

# JESUS CHALLENGES PETER'S LOVE

We should not make too much of two words for “love” used interchangeably in John's Gospel. Notice the following examples of “love” in the book of John. (1) God's love for man is *agape* (Jn.3:16); (2) God's love for man is *phileo* (Jn.16:27); (3) The Father's love for the Son is *agape* (Jn.3:35); (4) The Father's love for the Son is *phileo* (Jn.5:20); (5) Christians are to *agape* each other (Jn.13:34); (6) Christians are to *phileo* each other (Jn.15:19). It appears John used these words as synonyms, even though there may be fine distinctions between them.

“<sup>15</sup>So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, **lovest** thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I **love** thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. <sup>16</sup>He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, **lovest** thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I **love** thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. <sup>17</sup>He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, **lovest** thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I **love** thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (Jn.21:15-17)

MEANING

- 15** “Do you unconditionally love Me more than these other disciples love Me?”  
 “Yes, Lord, you know that I have affection for You.”
- 16** “Simon, son of Jonah, do you unconditionally love Me?”  
 “You know that I have affection for You.”
- 17** “Simon, son of Jonah, do you have affection for Me?”  
 “You know that I have affection for You.”

GREEK WORDS FOR “LOVE”	
<b>Agapé</b> ἀγαπή (G25)	Charitable, selfless, and unconditional.
<b>Phileō</b> φιλεω (G5368)	A human response to something found to be delightful.

LEGEND
= Jesus
= Peter