

# **A Trichotomous Gospel-Centric View Of Love**

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Love - such a common word, with many different degrees of meaning and application. You can love Ice cream, love a football team, or love your spouse! Sometimes when we say we love something, we mean that IT pleases us or makes US happy. Yet the kind of love the Bible talks about - God's love - is not really like that - His kind of love is a love that gives and serves and sacrifices. He doesn't just 'like' something because it pleases Him. And this kind of 'agape' love of God (the Greek word) is one that we receive and can thus have for others as well. So today I want to describe this kind of love that the gospel is made of, and describe it with 3 chronological qualities - aspects of love that God went through and goes through in a specific order.

**1** - So the first quality of God's love, which can subsequently be the love we have, is something you might not be expecting, but it is a key part of love that does not often get talked about. Let me introduce this by first using a simile that my Mom told me. Just like the symmetry of a butterfly - its 2 wings with the same pattern - so is God's character. He is infinitely holy and righteous, and so as His righteousness and righteous standards increase, so also symmetrically increases the badness of bad things and God's opposition to those bad things. The Bible says God is love, and yet multiple times in scripture, God opposes sin, at times, vehemently! And so our first gospel-centric aspect of love is that...

## **LOVE HATES EVIL!**

Yes, true love HATES evil! You say, how can this be - I thought hate was the opposite of love! Sort of. But what if love HATES everything that is NOT love, and that is evil and unjust? For example, God loves children immensely. If a child abuser or murderer comes along and does his hideous deeds, it is entirely correct for a loving God to HATE the evil wicked unloving act that the sinner committed. And besides just hating the act,

the Bible is clear that God also hates the evil person who did the act, to some extent. It is only natural - that PERSON chose to do the evil - the evil act didn't just do itself! See **Psalm 11:5** -

“The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked,  
And the ONE who loves violence His soul HATES.”

And so this is gospel-centric because the gospel starts with the problem of sin - God's opposition to sin. He is holy - set apart, and as the Bible says, our sins separate us from Him.

But this leads us to our next gospel-centric aspect of love that is truly amazing. And that is:

## **2. LOVE IS SELF-SACRIFICING!**