I know there has been a lot of talk about the truth of other heaven stories in the past….I just wanted to take a second and let everyone know that I stand by my story found in my book Heaven is Real. *I still remember my experience in heaven. I want to keep telling people about my experience because it has given hope to so many people.*
Colton Burpo

Prayer Study 461
GALATIANS 5
First Love Ministries, Inc., of Perry, Georgia USA

Christian Liberty

5 *Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.* ***2*** *Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.* ***3*** *And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.* ***4*** *You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.* ***5*** *For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.* ***6*** *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*

Paul comes back to the issue of circumcision. He is saying to the Galatians that, if they are compelled to get circumcised, then they are legally compelled to keep the whole law. This makes their salvation dependent on human achievement. If we could be saved on our own works and achievements, there would not have been a need for Jesus to be crucified for our sins. What is necessary is not circumcision, but faith, and that faith works through love. We love

Him because He first loved us. Thus, the whole essence of Christianity is not the law but a personal relationship with Jesus. Either we accept His righteousness, or we try to be righteous by keeping the law. We cannot have it both ways.

Love Fulfills the Law

7 *You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?* ***8*** *This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.* ***9*** *A little leaven leavens the whole lump.*
10 *I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.*
11 *And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.* ***12*** *I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!*
13 *For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.* ***14*** *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* ***15*** *But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!*

Here Paul is getting on to the Galatians. What he is saying is they were doing really good until the Judaizers came along, and the Galatians started listening to the Judaizers instead of what Christ taught.

In Scripture, both Old and New Testament, leaven is sin. Jesus warns His disciples of the leaven of the Pharisees in Matthew 16:6. Their leaven was legalism. Even today, there are legalists who tells us

we have to do more to be saved than simply believe in Christ. Nothing saves us-not baptism or keeping the law or anything else-except accepting Jesus.

Paul believes that these Galatians will eventually reject the position of the Judaizers and get back to the simple Gospel message. This message involves the cross, and J. Vernon McGee points out that the message of the cross is an offense to those who do not believe. It is an offense to works because human effort and achievement cannot win us salvation; to reason, instead of faith; to culture, for the truth is revealed to babes; to class, because God chooses the poor and humble; to pride, because it shows the sinfulness of the human heart; to one's will, because it calls for unconditional surrender. McGee goes on to say that there are three ways to try to live the Christian life: a life of legalism; a life of license to sin (hyper grace); and a life of liberty. The first way does not work because we cannot keep all of the law all of the time since we are born into sin; the second way does not work because we are called to show our love for Christ by keeping His commandments (John 14:15) (it is not so much what we don't do for Jesus but what we do!) and by loving our neighbor as we love ourselves so we cannot just do anything we want. We can only live the life of liberty. Freedom is not a license to sin. We have not become free to sin but by His grace free not to sin. The foundation of it all is loving others as we love ourselves.

Walking in the Spirit

16 *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.* ***17*** *For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh;*

and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ***18*** *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*
19 *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,* ***20*** *idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,* ***21*** *envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*
22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* ***23*** *gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.* ***24*** *And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.* ***25*** *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.* ***26*** *Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*

We are called to walk in the Spirit. The Spirit never lead us to do anything contrary to the righteous standards of God. Rick Joyner addresses the works of the flesh mentioned here: "*This is the clearest statement in Scripture identifying the works of the carnal nature. As Paul states, if we 'practice' such things, we will not inherit the kingdom of God. This is not to imply that if we fall to one of these, we are doomed. Rather, if we practice them-give into them without fighting to overcome them-we will forfeit our inheritance in the kingdom. This should compel us to wage war against this nature as we are instructed here.*

Paul gives a list of the works of the flesh:

1. **Adultery:** sex of a married person with someone who is not his or her spouse
2. **Fornication:** sex outside marriage

3. Uncleanness (impurity): anything, such as pornography, that contaminates someone making him unfit to come before God

4. Lewdness (lasciviousness, licentiousness, wantonness): doing anything for sinful pleasure without restraint; people who are lewd are so bound up in their own desire that they have ceased to care what others say or think or more importantly what the Word says or God thinks

5. Idolatry: worship of idols (this includes money and everything that takes the place of God)

6. Sorcery (pharmakeia): This is a form of witchcraft but literally means *the use of drugs.* It came to be associated with the use of drugs in witchcraft. Drugs are used in all heathen religions.

7. Hatred (Enmity): It refers to the actions of people who are characteristically hostile to other people. This is opposite of Christian love.

8. Contentions (strife, variances): This describes rivalry which has resulted in quarrelling

9. Jealousy (emulations): a wrong desire to have what someone else has

10. Outburst of wrath-a hot temper, uncontrolled temper which flares up and then dies

11.Selfish Ambitions (strife, self-seeking, factions, cliches): This describes a person who wants office, not from any motives of service, but for what can be got out of it.

12.Dissensions (seditions): divisions

13.Heresies (parties, sects):

14.Envy: Unlike Jealousy which wants to have something someone else has, envy does not want what someone else has but wants them not to have it either. The fourth-century Church father, Basil the Great called it "grief at your neighbor's good fortune."

15.Murders: Murder is an obvious breaking of one of the ten commandment and the command "Not to Murder" was repeated by Jesus in Matthew 19:18.

16.Drunkenness: According to Barclay, drunkenness at this time was uncommon. The Greeks drank more wine than they did milk.

Even children drank. They mixed the wine, however, in a proportion of three parts water to two of wine. They condemned drunkenness as a thing that turned people into animals.
17.Revelries (Carousing): unrestrained partying

The first four are sensual or sexual sins. The next (5-8) are religious sins. The last (9-17) nine are social sins. Note that Paul concludes this list of the flesh with "and such like" to let us know that there are many others he could have listed. He refers to these as works of the flesh, meaning what we *do.* The fruit of the Spirit is who we *are* when we walk in the Spirit.

Verses 22 and 24 give us the nine fruit of the Spirit. I believe they are sequential, meaning we have to love to have joy and joy leads to peace and peace to patience, etc. Rick Joyner says that walking in the Spirit starves the carnal nature: *"The way we war against the carnal nature is to walk by the Spirit. The fulfillment of walking by the Spirit is much greater than any satisfaction we could get from the carnal nature. This also starves the carnal nature, weakening it in our lives until we are dead to it."*

I also believe the foundation upon which all the gifts rest is the fruit of love. This is the agape of God. I would like to close this teaching with some words from the teaching on *Agape.*

AGAPE

Agape is one of three words used in the New Testament Greek for love. The other two are *stergo*, which means devotion, such as family members have one to another and such as a dog would have for its master or a nation would have for its ruler, and *phileo*, which describes affection or friendship.

Stergo is found in 2nd Timothy 3:3, where it is translated as natural affection, and this particular passage talks of a time coming which will be *without stergo* or *without natural affection,* suggesting that

the last days will be marked by a time when strong family ties and devotion to others will deteriorate.

Phileo usually is used in the New Testament to speak of brotherly love. This kind of love is very important to the Lord. In fact 1st Corinthians 16:22 reads: *If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!* The word used for love in this verse is *Phileo.* Paul is saying that having brotherly love for the Lord is so important that people who do not have this type love for Jesus should be cursed.

There is a fourth Greek word often translated as *love.* This is *eros. Eros* is sexual love and has to do with gratifying the sexual desires of the flesh and is a carnal love that seeks the fulfillment of its own desires. This word is not found even once in the New Testament, even when the discussion is about sex in marriage.

Agape is the opposite of eros. It is totally seeking to give oneself to another. It has so much emotion in the Greek language that it is extremely difficult to fully translate it into English. *Agape* is the highest form of love and depicts the love of God. The Greek scholar Rick Renner says this about *agape: "Agape occurs when an individual sees, recognizes, understands, or appreciates the value of an object or a person, causing the viewer to behold this object or person in great esteem, awe, admiration, wonder and sincere appreciation. Such great respect is awakened in the heart of the observer for the object or person he is beholding that he is compelled to love it. In fact, his love for that person or object is so strong it is irresistible."*

Perhaps the best know verse in all the Bible is John 3:16 where the Word says that *God so loved* (*agaped) the world that He gave His only begotten Son.* According to Renner, *"This means when God looked upon the human race, He stood in awe of mankind, even though man was lost in sin. God admired man; He wondered at*

man; He held mankind in the highest appreciation. Even though mankind was held captive by Satan at that moment, God looked upon the world and saw His own image in man. The human race was so precious to God and He loved man so deeply that His heart was stirred to reach out and do something to save him. In other words, God's love drove Him to action. You see, agape is a love that loves so profoundly that it knows no limits or boundaries in how far, wide, high, and deep it will go to show that love to its recipient. If necessary, agape love will even sacrifice itself for the sake of the object or person it so deeply cherished. Agape is a love that has no strings attached. It isn't looking for what it can get, but for what it can give. Its awe of the one who is loved is so deep that it is compelled to shower love upon that object or person regardless of the response. This is the profound love God has for the human race, for He loved man when he was still lost in sin with no ability to love Him back. God simply loved mankind without any thought or expectation of receiving love in return."

In summary, *eros* is a self-seeking love. *Stergo* is limited only to one's family. *Phileo* is based on mutual satisfaction and can feel disappointed. *Agape*, however, is the highest form of love and is a self-sacrificial love that moves the lover to action. This is the love that the early Church was called to walk in, and it, perhaps more than anything beside the *dunamis* power of the Holy Spirit, was what caused the Church to rapidly grow in those early days and on down through the ages. We also are suppose to walk in this *agape* love. Unfortunately, the Church has often walked in murderous acts,, such as in the Crusades, and high pride instead of the *agape* we are told to walk in. Scripture is full of calls for us to walk in *agape*. *Agape* your neighbor (Matthew 19:19). *Agape* your enemies (Matthew 5:44). A*gape* the Lord God 9LUKE 10:27). *Agape* is what causes faith to work (Galatians 5:6). *Agape* is one of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). *Agape* is what husbands are called to do to their wives (Ephesians 5:25). The Church is suppose to be knitted together in *agape* (Colossians 2:2). There is

no fear in *agape* and perfect *agape* cast out fear (1st John 4:18) There are over 150 references to this kind of love in the New Testament. The other two words translated for love are used only a little over 20 times.