

# HOW TO LOVE PEOPLE YOU DON'T LIKE

## TWO GREEK WORDS FOR "LOVE"

- *Philia* refers to a "feeling of love" (affection)
  - Example: Jesus at the grave of Lazarus John 11:35-36
- *Agape* refers to a "one-way action"
  - Example: God's love for us 1 John 4:10

## THE WORLD'S VIEW OF LOVE

- An emotion that leads to an action
- An emotion over which we have no control
- An emotion that justifies all behaviour, regardless of the consequences

## GOD'S VIEW OF LOVE

- An action to meet the need of another person
  - Material needs 1 John 3:17-18
  - Hospitality needs Hebrews 13:1-2
  - Physical needs Luke 10:25-37
  - Spiritual needs Galatians 6:2
- It is not based on feelings of love

## HOW MUST WE LOVE OUR MARRIAGE PARTNERS ?

- 'Agape' love eg Ephesians 5:25
  - That implies acting lovingly (ie meeting their needs) regardless of how we feel
- Do feelings of love play no role?
  - Yes! But emotions are the result of behaviour, not the origin

## WHAT ABOUT GOD'S FEELINGS OF LOVE?

- God loves everybody
  - He died for all sinners Romans 5:8 (*Agape*)
- God, however, does not like everybody
  - Jesus certainly did not like the Pharisees Matthew 23:27-29
- Does God like anybody?
  - The Father has a special affection for His children John 16:27 (*Philia*)
  - His Fatherly love leads to discipline Revelation 3:19 (*Philia*)

## HOW DO WE SHOW OUR LOVE FOR GOD?

- By obeying His commandments 1 John 5:3
  - In other words, it requires an action eg. 1 Kings 3:3
- Believers are commanded:
  - To care for others as much as we care for ourselves Luke 10:27
  - To be permanently indebted to others Romans 13:8

## THE PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

- Don't pray for more love
  - We have all the love we will ever need 2 Peter 1:3
  - God has already given it to us Romans 5:5
- Pray rather for more sensitivity
  - To be aware of the needs of those who cross our paths eg Mark 5:24-34
- Act lovingly regardless of how we feel
  - It is therefore possible to "love people we don't like" cf. Matthew 5:44 with Romans 12:20