

AGAPE Love (Devotional)

You may not know him by his name, but most likely you will recognize the slogan he originated, for it was Henry Penn, a Boston florist, who came up with the phrase, "Say it with flowers." Penn recalls how one morning two boys and a girl came into his shop. The spokesman for this little group said, "We're a committee, and we want to buy some nice yellow flowers. He really liked yellow." Penn asked, "Is it for a funeral?" The little boy nodded yes and pointed to the girl. "It's her brother," he began. "There was a truck, we were playing – we saw it happen." The other boy spoke up, "Us kids took up a collection, we got 18 cents. Would roses cost a lot, mister? Yellow roses?" Touched by the story, and the children's caring and concern, Henry Penn replied, "I have some nice yellow roses here that I am selling for 18 cents a dozen just this morning!" He accepted the 18 cents and the committee carried away the offering of love. Later Penn said, "I felt uplifted for days. I had been given the inexpressible privilege of sharing." It is no surprise Penn felt the way he did, for the Apostle Paul quoted Jesus as saying, **"It is more blessed to give than to receive"** (Acts 20:35 [ESV]). Jesus says the joy is in the giving. It is Satan who whispers in our ear, "the joy is in getting and receiving, in having and hoarding." But do not believe it. That is all lies! And Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44).

Jesus also said in John 13:34-35 [ESV], ³⁴**"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."** The love Jesus spoke of here was *agape* love, a type of love that is totally unselfish. It puts other people's needs first ahead of our own. Our Lord Jesus beautifully demonstrated this *agape* love earlier in John 13 when He stooped to wash His disciples' feet.

A is for *altruistic*. Agape love puts other people first.

G is for *grounded*. Agape love is foundational, for **"God is love"** (1 John 4:8).

A is for *actions*. Jesus tells us that others will see our love and know we are His disciples (John 13:34-35).

P is for *perfect*. Agape love is perfect and treats all people alike. It is impartial and unbiased.

E is for *exceptional*. **"And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony"** (Colossians 3:14 [ESV]).

Love for one another is how people will know that we are truly the disciples of Jesus. It is the *agape* love that can be observed by those of the world and in the world. In some way, the world needs to have the opportunity to observe the disciples of Jesus in action, in which their love that is patterned after Jesus' love can be seen. As the Apostle John wrote, **"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another"** (1 John 4:11 [ESV]).