the other hand, can see the needs that *are* being met, even the ones that are met quietly and without fanfare.

Many feel that because it *is my need*, others cannot possibly understand.

When our desire, in the form of an unmet need, has been awakened, the Seven Giants rapes, pillages, and plunder until that need has been supplied.

This is the psychological basis for all advertising. **Awaken the desire, and then the strength of the Seven Giants take over.**



We want what we want, affording it is hardly even a consideration because it can be accomplished by 36 easy payments that are hard to make.

6. Give-and-take Lawlessness

Under the sponsorship of the Seven Giants, *Eros* uses a most clever form of deception that I call *give-and-take lawlessness*: I give you permission to annul or change what the Bible says, if you, in turn, will do the same for me.



Matthew 5:19-20 says, “*19 Whoever then breaks or does away with or relaxes one of the least [important] of these commandments and teaches men so shall be called least [important] in the kingdom of heaven, but he who practices them and teaches others to do so shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.*
20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness (your uprightness and your right standing with God) is more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Suppose we are both trying to lose weight and, with a *hidden agenda*, I suggest we go out for ice cream. I ask, “*Why don't you go ahead and have one of those special chocolate sundaes?*”
I am setting you up to say something, like, “*Okay, if you'll have one too.*”

Once you see ***Hidden Agenda*** and understand how he operates, he is not so hidden.

Give-and-take lawlessness is one of the sources of the increase in velocity and strength of the *Eros* shift. After all, who can argue with the majority?

The *Eros* shift has been intensified and accelerated by the phenomenon of adjusting truth to desire.

This is especially easy to rationalize when Scripture is asking for a response which will cause personal discomfort, expose what we hoped to keep hidden, or force into view motivations which we ourselves did not think were present.

It is easier to keep the Giants hidden, allowing them to control and govern in secrecy.

This is what the Bible identifies as *darkness*. Walking in Light exposes the Seven Giants and brings about their demise.

7. Governed and Ungoverned Desires

There is a degree of **mystery** in the resolve and strength of mind that is revealed in human desire once it has been awakened.



A missionary doctor once described the Good News to several abandoned and desperate orphans within the darkened nation of China in these words:

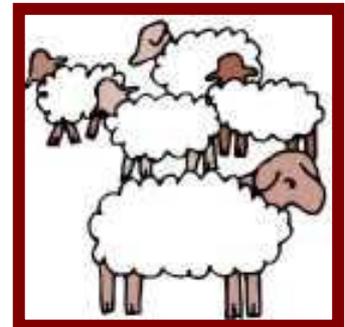
There was a home where the Father, Creator, Provider, and Sustainer placed us in perfect care. Yet our earliest relatives rebelled against Him and scorned the provision and the Provider. From that point on, we have, each of us in turn, raised the fist, run away from home, and preferred to live as orphans, masters of our own destinies, planners of our own tomorrows, and rulers of our own worlds.

It is enough for us to know that ungoverned desire is "*good for food; a delight to the eyes and desirable to make one wise*" (**Genesis 3:6**).



This desire, awakened in the fall, caused us

- to raise the fist (stubbornness/rebellion),
- run away from home (run, hide, shift blame),
- prefer to live as orphans (denying God's Fatherhood),
- be masters of our own destinies (little gods),
- planners of our own tomorrows (all we like sheep have gone astray each to our own way),
- rulers of our own worlds (be right, stay in control).



The Seven Giants utilize the power of ungoverned desire to implement their *Eros* agenda.

It is important to see that the issues are deeper than having our sins forgiven.

"He shall save His people from their sins" (**Matthew 1:21**) means eliminating both the **act** and the **root** cause which are the result of the Seven Giants.

Desire, both governed and ungoverned, has more direct influence upon human behaviour than we could possibly imagine.

Ungoverned desire directly affects the manner in which the Scriptures themselves are understood.

Attempting to take refuge in what we innocently call "*the plain meaning of Scripture*" is no longer possible.

It is not that the Scriptures have changed, but those who **interpret** them have. Figures don't lie, but liars figure.

Desire, both governed and ungoverned, has the ability to change the way the Scripture is understood and explained. Essentially the choice is two-fold:

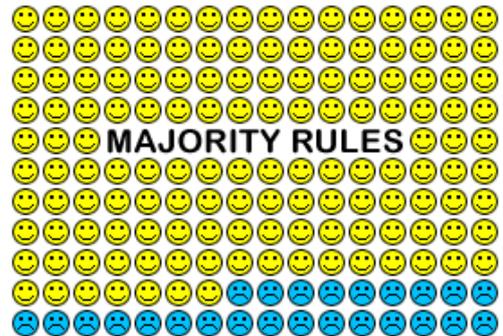
**Conform desire to the truth, or
Conform truth to desire.**

This is a very important distinction because, we are now facing postmodernism and some of the most difficult conflict awaits those of us who believe that Scripture is the very foundation of society and freedom.

In the Eros shift, ungoverned desire increases until society itself is influenced and controlled.

This is evidence that the voice of the people can become a controlling factor.

We have all seen how easy it is for people to become an angry mob, insisting and demanding to the point of death or incarceration that the will of the people be done (**Exodus 32:22-23**).



When the majority or experts (*vox populi*) interpret the Scriptures according to their ungoverned desire, the possibility emerges to make it say anything their desire demands.

When something is not in accord with their desire, it is considered radical fundamentalism and should be discarded or oppressed.

The Seven Giants often are the source of the ungoverned desires that controls how the Bible is understood.

When the voices are sufficiently confused, no one knows who to believe or who to trust.

Truth is capable of disturbing that which insists on remaining undisturbed.

When our ungoverned desires (Seven Giants) are faced with a Biblical challenge to yield to Christ's government and be conformed to the Image of God's Son, our **response is two-fold**:

1. Recognize that we must **conform our desires to the Truth** if we are to be free to move into intimacy with the Father;



2. Seek another teacher, another church, or another interpretation of that same verse that will tell us what we want to hear.

This is similar to searching for a doctor who will tell us what we have already determined is wrong.

The *Eros* payoff may cost us, but many people decide it is more than worth it. We are now effectively conforming God's Truth to our ungoverned desire.



Revelation 22:18-19 “18 I [personally solemnly] warn everyone who listens to the statements of the prophecy [the predictions and the consolations and admonitions pertaining to them] in this book: **If anyone shall add anything to them, God will add and lay upon him the plagues (the afflictions and the calamities) that are recorded and described in this book.**

19 And if anyone cancels or takes away from the statements of the book of this prophecy [these predictions relating to Christ's kingdom and its speedy triumph, together with the consolations and admonitions or warnings pertaining to them], **God will cancel and take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the city of holiness** (purity and hallowedness), which are described and promised in this book.”

2 Peter 2:1-3 “1 **BUT ALSO** [in those days] there arose false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among yourselves, who will **subtly and stealthily introduce heretical doctrines** (destructive heresies), even **denying and disowning the Master** Who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many will follow their immoral ways and lascivious doings; because of them the true Way will be maligned and defamed.

3 And in their covetousness (lust, greed) they will exploit you with false (cunning) arguments. From of old the sentence [of condemnation] for them has not been idle; their destruction (eternal misery) has not been asleep.”

We can hardly understand why Esau would trade his inheritance for lentils - a pittance of an *Eros* payoff (**Genesis 25:29-34**) apart from understanding the nature of ungoverned desire.

Ungoverned desire is why successful and wealthy people are arrested for shoplifting. It is why people are ruled by the iron yoke of addictive substances including pornography and gambling.

Ungoverned desires are deeper than they appear on the surface.

To be ruled by desire is very real and exceedingly difficult to change.

We seldom realize how controlled we are until someone asks us to cease doing something we do not *want to stop doing*. Remember that no one can set us free from that which we still desire.

Ungoverned desires make us enemies of the Cross

Philippians 3:18,19 “18 For there are many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, **who walk (live) as enemies of the cross of Christ (the Anointed One).**

19 They are doomed and their fate is eternal misery (perdition); **their god is their stomach** (their appetites, their sensuality) and they glory in their shame, siding with earthly things and being of their party.”

Note that **we are not enemies of Jesus**, because ungoverned desires still need the good things He can do for us, i.e., salvation and healing.

It is when He asks us to adjust our desires to His Truth that we want to avoid or circumvent (deny, avoid, endure) the demands of the Cross.

This is Cross-less Christianity. **It is only by embracing the Cross of Christ that our human behavior can be changed.**

For many years, we could not understand the need for a daily Cross. Our idea was that we could call upon the Cross in times of crisis, personal need, or failure.

However, the more we understood the pervasiveness of the Seven Giants and the *Eros* payoff, the more we understood *why* the Cross must be ever present rather than something we simply call upon.

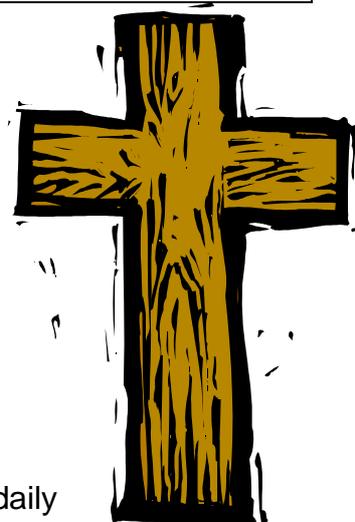
The daily need for the Cross will appear and reappear as we discover these Seven Giants operating in our own life and in the lives of others whom we know and love.

The strength and function of *Eros* as expressed in pleasure is severely underestimated.

Once we decide to move toward something we want, the awakened desire becomes lust taking on a momentum and acquiring a *possessiveness* of its own.

This explains how *Eros* can attempt to acquire and control, capturing something or someone for its own use or pleasure.

If that motion or momentum toward anticipated pleasure and satisfaction is disturbed or denied, the result is anger.



Suppose a woman flirts with a man, but then denies the satisfaction that she alluded to in the flirting. More powerful than the arousal of desire is the force of his consequent anger.

This explains the motivation behind rape, which is most often not sexual, but awakened desire to possess, acquire, and control that cannot or will not be denied.

Eros, awakened but unsatisfied, is also the primary source of depression.

Almost every person sulks when denied access to what they were going after, whether the goal was real or imagined.

King Ahab had everything at his disposal, but when denied the purchase of Naboth's vineyard, he sulked like a spoiled child (**1 Kings 21**).



Have you ever really desired a certain make or type of automobile that seemed just out of your reach? Or, perhaps you felt deeply that you deserved a certain position in your company or the lead role in a project?

Have you ever vowed to be unhappy until you got what you wanted from someone? How did you respond?

The forces of darkness, aware of something that we have set *our affections* upon, offers desire to us in illegal ways, wrong timing, or injurious circumstances.

The fact is, what is being offered may, indeed, be something God has already promised, but the setting or the **timing** may not be right.



Understanding ungoverned desire helps us see the strength of temptation.

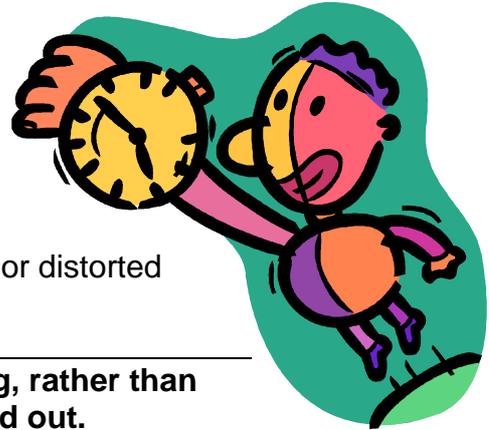
Eros uses **desire** for its advantage, **twists and distorts** it so that it is no longer wrapped in *God's Agape*.

Because the nature of *Eros* is to **possess, acquire, and control**, the desire itself gains a momentum and takes on a life of its own for which we may be unprepared.

Once that momentum is interrupted or denied, anger, rage, depression, even suicide are among the responses that follow.

The force of ungoverned desire happened to Jesus in John 6 when the crowd tried to take Him by force and make Him King.

Father had already declared Him King, and the popular movement was appealing to the awareness of that Kingship in an illegal manner. They were seeking to awaken an ungoverned desire in Him to fulfill His destiny at the wrong time and under the wrong circumstances.



If Jesus had yielded to this, it would have twisted or distorted the larger purpose of His Father.

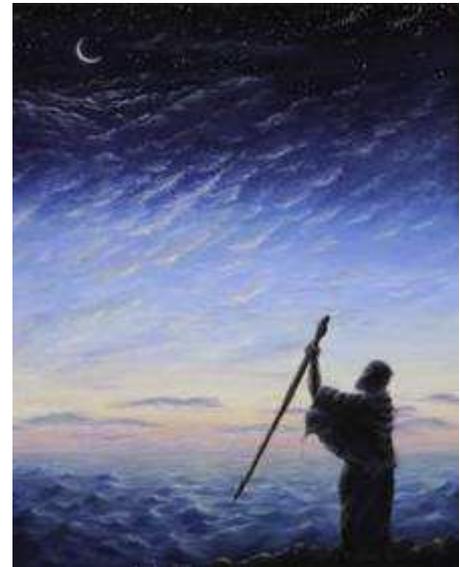
Most errors in guidance have to do with timing, rather than direction, because we are so eager to help God out.

Two things can ultimately defeat *Eros*:

- Waiting for Father's **initiative (John 5:19)** rather than attempting to control,
- Waiting for Father's **timing** to add something to us (**Matthew 6:33**).

Governed desire yields to Father's Government.

Many times I found myself sulking when something that was legal and clearly the will of God for me was being denied or eluded my grasp due to some human failure, unpredictable event, or wrong timing.



A sense of **depression** swept over me when I was denied the pleasure or satisfaction at the time it was expected.

This depression was a form of **anger** toward God for not only failing to do what I thought He promised, but for not doing it in the manner and time span I expected.

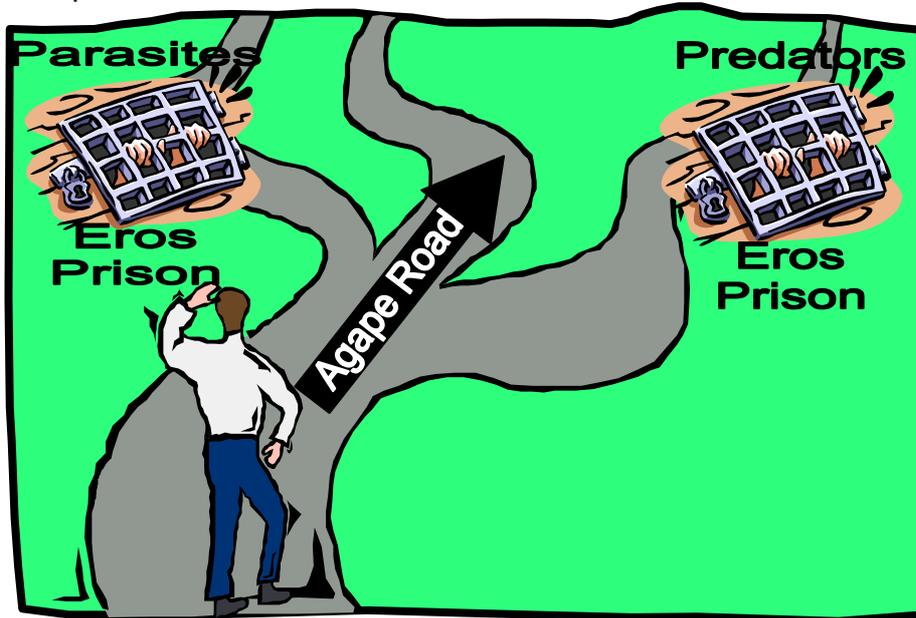
To put it bluntly, God disappointed my pleasure principle.

"Who does He think He is, God?"

God uses even disappointments to expose and disable the Giants.

Predator or Parasite:

When the Seven Giants mature, they produce two forms of human behaviour: predators or parasites.



Jude 12-13 describes them accurately:

Jude 12-13 “12 These are **hidden reefs** (elements of danger) [**predators, Hidden Agenda**] in your love feasts, where they boldly feast sumptuously [carousing together in your midst], without scruples providing for themselves [alone] [**parasites**]. They are **clouds without water**, swept along by the winds; trees, without fruit at the late autumn gathering time—**twice (doubly) dead**, [lifeless and] plucked up by the roots;
13 **Wild waves of the sea**, flinging up the foam of their own shame and disgrace; **wandering stars**, for whom the gloom of eternal darkness has been reserved forever.”



A **predator (Jude 12)** is the consummate user. They are out to get anything or use anyone to their personal advantage.

They are determined to stop at absolutely nothing to satisfy ungoverned desire, including murder. Predators force their will on everyone and everything around them.



There are predators in business, medicine, law, education, and ministry. Every pastor knows what it is like to have a predator within the congregation. A **parasite**, on the other hand, takes advantage of the generosity of others while refusing to make any useful contribution in return.

Jude 16 describes them as:

"inveterate murmurers (grumblers) who complain [of their lot in life], going after their own desires [controlled by their passions]; their talk is boastful and arrogant, [and they claim to] admire men's persons and pay people flattering compliments to gain advantage."

Parasites are becoming more prevalent in the Body of Christ. A parasite uses everyone and everything for their own advantage. They are like **leeches**. They get on you, around you, and among you. They use you, refusing to produce anything.

They con, whine, and plead to have their own way.

Parasites are also discovered in business, medicine, law, education, and ministry.

Both predators and parasites feel they are entitled.

Entitlement is the attitude that we *expect* others to provide for us. We have the "right" to claim these things.

When predators and parasites increased in early Rome, they significantly contributed to the *Eros* shift, encouraging those who had already broken loose to become out of control. **Ungoverned desire** resulted in the inevitable fall of Rome.

Entitlement has "broken loose" in our western society. It is one of the explanations for a staggering national debt that is about to push our nations toward the inevitable and consequential effects of **ungoverned desire**.



Self-Willed Determination to be Godly

Oswald Chambers gives us a valuable insight into how the Seven Giants operate:

But it is hardly credible that one could so persecute Jesus!



Acts 26:14 "14 ... **Saul, Saul, why do you continue to persecute Me** [to harass and trouble and molest Me]? It is dangerous and turns out badly for you to keep kicking against the goads [to keep offering vain and perilous resistance]."

Am I set on my own way for God?

We are never free from this snare until we are brought into the experience of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire.

Obstinacy and self-will will always stab Jesus Christ. It may hurt no one else, but it wounds His Spirit.

Whenever we are **obstinate** and **self-willed** and set upon our own **ambitions**, we are hurting Jesus. Every time we **stand on our rights** and insist that this is what we intend to do, we are persecuting Jesus.

Whenever we **stand on our dignity** we systematically vex and grieve His Spirit; and when the knowledge comes home that it is Jesus Whom we have been persecuting all the time, it is the most crushing revelation there could be.

Is the Word of God tremendously keen to me as I hand it on to you, or does my life give the lie to the things I profess to teach?

I may teach sanctification and yet exhibit the spirit of Satan, the spirit that persecutes Jesus Christ.

The Spirit of Jesus is conscious of one thing only - a perfect oneness with the Father, and He says:

"Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart."

All I do ought to be founded on a perfect Oneness with Him, not on a self-willed determination to be Godly.

This will mean that I can be easily put upon, easily over-reached, easily ignored; but if I submit to it for His sake, I prevent Jesus Christ being persecuted.

Oswald Chambers: has done us an enormous service in setting out the Seven Giants in the *Eros/Agape* paradigm in a way that significantly affects our Christian life-style:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Look Good | Standing upon our dignity |
| 2. Feel Good | Easily put upon, over-reached, ignored |
| 3. Be Right , | Obstinate and self-willed |
| 4. Stay in Control | Self-willed determination to be godly |
| 5. Personal Advantage | Set upon my own ambitions |
| 6. Hidden Agenda | Set in my own way for God |
| 7. Undisturbed | Self-willed determination to be Godly |

THE CROSS AND THE KINGDOM:

The only manner in which the Seven Giants can be **exposed**, **destroyed**, and **replaced** with *Agape* is by an invasive understanding of the **Cross** and the **Kingdom**.



When the Kingdom comes, it requires **repentance and acceptance**. We are admonished in Scripture not to think we know others' reasons or judge obscure and hidden motives; we are instructed and encouraged to look for the fruit of *Agape*, which causes the exposure of the Seven Giants.

Only you and God know if your dress, hairstyle, body piercing, tattoos, etc., are for the purpose of impressing others, and are motivated by an *Eros* payoff.

For every new and fresh discovery of the human *Eros* predicament, we must have a fresh baptism of *Agape*.

All conflict is internal, manifesting as external attitudes or behavior:



Matthew 15:10-20 "...11 *It is not what goes into the mouth of a man that makes him unclean and defiled, but what comes out of the mouth; this makes a man unclean and defiles [him].*
 12 *Then the disciples came and said to Him, Do You know that the Pharisees were displeased and offended and indignant when they heard this saying?*
 13 *He answered, Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be torn up by the roots.*
 14 *Let them alone and disregard them; they are blind guides and teachers. And if a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a ditch.*

15 But Peter said to Him, Explain this proverb (this maxim) to us.
16 And He said, Are you also even yet dull and ignorant [without understanding and unable to put things together]?
17 Do you not see and understand that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the abdomen and so passes on into the place where discharges are deposited?
18 But whatever comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and this is what makes a man unclean and defiles [him].
19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts (reasonings and disputings and designs) such as murder, adultery, sexual vice, theft, false witnessing, slander, and irreverent speech.
20 These are what make a man unclean and defile [him]; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him unclean or defile [him].”

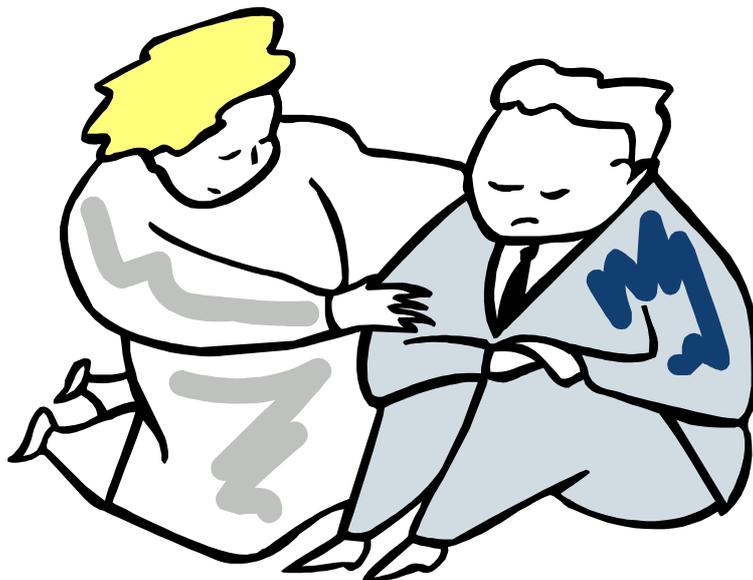
The only possible motive for us to embrace the truth of the **Eros prison**, the **Eros payoff**, the Seven Giants, and its consequential **Eros shift** is our shared commitment to reflecting God's Glory.

The Kingdom is invasive and demanding. It requires us to conform our desires to the truth.

Are we committed to our own spirituality in a self-willed determination to be Godly?

Or, are we committed to seeing the Glory of God revealed in the Church (**Ephesians 3:21**)?

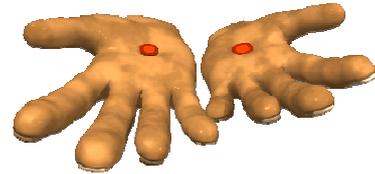
God, as a Father, has committed Himself to those to whom He has given His Glory, His Name, and His purpose. He is waiting for the Church to reveal His Glory in the earth!



CONCLUSION:

How do I stay true to God in the most difficult circumstances?

Answer: You allow Him to be True to you. Let God be what He most wants to be. God becomes to you exactly what you need to become to others around you.



He comes to you for your own sake first. When you become full of Who He is for you, then it becomes a natural overflow to anybody around you who you will connect with.

Agape love – you experience it in yourself first.

God allows the bad and the suffering in our lives not to destroy us but to establish something in us.

Transformation comes when you experience unconditional love on an ongoing basis.

Two types of love:

- 1) **Unconditional love.**
- 2) **Providential love** – love as a gift in every single situation.



Providential love is God providing love for you in every single thing that you face.

Love for God is non-negotiable. It will always be part of what He's doing in your life.

Unconditional love means that God is consistent in His Nature. Therefore He is predictable in certain things.

Unconditional love means God does not put conditions on His love for you. He does not say: *“You do this then I’ll love you.”*

He says: *“You need to receive from Me the love that I have for Jesus.”*

His behaviour towards you is not influenced by your performance. He loves you because He loves Jesus.

His love is tuned in to the Life and Character of Christ not to my lifestyle or my performance. That's Agape love!



The world loves only when it receives something. God does not have to receive anything from you.

He's made a determination in His Heart that He will love Jesus at all cost. He just happens to have put you into Christ so that He can love you at all cost, at all times, and in all circumstances.

Receive that in the Name of Jesus and **live** in it!

Providential love means that **God provides love as the basis for all of our ongoing life occurrences.**

You must experience His love in all of His dealings with you.

The goal of God is that we be filled up to the fullness of the stature of Christ.

Jude 20-21 *"20 But you, **beloved, build yourselves up** [founded] on your **most holy faith** [make progress, rise like an edifice higher and higher], **praying in the Holy Spirit;**
21 **Guard and keep yourselves in the love of God;** expect and **patiently wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah)**—[which will bring you] unto life eternal."*

Four Elements of Unbroken Fellowship:

- 1) **Build up** yourself in the Faith – you are responsible for building up yourself in faith. You must have absolute confidence in the Name and Nature of Christ towards you.
- 2) **Praying** in the Holy Spirit. Keep that effective channel of communication open and learn how to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit.
- 3) **Keep** yourself in the Love of God.
- 4) **Wait** for mercy – don't react to people and circumstances, **wait** for mercy to touch you. Then you won't have to apologize. If no mercy rises up, keep your mouth closed!



Position yourself so that whatever you do or say you can reap from it positively and wonderfully!

PRAYER:

Father, I thank You, You are committed to Agape love. You will love us as You love Jesus. We bless You. As we stand still under Your Hand, as we respond to who You are and what You are like, so we become changed.

Father, we thank You that our spirits can speak to You. We pray that all of our words and thoughts, intentions, actions will be God-breathed and Spirit-led. Jesus deserves excellence. Father, Thank You for what You have done in this time in terms of breakthrough in our understanding and experience of Your Agape love.

Lord, we pray that we will be found whole-heartedly co-operating with You in every test and trial that You allow, that we would see them for what You are trying to establish in and through us.

Help us to grow up fast, in Jesus Name!

Thank You Father for Your abundant Agape love!

AMEN!



Extracts taken from: “The Agape Road” by Bob Mumford.