

Love:  
**A LifeBridge Study**



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## Introduction to the LifeBridge Study Series

“But God...even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ.” Through the Cross of Christ God bridged the uncrossable gap that existed between Himself and humankind. Through God’s grace all that choose to walk across that bridge are accepted. There is however a second bridge in the Christian walk. What we have received from God we are expected to give to others. As Jesus said - “Freely you received, freely give.”

The purpose of the LifeBridge Study Series is to explore the riches God's blessings and how we can give them to others. Each study booklet in the series is designed to maintain a balance between instruction and discussion. While they can be used for individual study the intent is for group study such as family time, Sunday School, or in a small group. Our prayer is that you will see and receive the richness of God’s blessings and open your heart to share those blessings with those around you.

Key lesson points for this study on Love:

- God freely loved us and sent Jesus Christ to provide the way to receive His love.
- To understand *agape* love through the life of Jesus and our relationship with Him.
- God’s love is demonstrably good and present.
- We demonstrate our love to God through expressions of worship and obedience to His commandments.
- The true mark of a disciple of Jesus is how he or she loves others.
- Love must be unconditionally received as well as given.

## Love: Lesson 1

*“For God so loved the world...”*

Love. That one word is used in many different ways and describes a broad range of emotions. It is the stated motivation behind many actions, both good and bad. Love can selflessly bless or be misused to selfishly control and manipulate another. Love is often used as the excuse or justification for our actions. Love is celebrated, yet it can seem fleeting and difficult to hold on to. Some say that love can be fallen into and back out of while others demonstrate love's life long commitment. Love can be said without feeling and felt without expression. But, love is best when it is both felt and expressed.

Read John 3:16-17. In this familiar verse, we see love felt and love expressed. We are told that God loved the world. The world being all of humanity through all time. God recognized our helpless and rebellious condition and loved us anyway. Matthew wrote of Jesus, *“Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.”* (Matthew 9:36) God, however, did not just feel love, did not only feel compassion, but He expressed love through Jesus Christ. Let's consider God's expression of love through four events.

**The story of Christmas is love's gift.** A gift is only a gift if it is freely given without the expectation of something in return. God's gift to us was to send his only Son to us in the form of a human baby. It is impossible to describe the difference between Christ's eternal existence with God the Father and his human experience as a baby. God in His infinity became finite, limited, and weak. Jesus became one of us because of His love for us.

**The story of Good Friday is love's sacrifice.** Jesus took the penalty for our sins on himself. There is terrible pain when a parent loses a child. The whole order of the universe seems to be upset. Even though we might have felt or observed the pain of losing a child, we cannot imagine God the Father's pain at the death of His only son. Those who from eternity past had never been apart and dwelt in perfect love were now separated because of love's sacrifice

for a broken and rebellious creation, for you and I. God the father turned away when the punishment that we deserved was poured out on Jesus. At that moment, Jesus' cried out from the cross - "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*" His love for us cost Him everything.

**The story of Easter is love's hope.** Christ's resurrection conquered the last enemy; death. Humanity is no longer doomed to an eternity separated from God and each other. (Contrary to popular belief there is no party in hell, only pain, loneliness, and regret.) Because of Christ's resurrection, life does not need to be a cascade of futility or death result in eternal separation. Through Jesus Christ, each of us can receive God's love, receive His promise of eternal life, and receive meaning and purpose during our time on earth.

**Your story can be love's triumph.** Love is not complete until it is received. God has given far more love than you can imagine. But you must recognize your need to be loved. Recognize the brokenness and rebellion that has separated you from God. By choosing to receive Christ you are accepting His love for you. You see, you cannot truly love until you have been truly loved. While you may have experienced love, the only true and perfect love is that which is given to you by God through Jesus Christ, receive His love today.

Key Lesson Point: God freely loved us and sent Jesus Christ to provide the way to receive His love.

How would you describe love?

Describe a time you experienced being unselfishly loved.

According to John 3:16 - Who does God love?

What is God's expression of love towards us?

In what ways has God expressed His love towards you?

### **Love's Gift**

What is the best Christmas, birthday, or anniversary gift you've ever received?

What are your thoughts concerning God's gift of Love - Jesus Christ.

### **Love's Sacrifice**

Recall a time when love cost you more than you received in return.

What are your thoughts concerning Christ's sacrifice of love for you and I?

## **Love's Hope**

Describe a time in your life or experience when something that seemed impossible became possible.

What are your thoughts concerning Christ's resurrection and the hope that it offers to you and I?

## **Love's Triumph**

Have you ever offered a gift to someone only to have it rejected? Describe in brief.

If you have received the God's gift of love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ - write a brief testimony of your experience and love's triumph.

If you have not yet opened your heart to God's gift of love - would you consider doing so today? If you desire to do so there is a brief guide on the next page.

## **How to Receive God's Love**

A basic outline for receiving Christ's love and forgiveness can be expressed with 4 R's.

### **Repent of your sin and its results**

To repent means to turn away from. God did not reject you, you rejected God by choosing to go your own way. There are two parts to repentance. The first is confession - you agree with God concerning your sin. The second is repentance - not simply feeling sorry, but a decision to turn your back on sin.

### **Recognize that Jesus paid the penalty for your sin**

Know that you are incapable of repaying God the penalty your sin justly deserves. But, that God so loved you that He sent Jesus Christ, His only Son, to pay the penalty on your behalf.

### **Receive Jesus' love and forgiveness**

Receive God's love and forgiveness by open heartedly asking for it. You don't earn it or buy it, you simply receive it.

### **Respond to Christ's love by loving Him in return.**

You can never fully repay God's gift of love. But, you can respond to His love by loving Him in return. Choose to dedicate yourself to loving God to the best of your ability.

A sample prayer would go something like this:

*God, I know that I am a sinful person and don't deserve your love. Today I confess my sins before you and repent of them. I thank you that you have sent your son Jesus Christ to pay my penalty through His death and resurrection. I choose this day to receive your love and forgiveness into my heart and ask that you would wash me clean. God, I know that I can't repay what you have done for me but I ask that you help me to love you in return. Amen.*

Lastly tell someone about it! If you have a church home let your pastor know of your decision. Also, if you be so kind, please let me know as well. I can be contacted at [dheinold@gmail.com](mailto:dheinold@gmail.com).

## Love: Lesson 2

*"Love is patient..."*

I love cherry pie, I love my wife, but I don't love cherry pie like I love my wife. Does that make sense? One of the reasons we have such a difficult time understanding love is our language. English pours multiple meanings into that one word. It can be used to express a preference for something like cherry pie. And love can be used to indicate a deep, lifelong, commitment and emotional bond. On the other hand the original language of the New Testament, Greek, had several words for love (for a breakdown of those words see the appendix). The Greek word for love that is the focus of this study is agape. It is the highest expression of love and in the context of the New Testament is equated with divine love, God's kind of love.

In order to further understand agape read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a. The Apostle Paul provides a picture of love based on its fruit. He begins with what is perhaps one of the hardest ones - love is patient. He ends with a reminder - love never fails. Basically, love is not easy. It is not automatic. Love requires choice, sacrifice, and preferring others over self. Love is not easily offended and is actually forgetful concerning offenses suffered. Love is not about puffing ourselves up but about honestly walking with another. Love sees the distance yet to travel and trusts, beyond all doubt, that the journey will be completed.

A common exercise is to read 1 Corinthians 13 inserting your name, Dale is patient (not), etc. Its a good exercise to see where we do love and where we fall short. Lets take a different path for this lesson. Instead lets insert Jesus' name. That way, instead focusing on a failed picture of love we will begin to see love perfected.

Jesus is patient - think about the patience Jesus displayed towards his disciples. Jesus is kind - the children, the folks needing his touch, even a temple guard with a recently sliced off ear would all agree. Jesus is not jealous - he does not envy the position of others (Philippians 2:6). Jesus does not brag and is not arrogant - consider the many times he requested folks to keep quiet about a miracle.

Jesus does not act unbecoming - he did not draw attention to himself with marketing gimmicks or loud talk but proceeded to His goal with firm resolve. Jesus does not just seek His own good - the cross was for us. Jesus is not provoked - remember his non-reaction before Pilate and Herod. Jesus does not take into account a wrong suffered - while we were yet in rebellious war with God Jesus died for us and loves us. Jesus does not rejoice in unrighteousness - instead he sought to heal it, to bring unrighteousness into conformity with God's will. Jesus rejoices with the truth - unlike every other person I know, Jesus never lies or deceives, not even for a good or righteous cause. Jesus bears all things - He bore the cross and bears our own foolishness. Jesus believes all things - His continual call to the disciples was to have faith. Jesus hopes all things - even when He rebuked someone it was in the hope of correction and change. Jesus endures all things - He does not throw us away when we fall but picks us up, forgives our sin and offense, and continues His healing work of our broken souls. Jesus never fails - His love is a constant, He never tires of loving us, nor regrets loving us.

Love has many definitions, many uses, and too many misuses. We as Christians are called to a particular kind of love, a specific definition. It is the same love that we have received by God through Jesus Christ. Before we can truly love others we must receive, experience, and understand Christ's love for us.

**Key Lesson Point:** To understand agape love through the life of Jesus and our relationship with Him.

What are some differences between loving cherry pie and Christ loving you?

The lesson talks about inserting our name into 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Having considered the example of Jesus, rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 in these areas. 1 being impossible to even consider, 10 being almost like Jesus.

Patient - ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Kind - ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Not jealous - ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Does not brag - ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Is not arrogant - ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Does not act unbecoming - ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Does not seek your own good - ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Is not provoked - ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Does not keep a record of wrongs - ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Doesn't rejoice in unrighteousness - ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Rejoices with the truth - ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Bears ALL things - ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Believes ALL things - ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Hopes ALL things - ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Endures ALL things - ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

In what areas is your love the strongest?

In what areas is your love the weakest?

Looking at the ratings again, how do you think your spouse, friends, siblings, and parents would rate you?

I encourage you to write down any ideas or thoughts you have about improving what you have seen about yourself.

### **Love: Lesson 3**

*“By this the love of God is manifested...”*

They say that the proof is in the pudding - which makes absolutely zero sense. Think about it. You're shopping for new drill and ask the clerk, "is this a good drill?" "The proof is in the pudding," he replies as if somewhere there is a cup of pudding with a fact sheet hidden in it proclaiming the drill's goodness. The phrase only makes sense when you know where it came from. The original saying is "the proof of the pudding is in the eating". Now that makes perfect sense. The proof of something is in the demonstration of its use. The packaging may proclaim "Best Drill Ever Made." But, until the drill is actually used there is no proof of the packaging's truthfulness.

Love is also like that. It is fairly easy to say "I love you" but, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Were those words of love spoken to manipulate, or because of tradition, or out of true feelings? Only the actions that follow determine their motivation and truthfulness. Even God's love has a demonstration of its quality. Read 1 John 4:9-10 and Romans 5:6-8. Both of these passages talk about God's love in similar ways.

God's love for us is visibly demonstrated through Jesus Christ. Both passages observe our sinful condition. Paul calls us helpless, John identifies us as being without love. Both writers declare God's love for us even though we were in a helpless and loveless state of our own making. Paul declares that God demonstrated His love through Jesus' death on our behalf. John sees God's love made manifest, made visible, through God's sending of His son as a propitiation, the payment, for our sin. John sees the manifestation of love continuing through our lives in Christ.

God did not simply say that He loves us, He proved it through Jesus Christ. It is something that we struggle to get our heads around. God the Father sent God the Son to earth, to become human, fragile, and limited for the express purpose of suffering an agonizing death in order to redeem foolish, rebellious humanity. Lets make that more personal. God the Father sent God the Son to earth, to become

human, fragile, and limited for the express purpose of suffering an agonizing death in order to redeem foolish, sinful, rebellious, self-centered (insert name). Jesus did not wait for (insert name) to love Him, He loved (insert name) first. This is not like Christmas where we exchange gifts of roughly the same value, and feel slighted if we gave a blender and they gave us some homemade cookies. God loves us even though we have nothing to offer of equal value in return. Which is why God's love and salvation is called grace, an unmerited and unearned gift.

Not only is God's love demonstrated through Christ it is also infinite in scope. Paul wrote, *"Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 8:35, 38–39) God's love is always present and ready for us to open our hearts to receive it. As Corrie Ten Boom learned in the darkness of the Ravensbrook concentration camp - "There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still." Corrie tasted the goodness of God's love in the darkest of circumstances and found it to be very good indeed.

Key Lesson Point: God's love is demonstrably good and present.

List some things that need to be tried or tested in order to determine their usefulness, truthfulness, and value.

Consider 1 John 4:9-10  
How is God's love made visible?

Who love first - us or God?

What does Christ's sacrifice to pay your sin debt mean to you?

Consider Romans 5:6-8  
How does Paul describe our sinful state of being?

How does Paul describe God's demonstration of love for us?

Consider Romans 8:35, 38-39

Is there anything that can separate us from God's love?

Is there anywhere we can try to hide from God's love?

How have you tried to hide from God's love?

Can you accept that you do not deserve Christ's love nor do you have to try to deserve His Love?

Have you, like Corrie Ten Boom, ever discovered love and grace in an unexpected place or circumstance? Describe that experience.

## Love: Lesson 4

*"If you love Me..."*

Last night our daughter called. During the conversation it was quite noticeable that the youngest grandson was upset. Turns out that he had to sit at the table until he ate a noodle. It is one of their family rules, you at least have to taste everything on your plate. But Eli refused. Immovable object meet the all-powerful force. So Eli sat in the chair for two hours and went to bed without a snack, did I mention that he is almost two.

In this lesson we consider how we return our love to God in response to His love for us. We have seen already that love has two components, what is spoken and what is done. Likewise, this lesson considers our love expressed in worship and obedience. Read Psalm 103:1-5 and John 14:15.

**Love Expressed.** Worship can be expressed in many ways. Singing, music, prayer, witnessing, art, and writing, just to name a few. The basics of worship is recognizing God's love for us and reflecting it back to Him in some form. Bless the Lord oh my soul...who redeemed my life from the pit!. Worship does not need to wait for Sunday Morning and the first notes of a song. We can worship God at any time, for any reason. Worship is love spoken.

**Love Demonstrated.** Obedience of God's commands is love's action. Can you get any more succinct than Jesus statement in John 14:15? *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."* John declares in one of his letters that *"His commandments are not burdensome"* (1 John 5:3). We know that keeping the Law of Moses was difficult for the Israelites to bear. The commands of Christ are no less life altering and defining. In fact, Jesus expanded the law to include our thoughts and intentions. Murder is more than taking of a life but also our hatred. Adultery is more than the illicit affair but also the imaginings of our lust. From those two examples it would seem that keeping Jesus' commandments is an even greater burden than that of the Law of Moses. But then John's declaration, "His commandments are not burdensome" comes back at us.

How can something that is more be less? The difference is love.

**Love's Burden.** When you want to do something doesn't the effort to see it through seem trivial? I know that many would find sitting in a tractor for 8-10 hours a day to be a tremendous burden. The endless and monotonous task of carefully working the ground with the roar of the engine constantly bombarding their ears would drive them insane. Yet, I know folks that would rather be there than any place on the world. Why? Because they love it. Why are Christ's command not a burden? Because we love Him and want to do what is required.

**Love's Requirement.** So, the final question. What is required of us by Christ? There are many ways to express that answer. The simplest and most concise is this. *"And He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' "This is the great and foremost commandment. "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.""* (Matthew 22:37–40) By loving God and loving others in thought, word, and deed we keep the commandments of Christ and therefore demonstrate our love for Him. We will explore what it means to love others in the next lesson.

Key Lesson Point: We demonstrate our love to God through expressions of worship and obedience to His commandments.

## **Love Expressed**

The psalmist advises that we should not forget His benefits and blessings. List some ways, the more specific the better, in which God has loved you.

Worship takes on many forms, spoken, sung, written, and art to name a few. What method or means would allow you to express best the love of God that is in your heart?

## **Love demonstrated**

On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being non-existent, 10 being all in, rate the love you feel towards God

Describe your feelings about the word "obedience".

On the same scale as above rate your obedience to God.

Describe a time when you experienced His love empowering you to obey His Word?

How do you think your obedience to God can be improved?

### **Love's Burden**

What thing do you do that others can't stand or have little tolerance of?

What things to you find tedious and boring?

What makes the difference?

How can the things of God that you find tedious and difficult become a "light burden"?

### **Love's Requirement**

List ways to love God

List ways to love others

## Love: Lesson 5

*“By this all men will know that you are My disciples...”*

Perhaps you've been here. You're driving along, minding your own business when someone quickly closes on your bumper. Obviously they are in a hurry and have no problem breaking the speed limit. Traffic does not allow them space to pass so they tailgate. In a sense, pushing you to go faster. After several failed attempts there is finally enough space for a risky pass. You slow slightly to help the other driver avoid the oncoming traffic. As the tailgater settles in your lane you notice their bumper sticker - Honk If You Love Jesus. You wonder if the honks they hear are the result of the bumper sticker or their driving.

There are many ways to declare that we are following Jesus. Here are a few - church membership, publically praying, t-shirts, bumper stickers or fish symbols, wearing crosses, or perhaps acquiring scripture based tattoos. Nothing wrong with any of these but they are not the true mark of loving Jesus. Consider Jesus' own words - *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”* (John 13:34–35) Jesus does not suggest that we love each other - He commands it. Since loving each other is the true mark of a disciple what does it look like? What I'm about to present is simply a sketch of the fuller picture found in the Bible. Let's consider three words to outline what it means to love each other - acceptance, accountability, and sacrifice.

**Acceptance.** To love means to accept. To open our hearts to another, knowing full well that we may end up hurt and broken. But we choose to accept that risk and to accept them as they are. That is the way Jesus loved us, He didn't wait for us to become perfect, but loved us in spite of our sin, hate, and rebellion. Another part of acceptance is loving even love is not returned in any measure or in the way we prefer. Unless we accept we cannot love. But love doesn't end with acceptance, it simply begins there.

**Accountability.** To love means helping others on the path of obedience towards God. Remember, obedience to God is our love towards Him in action. Jesus taught, *“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.”* (Matthew 18:15) When we fail to help each other with accountability and obedience we fail to love. You see, love not only accepts but also hopes. Love sees what could be and risks being rejected in order to encourage its vision.

**Sacrifice.** To love means to sacrifice our own desires, preferences, equity, time, strength, and life for the sake of another. Jesus taught, *“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”* (John 15:13) Granted, we aren’t often called to die for the sake of another. But, we can die to ourselves for the sake of others. Many ask for Jesus to prosper and bless them in some way. Few ask Jesus how they may lay down their lives today for the sake of others.

These three words are simply a starting place, all are important and must be balanced by the others. To rebuke without acceptance and sacrifice is judgmentalism, to sacrifice without accountability is enabling sin, to accept without accountability is people-pleasing. Bumper stickers and t-shirts are fine. But, the true mark of a disciple of Jesus, the real witness to the world, is how we love each other.

Key Lesson Point: The true mark of a disciple of Jesus is how he or she loves others.

Describe an incident where you or someone else’s expression did not match their actions?

According to John 13:34-35, what one thing does Jesus want to make sure that we do?

Describe ways that you have been loved by fellow Christians?

### **Acceptance**

What is the risk we take when we accept others?

Is acceptance all there is to love?

Why do you think acceptance is an important ingredient to love others?

### **Accountability**

What is the risk we take when we hold one another accountable?

Do you welcome and prayerfully consider when someone holds you accountable to love and obedience?

How can you become more receptive to being guided through accountability?

How can you lovingly help someone else where they are weak?

### **Sacrifice**

What is the risk we take when we put our own desires aside for the sake of another?

Describe a time when someone laid down their own desires for your sake?

Describe a time when you laid down your desires for the sake of others?

Do you agree that all three aspects, acceptance, accountability, and sacrifice must be present in our love for each other?

What are the risks to loving others in this way?

## Love: Lesson 6

*“So, as those who have been chosen of God,  
holy and beloved...”*

You wouldn't think that receiving love would be a problem. That, the last thing we would want to do is erect any barriers towards being loved. The sad truth of course is that we do. Not only do we need to learn to give love, we must learn to receive it as well. Not only must we open our hearts and risk loving others, we must also risk being loved. For this lesson we are going to consider three barriers that keep us from receiving love.

**The Barrier of Self.** The first barrier is self and not considering ourselves with proper judgment. It could be that someone has been so beaten up by the events of their lives that they do not see themselves as being worthy of love. Or it could be that someone is so full of themselves that there is no room left to receive love. Either way, self is barring the door to love. The first must come to understand that love has nothing to do with worth. Love, to be love, is a choice and not earned. God loved us even though we didn't deserve it, were not worthy of it, and could never earn it. The answer for the second extreme is self-evident, *“Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.”* (Colossians 3:5) Although in very different ways, both extremes have made self an idol.

**The Barrier of False Expectations.** The second barrier to receiving love is false expectations. In a way it is an offshoot of the first barrier. We place conditions on love, it has to meet our standard or it is not love at all. So we expect someone to act or respond a certain way, often without telling them, and then when they fail we assume that they do not love us. The problem of course is that we cannot demand how someone else chooses to express love for it to be love. For instance, we desire to be accepted to be loved, but reject any attempt at accountability. To remove this barrier we must see love as a gift and not an entitlement. There are many ways to express love and we

need to be open to them all (within the guidelines of appropriateness).

**The Barrier of Unforgiveness.** The third barrier to receiving love is unforgiveness. As long as we hold unforgiveness against someone we will not be able to receive their love. It's as plain and simple as that. Here's what we often miss: holding unforgiveness towards one person will affect our ability to receive love from others as well. Unforgiveness effectively puts a twist in every relationship by causing us to put a condition on the love of others. "If you love me you will agree with the grudge I hold against so and so." "If you love me you will take my side!" Removing this barrier requires that we humble ourselves and forgive.

Not only must we give unconditional love to others we must receive it as well. In fact, that is how we grow in love, by both receiving and giving to the degree we are able. It is like the farmer that plants a single seed, when harvest comes he reaps 100 seeds. Next spring he plants those hundred seeds and reaps 10,000 seeds. Our love of God and of each other can grow in the same way. Finally, please consider this admonition from the Apostle Paul, "*So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.*" (Colossians 3:12–13)

Key Lesson Point: Love must be unconditionally received as well as given.

Is it risky to receive love?

What are some of the risks of receiving love?

How open are you to accepting those risks?

### **Barrier of Self**

Seeing this barrier can be tricky and requires an honest assessment.

Do you feel that you are not worth loving and don't understand why folks would bother even trying?

Do you feel that you don't need the love of others?

Do you feel that you have to earn the love of others?

Do you feel that you have the right of the love of others?

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you areas where the idol of self has a place in your life. Write down what He shows you.

### **Barrier of False Expectations**

Do you put conditions on the love expressions of others?

Do you understand that others might be expressing love in way you don't understand?

Have you ever been trapped by someone else's unspoken expectations?

Have you ever trapped someone by your unspoken expectations?

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you may be harboring false expectations.  
Write down what He shows you.

### **Barrier of Unforgiveness**

Can you see how unforgiveness makes it impossible to receive love from someone?

Is there someone you have not forgiven? Why?

Have you ever been caught in the trap of someone else's unforgiveness - "if you love me you will agree with my views of that person". How did it make you feel?

Have you ever said or thought something along the lines of -  
“if you love me you will agree with my views of that person”.

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you may be harboring  
unforgiveness.

Write down what He shows you.

*\*For more on forgiveness please consider the LifeBridge  
Bible Study by that name.*

Conclusion

What have you learned through this study?

How will you apply it to your life and walk with Christ?

## The Words of Love

*Storge* - Used once in the New Testament in a negative sense in 2 Timothy 3:3. *Storge* is equivalent to a loose affection or simple acceptance often found in families.

*Eros* - Not found in the Biblical text. Physical, passionate, romantic love. Puppy love and infatuation is a form of eros. Lust, while emotionally connected, is a twisted form of eros.

*Philio* - Brotherly love or friendship. Used several times in the Biblical text most notably in John 21:15-17 in Peter's response to Jesus' question.

*Agape* - The most common word for love in the New Testament and is the primary basis for this study. In a sense agape is a love that goes beyond, it has best been demonstrated by God and is reflected in the Biblical term lovingkindness, a God kind of love that contains both emotion and action.

## Key lesson points for this LifeBridge study on Love:

- God freely loved us and sent Jesus Christ to provide the way to receive His love.
- To understand *agape* love through the life of Jesus and our relationship with Him.
- God's love is demonstrably good and present.
- We demonstrate our love to God through expressions of worship and obedience to His commandments.
- The true mark of a disciple of Jesus is how he or she loves others.
- Love must be unconditionally received as well as given.



### About the Author:

Dale and his wife Betty reside in central Illinois. They serve in various capacities at New Life Community Church in Henry Illinois. In 2012 Dale graduated from Oral Roberts University with a degree in Church Ministry. Dale has written one book and also writes for [lambchow.com](http://lambchow.com) where he states: *My goal in writing is the same as when I lead worship, to invite everyone into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ. The Bible often describes our Christian experience as a journey. My hope is that you will discover something helpful for your walk with Christ. Consider my writing to be like trail mix, something to help you along the way.*