

The Ceresco Messenger - February 2026

8 Types of Biblical Love and What They Reveal About God

by Laterras R. Whitfield

What is love? This single word covers everything from our feelings for family or a spouse to favorite foods — and God. Yet, not all love is the same. The ancient Greeks recognized this, identifying eight distinct types of love, each uniquely expressed. Their framework offers a richer, deeper understanding of our connections with others — and especially with God.

When someone says, "I love you," what do they really mean? Is it passion, friendship, family, or something deeper? Exploring the eight types of love — *agape, eros, ludus, mania, philautia, philia, pragma, and storge* — helps us understand and express love with greater intention. This redefinition builds healthier relationships and reveals more of how God shares His perfect love with us.

Let's discover what these ancient terms reveal about love's true power.

1. Agape: Unconditional Love

What It Is: Agape is selfless, unconditional love that persists no matter the circumstances. Unlike transactional love, agape freely gives and expects nothing in return.

How to Identify It: You see agape in acts of compassion or in forgiving others even when they haven't apologized. It's a choice, made daily, to extend grace and kindness regardless of the situation.

What It Teaches Us About God: Agape is at the heart of God's character. It's the love that led Him to send His Son for our salvation — love rooted not in our merit but in God's goodness.

Scripture: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." ([John 3:16](#), NIV)

2. Eros: Passionate Love

What It Is: Eros is the passionate, romantic love marked by intense desire and emotional excitement — think of the butterflies-in-your-stomach feeling at the start of a new romance. While this love is powerful and can ignite a relationship, it needs a solid foundation to truly thrive in marriage.

How to Identify It: Eros is seen in that spark of attraction and longing between two people, especially in the early stages of a relationship or in moments of deep intimacy within marriage.

What It Teaches Us About God: Eros is a gift from God, designed for enjoyment within the covenant of marriage, as celebrated in the Song of Solomon, where intimacy and longing are honored. This passion reflects God's intention for joy and connection between husband and wife.

Scripture: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth — for your love is more delightful than wine." ([Song of Solomon 1:2](#), NIV)

3. Ludus: Playful Love

What It Is: Ludus is the playful, lighthearted side of love, filled with laughter, banter, and joy-filled moments that keep relationships fresh and exciting — whether you're teasing a new date or keeping things fun in a long-term marriage.

How to Identify It: This love flourishes in the simple enjoyment of one another's company and an easy ability to have fun together, reminding us of childlike delight.

What It Teaches Us About God: Ludus reminds us that God delights in our joy and gives us a spirit of gladness. Playfulness is a reflection of His heart.

Scripture: "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." ([Proverbs 17:22](#), NIV)

4. Mania: Obsessive Love

What It Is: Mania is an obsessive, possessive form of love that often overwhelms with consuming worry, irrational jealousy, and a strong need for control. Stemming from insecurity, it can lead to unhealthy patterns of attachment and emotional distress.

How to Identify It: You might recognize mania in behaviors such as needing constant reassurance, fearing abandonment, or attempting to control the actions of a loved one out of fear rather than trust.

What It Teaches Us About God: Mania reminds us what God's love is *not*. God's love for us is never controlling or rooted in possessiveness; He always desires our freedom and growth.

Scripture: While Scripture acknowledges a "godly jealousy," it is always for our ultimate good. As [2 Corinthians 11:2](#) (NIV) says, "For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him."

5. Philautia: Self-Love

What It Is: Philautia is *healthy* self-love — a compassionate regard for ourselves that is essential, not selfish, and undergirds every form of love we offer others.

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How to Identify It: You'll notice philautia in the gentle way you forgive yourself after a mistake, in setting boundaries, and in making self-care a priority so you can show up whole and strong for those around you.

What It Teaches Us About God: This type of love honors God because we are each made in His image, and when we care for ourselves, we're honoring His craftsmanship.

Scripture: Jesus draws a direct connection, teaching us to "Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these" ([Mark 12:31](#), NIV).

6. Philia: Deep Friendship

What It Is: Philia is the deep, affectionate love shared between close friends. It is built on trust, loyalty, and meaningful, shared experiences — the "brotherly love" that serves as the foundation for strong communities.

How to Identify It: You'll recognize philia in steadfast friends who stand by you without question, offering supportive connections that help you feel truly seen and understood.

What It Teaches Us About God: Jesus modeled this love with his disciples, calling them friends and sharing life with them — showing us that God desires genuine friendship with us, not just our worship.

Scripture: "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity." ([Proverbs 17:17](#), NIV)

7. Pragma: Enduring Love

What It Is: Pragma is the practical, enduring love that forms over years of shared experiences. It is rooted in mutual respect, compatibility, and the daily decision to remain committed, even when challenges arise.

How to Identify It: You'll notice pragma in couples who have weathered decades together or in lifelong friendships that grow and adjust through every season. It's the kind of love marked by shared mission, resilience, and a conscious choice to continually invest in the relationship.

What It Teaches Us About God: Pragma mirrors God's covenantal love — a steadfast, unwavering commitment to His people. His love is more than a feeling; it is an eternal promise and presence through every chapter of our lives.

Scripture: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. [...] It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." ([1 Corinthians 13:4, 7](#), NIV)

8. Storge: Familial Love

What It Is: Storge is the deeply rooted, nurturing love that naturally flourishes between family members — parents, children, and siblings. It's a foundational love that provides comfort, security, and a sense of belonging that shapes us from childhood.

How to Identify It: You'll notice storge in the warmth of family rituals, instinctive acts of protection, and the effortless connection shared among relatives. It's the love that makes home feel safe and relationships feel unbreakable, simply because of who you are to one another.

What It Teaches Us About God: Storge reflects the way God welcomes us into His family. Through Christ, we are adopted as God's children and embraced with steadfast, unconditional love — a love that is always present, always accepting, and always enduring.

Scripture: "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1a, NIV)

Becoming a Student of Love

Love is far more than a single feeling or a simple phrase. By understanding these eight facets of love, we can better identify the ways we give and receive it.

More importantly, we see a fuller picture of God's love for us — a love that is unconditional (agape), passionate (eros), joyful (ludus), healthy (*not* mania), affirming (philautia), loyal (philia), enduring (pragma), and familial (storge).

Recognizing these distinctions equips us to build stronger, healthier relationships and deepens our awe for a God who embodies every perfect form of love. May we all strive to become better students of love, reflecting His heart to the world around us.



Welcome to the month of February - the "Love" month.

Date	Worship Flowers	Special Music	Junior Church	Children's Time
2/1/2026	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
2/8/2026	Sommers	OPEN	OPEN	Sommers
2/15/2026	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
2/22/2026	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	Sommers

Father's Love Letter

An intimate message from God to YOU.

My child,

You may not know Me, but I know everything about you (Psalm 139:1). I know when you sit down and when you rise up (Psalm 139:2). I am familiar with all your ways (Psalm 139:3). Even the very hairs on your head are numbered (Matthew 10:29-31). For you were made in My image (Genesis 1:27). In Me you live and move and have your being (Acts 17:28), for you are my offspring (Acts 17:28).

I knew you even before you were conceived (Jeremiah 1:4-5). I chose you when I planned creation (Ephesians 1:11-12). You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in My Book (Psalm 139:15-16). I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live (Acts 17:26). You are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). I knit you together in your mother's womb (Psalm 139:13). And brought you forth on the day you were born (Psalm 71:6).

I have been misrepresented by those who don't know Me (John 8:41-44). I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love (1 John 4:16). And it is My desire to lavish My love on you (1 John 3:1). Simply because you are My child and I am your Father (1 John 3:1). I offer you more than your earthly father ever could (Matthew 7:11), for I am the perfect Father (Matthew 5:48).

Every good gift that you receive comes from My hand (James 1:17). For I am your provider and I meet all your needs (Matthew 6:31-33). My plan for your future has always been filled with hope (Jeremiah 29:11). Because I love you with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3).

My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore (Psalm 139:17-18) and I rejoice over you with singing (Zephaniah 3:17). I will never stop doing good to you (Jeremiah 32:40), for you are My treasured possession (Exodus 19:5).

I desire to establish you with all My heart and all My soul (Jeremiah 32:41), and I want to show you great and marvelous things (Jeremiah 33:3). If you seek Me with all your heart, you will find Me (Deuteronomy 4:29). Delight in Me and I will give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4). For it is I who gave you those desires (Philippians 2:13). I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine (Ephesians 3:20). For I am your greatest encourager (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17). I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you (Psalm 34:18). As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart (Isaiah 40:11). One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes (Revelation 21:3-4), and I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth (Revelation 21:3-4)

I am your Father, and I love you even as I love My son, Jesus (John 17:23) for in Jesus, My love for you is revealed (John 17:26). He is the exact representation of My being (Hebrews 1:3). He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you (Romans 8:31) and to tell you that I am not counting your sins (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). His death was the ultimate expression of My love for you (1 John 4:10). I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love (Romans 8:31-32).

If you receive the gift of My Son Jesus, you receive Me (1 John 2:23). And nothing will ever separate you from My love again (Romans 8:38-39). Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen (Luke 15:7). I have always been Father, and will always be Father (Ephesians 3:14-15). My question is...Will you be my child? (John 1:12-13) I am waiting for you (Luke 15:11-32).

Love, Your Dad, Almighty God

God's Love is Greater Than Life – 4 Reasons Why

In Psalm 63 David makes an astounding statement – God's love is greater than life itself. But what makes God's love greater than life and why?

Our earthly life is short and not easy. It is marked by daily struggles, pain, disappointments, troubles, losses, and suffering in one way or another. We are exposed to chaos. There is not one day that develops according to our plans and expectations. The joys we encounter are fleeting and of short duration. We live in the in-between zone, between the Garden of Eden and the time when everything will be made new. We know deep down that our life is not supposed to be this way. And we long for satisfaction, for lasting peace and joy, for rest.

God's Love Is Greater Than Life Because It Is the Answer to the Longing for Satisfaction

David penned his Psalm 63 in the desert, in the middle of extreme circumstances, and intense internal conflict. He was hiding from Saul who wanted to take his life. (1 Samuel 23:14-16) David was in danger, alone and isolated in the harsh desert conditions with limited resources. There was also an internal struggle going on. His circumstances differed so much at that moment from the promises he received from God. He struggled to remain hopeful, to keep his faith and peace, and to trust God's way and God's plan. This intense external and internal struggle leads to a desperate longing to experience God's loving presence and to be satisfied by Him. In this longing and search for God amidst great struggle and anguish, David acknowledges and embraces the truth that experiencing God's love is better than life. (Psalm 63:3). Life disappoints and is not able to satisfy completely. Only God's constant love and steady devotion can satisfy us fully. (Psalm 63:5)

God's Love Is Greater Than Life Because It Transforms Our Reality

The second reason is that God's love affects and transforms our reality. It does so in many different ways. In Christ God loves and accepts us forever. His love is never leaving, ever-present, and eternal. By the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit, He can love us in every situation giving us what we need most. God's love defines us and gives us meaning and purpose

When we are down and discouraged, the love of God comforts and lifts us up. His love restores our hopes and gives us the strength to overcome and go on. It changes our perspective and provides guidance, clarity, and wisdom. His love heals. It makes us able to experience deep joy and peace amidst our struggles. God's love defines us and gives us meaning and purpose. By God's redeeming love our daily struggles and suffering are not in vain.

God's Love Is Greater Than Life Because It Transcends Life and Its Sorrows

God is the Creator and the Source of life. Because He is greater than life, His love is greater, more valuable, and desirable than life. It transcends earthly life and its sorrows and remains forever. God's love does not allow life's troubles, pain, sorrows, and losses, to separate us from Him, rob our joy, crush us, and destroy us. It has a mighty protective and preservation power, keeping us and preserving our souls and inner beings. Despite our circumstances, by believing and experiencing God's love we are not desperate, not abandoned, and not destroyed! (2 Corinthians 4:8-9).

Nothing Can Separate From the Love of God

The most amazing thing about the love of God is the power that conquers and subdues everything. Nothing in the world has the power to separate us from the love of God, which He displays in Christ Jesus. "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, neither angels, nor demons, neither the present nor the future ... nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39).

Conclusion

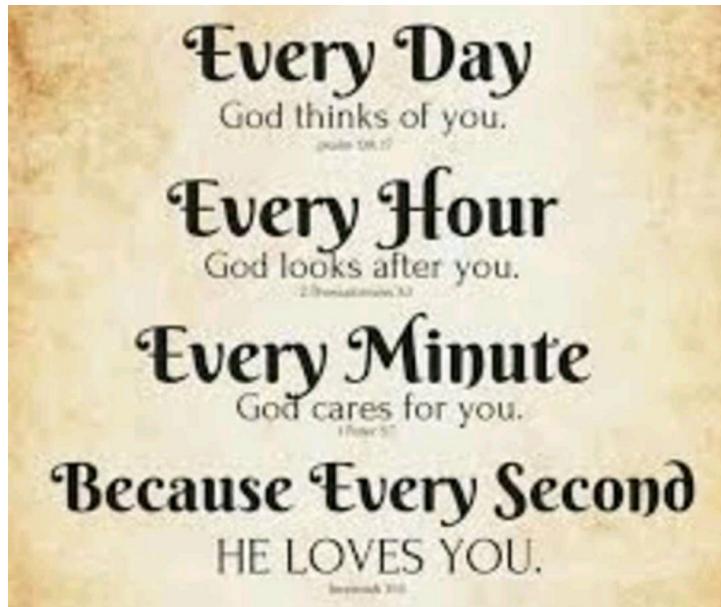
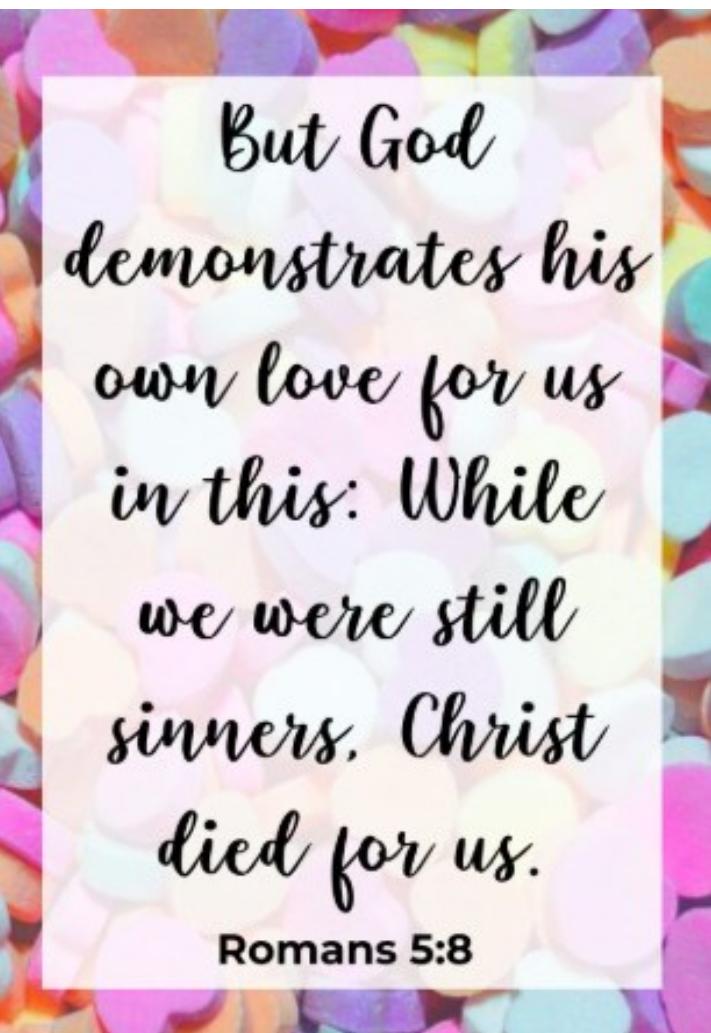
Yes, God's love is better, sweeter, larger, more desirable, precious, valuable, and greater than life. Once we have believed and experienced this love, we respond naturally by praising and worshipping God. When we choose to turn to His love, remember, acknowledge it, focus on it, and lean on it by faith, then His love is freely working in us. (Galatians 2:20) The outcome is full satisfaction, renewed strength, hope, joy, and peace as well as a transformed heart and life.



Feb	2	Cruz Garcia-Wilkens
Feb	4	Nicole Thomas
Feb	13	Allan Walker
Feb	17	Carlton Anthony
Feb	18	Glen Cary
Feb	25	Kelcie Collins
Feb	26	Gretchen King 1939
Mar	4	Garrett Skinner
Mar	9	Bonnie Eckhart
Mar	11	Ruth St. John
Mar	13	Lucas Finch
Mar	15	Vi Halder
Mar	15	Joanne Henley
Mar	18	Pam Kirkland
Mar	20	Deb Beltz
Mar	22	Danny Sommers
Mar	22	Stacy Sommers
Mar	24	Patrick Douglas
Mar	27	Sarah Collins
Mar	29	Hainsley Casey
Mar	29	Kenzie Babcock

Happy Anniversary

Mar 11 Michael Meng & Angela Sommers



Fellowship Sunday Refreshments, 2/22/2026 - OPEN!

February 2026

Sunday		Mon.		Tue.		Wed.		Thu.		Fri.		Saturday	
1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
Communion Sunday, Jan Bake Sale & Fellowship Refreshments						Bible Study 10 AM		Zoom Bible Study 6 pm				8 am Men's & Women's Breakfast, 10 am EMT Meeting	
8		9		10		11		12		13		14	
						Bible Study 10 AM		Zoom Bible Study 6 pm					
15		16		17		18		19		20		21	
						Bible Study 10 AM		Zoom Bible Study 6 pm					
22		23		24		25		26		27		28	
						Bible Study 10 AM		Zoom Bible Study 6 pm					

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