

Principles from the Doctrine of Love: Love of God Precedes Love for God; Mandate for Esprit-de-Corps Love; Adversity Brings about Courage, Rom 5:1-3

Esprit-de-Corps Love

**Coosa River Bible Conference
Coosa River Bible Church
Cropwell, Alabama
April 18, 19, 20, 2006**

Principles from the Doctrine of Love

1. There are four general categories of love:
 - (1) **Category 1** is Reciprocal love for God that is a response to His perfect virtue love toward us.
 - (2) **Category 2** is Romantic love between right man and right woman. It originates in the soul through a process of physical attraction, followed by compatibility of personalities, and finally the rapport of souls.
 - (3) **Category 3** is Subjective love that relates to friendship. It is non-sexual and non-touching except for certain forms of customary greetings.
 - (4) **Category 4** is Familial love, the relationship between parents and children and children and parents. The classical Greek word for this is **στοργή, storgē**. It is not used in the New Testament but it does provide a name for the kind of love and affection that develops from the mandates directed toward parents and children [Liddell & Scott, 1650]. Colossians 3:20-21; Ephesians 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 5:4.
2. Category 1 love is reciprocal toward God but it gets its capacity from spiritual growth and reaches its maximum impact at occupation with Christ.
3. The Lord made clear the obligation of the believer when He told his disciples in John 14:15, "If you love Me, keep My commandments."
4. From one's capacity to love God comes the capacity for love in categories 2 and 3, and 4. The more spiritually advanced a person, the more stable he is in his relationships with people.
5. Thus we have the principle of the tandem problem-solving devices in the adult spiritual life. Personal love for God must precede unconditional love for one's fellowman. The Lord clearly indicates this in:

Mark 12:28 - One of the scribes ... asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?"

v. 29 - Jesus answered, "The foremost is, "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord;

v. 30 - and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

v. 31 - The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."
6. Personal love for God precedes unconditional love for others. To acquire personal love for God one must devote himself or herself to learning who and what God is. The only revelation about God and His character is the Bible and therefore, Bible study becomes the only means of developing love *for* God.

7. It is obvious that the believer's response to the love of God originates from his free will and is therefore reciprocal. To reciprocate means to return in kind and implies the paying back of what one has received.
8. According to 1 John 4:19 God loved us first and because of this we love. Thus we find that our love for God is reciprocal. It is recognition that He is our Creator, our Benefactor, our Provider, our Defender.
9. The development of reciprocal love toward God and toward others is discussed by Paul in Romans 5:1-5 where the apostle outlines the results of justification by faith in Christ. Here is how verses 1 and 2 read in corrected translation: [TXP: The Barrier & Its Removal]

Romans 5:1 - Having been justified by faith, let us have prosperity [εἰρήνη, *eirēnē*: peace with God by the removal of the barrier produces spiritual prosperity] with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. [TXP: Imputed +R & the Grace Pipeline]

v. 2 – Through Whom also by means of faith we have attained access into this grace in which we stand [logistical support]; and so let us demonstrate esprit de corps [“exult”: καυχάομαι, *kauchaomai*] in hope [ἐλπίς, *elpis*: absolute confidence] regarding the integrity of God.

10. The first result of justification is spiritual prosperity through the imputation of divine operating assets at salvation through the grace pipeline plus the provision of logistical grace support to the believer's imputed righteousness.
11. The key word we will emphasize in our study is translated “exult” in the New American Standard: “we will exult in hope of the glory of God.” The Greek word is the present middle subjunctive of:
καυχάομαι, *kauchaomai* - “To boast, to glory, to pride oneself in a thing.”
12. To boast about oneself is arrogance and self-centeredness. But in this context *kauchaomai* is not directed toward self but rather is an inclusive concept that expresses the harmony possessed by a group of people who have acquired harmonious rapport.
13. This is expressed by collective confidence in the “glory of God,” that is, an eternal future not only in the presence of God but also in harmony with Him.
14. When a group of people bond together with harmonious thought, objectives, and purposes then they function under group harmony.
15. It is the harmonious rapport that exists among people of like mind that is indicated by *kauchaomai*. The best way to translate it into English is to do so by way of French: esprit de corps. The Frankish phrase is defined by:

Ehrlich, Eugene (ed.). *The Harper Dictionary of Foreign Terms*. 3d ed. (St. Louis: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1987), 116:

Esprit: spirit, soul, mind. —esprit de corps, (the) animating spirit of a collective body and devotion to its honor and interests; a spirit of comradeship and loyalty to the body to which one belongs.

The New Oxford American Dictionary, s.v.:

Esprit de corps. Origin: French, literally ‘spirit of the body.’ A feeling of pride, fellowship, and common loyalty shared by the members of a particular group.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.v.:

Esprit de corps. The common spirit existing in the members of a group and inspiring enthusiasm, devotion, and strong regard for the honor of the group.

Oxford English Dictionary, s.v.:



The regard entertained by the members of a body for the honor and interests of the body as a whole, and of each other as belonging to it.

16. There is esprit de corps among the Trinity since They possess the same attributes that define divine essence. Members of the body of Christ that accumulate in a local church should share the same esprit de corps that unites the Godhead.
17. Esprit de corps is developed by means of the believer's absolute confidence in the essence of God which includes His integrity, and His integrity backs His promise of eternal life.
18. In verses 3 and 4 the value of esprit de corps love applied under pressure expresses another result of justification:

Romans 5:3 - Not only this, but let us demonstrate esprit de corps [καυχόμαι, kauchaomai: harmonious rapport] in adversity [the third result of justification: persecutions, trials, distressing circumstances], knowing that such adversity brings about courage [ὕπομονή, hupomonē: courage, honor, & integrity in time of disaster];

19. In ancient Sparta the principle of esprit de corps was considered the ideal civic virtue to be held by her citizens and especially by her warriors. Their concept was expressed by the phrase ἐξωτερικὴ ἁρμονία, exōterikē harmonia: outer harmony. To achieve this outer harmony one must first acquire inner harmony: ἐσωτερικὴ ἁρμονία, esōterikē harmonia. [TXP: Pressfield's Inner & Outer Harmonies]

20. The mental discipline that produces these virtues is developed by:

Pressfield, Steven. *Gates of Fire: An Epic Novel of the Battle of Thermopylae*. (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 80:

(Xeonos and Alexandros [Ἀλέξανδρος] talked for hours in secret on the pursuit of *esōterikē harmonia*, that state of self-composure which the exercises of the *phobologia* [φοβολογία, the science of fear] are designed to produce. As the string of the *kithēra* [κιθῆρα, "lyre"] vibrates purely, emitting only that note of the musical scale which is its alone, so must the individual warrior shed all which is superfluous in his spirit, until he himself vibrates at that sole pitch which his individual *daimōn* [δαίμων, "god"] dictates. The achievement of this ideal, in Lakedaemōn [Λακεδαίμων, the ancient name for Sparta], carries beyond courage on the battlefield; it is considered the supreme embodiment of virtue, *andreia* [ἀνδρεία], of a citizen and a man.

Beyond *esōterikē harmonia* lies *exōterikē harmonia*, that state of union with one's fellows which parallels the musical harmony of the multistringed instrument or of the chorus of voices itself. In battle *exōterikē harmonia* guides the phalanx to move and strike as one man, and of a single mind and will. In passion it unites husband to wife, lover to lover, in wordless perfect union. In politics *exōterikē harmonia* produces a city of concord and unity, in which each individual, securing his own noblest expression of character, donates this to each other, as obedient to the laws of the commonwealth as the strings of the *kithēra* to the immutable mathematics of music. [TXP: **Outside Pressures of Adversity**]

21. Pressfield's depiction of ancient Greek esprit de corps provides us an excellent illustration of how virtue love enables believers to achieve soul rapport with God, fellow believers, and their right person.
22. Good soldiers for Christ must make it their objective to pursue the ideal of virtue love which is the primary mental attitude for the sophisticated spiritual life. It produces a "state of self-composure" that is defined in three categories: spiritual self-esteem, spiritual autonomy, and spiritual maturity. [TXP: **Sophisticated Spiritual Life**]
23. The Apostle John writes about the sophistication of virtue love in:

1 John 4:18 - Fear does not exist in virtue love but the one who fears punishment has not been perfected in virtue love which drives out fear.

24. There is an altruistic, human-viewpoint “ethic” that is defined as “love” by immature believers. It is motivated by fear of punishment and thus they are restrained from doing certain things. This is a pseudo, self-imposed humility.
25. Eventually, believers must attain within their souls virtuous, divine-viewpoint love for God, others, and their right person. It must be motivated by reciprocity. This is the function of genuine humility—the inner resource of Bible doctrine that is their operational frame of reference for thought, decision, and action.
26. Those who possess virtue love are not motivated to love others because they fear punishment if they do not, instead they love others because it is a reflection of who they are by virtue of their love *for* God.
27. As the believer advances he must permit the Word of God to inform him about his function in the plan of God. This requires self-analysis. It requires allowing his own personality, under the instruction of the Holy Spirit, to be guided by biblical revelation which will reveal his place and purpose in the divine plan.
28. Each believer must view himself as a string of the *kithēra* and learn to “tune” himself so that he plays his note perfectly. As he allows the Holy Spirit to “get him in tune” he will “emit his note” which God designed him to play within the divine symphony.
29. To obtain the humility, objectivity, and maturity to play his note the believer must acquire virtue love. Once he learns to play his note with efficiency then he will realize that he is “in tune” with other believers who have made the similar advance.
30. When enough believers in a local church achieve inner harmony—*esōterikē harmonia*—then there will also emerge outer harmony—*exōterikē harmonia*—within the congregation. When each believer functions under the assignments God has designed for him it results in soul rapport within the group.
31. This soul rapport “parallels the musical harmony of the multistringed instrument or of the chorus of voices itself.”
32. Thus we can paraphrase the last sentence of Pressfield’s remarks:

“In Christianity, *exōterikē harmonia* produces a congregation of concord and unity, in which each individual, securing his own noble expression of spiritual integrity, donates this to each other, as obedient to the immutable principles of doctrine as the strings of the *kithēra* are to the immutable mathematics of music.”
33. It is the positive believer who has invisible historical impact and that impact increases in direct proportion to his advance in the spiritual life of the Church Age.
34. It is those who function in the sophisticated spiritual life who provide the *exōterikē harmonia* that “guides the phalanx to move and strike as one man, and of a single mind and will” in the scrum of the Invisible War.