

Gathering

FAMILY LOVE

You have probably noticed an abundance of chocolate hearts and Valentine candy this month. Valentine's Day encourages our expression of love—but what happens when the heart candy is no longer available? How effective are we, in regularly expressing our love and gratitude to those we love?

Abram set a beautiful example for us in Genesis 13. Disagreement rose between Abram and Lot (his nephew) because the land where they lived was too small to support both of their families and possessions. Rather than overlook the tension, Abram does two things:

1. He directly addresses Lot with a plea for them to stop arguing. *"Let's not have any quarrelling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives."* (Genesis 13:8, NIV)
2. He provides a solution to the cause of the argument. *"If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."* (Genesis 13:9b, NIV)

God's love empowers us to address problems head-on, with kindness. Rather than ignore the issue or talk around it, Abram's love for Lot drove him to seek reconciliation by speaking honestly about their disagreement. This must have taken courage, but it was necessary for their conflict to be resolved.

With God's love overflowing in our lives, we can love our family through any difficulty or disagreement. We can draw on God's wisdom, courage, and strength to address our differences in love and seek Him for a solution.

After reading the Scripture, consider these questions:

- What are some of the things involved in seeking reconciliation to protect family love?
- Is there a disagreement with someone that you have been avoiding addressing?
- Consider the love you have for that person. What is stopping you from talking to them about the disagreement to seek reconciliation?

Complete your monthly report and turn it in to the Corps Officer.

Genesis 13:8–9b NIV

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Using the Bible characters mentioned above,
share some of the moments where **God**
showed His agape **love** towards them and/
or through them to His **people**?

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How have you experienced **God's**
agape **love** in your life?

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What are some practical ways you can
show agape **love** toward others?

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(Genesis 13:8-9b NIV)



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From Ancient Greeks to modern psychology, love has been classified in different categories. The four main categories are **Eros** – A sexual or romantic



type of love; **Storge** – A familiar love (*like father-child*); **Philia** – A brotherly type of love (*like between friends*) and **Agape** – An unconditional, sacrificial type of love.

Each one of these words for love can be found throughout the Bible. Go deeper into the

Word of God with the following questions to help you explore how you can cultivate agape love in all your relationships:

- Can you identify scriptures that give an example of each type of love? Ex. Philia – Romans 12:10
- How is agape love described in 1 Peter 4:8 and what is the result of such love?
- How does Ephesians 5:2 define 'living a life of love'? What are some things that you need to sacrifice today in order to show this same type of love?
- Read 1 Corinthians 13, substituting the word 'love' for 'Jesus'. Repeat the exercise using your name... what areas is the Spirit revealing you to improve in order to cultivate agape love in your relationships?

Written by Mabel Cuevas & Richard D. Lopez
– Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands Division



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