

## Friendship

### 1. Relation Between Agape and Phileo

- A. We have heard many lessons on “agape”: it is an act of the will rather than the emotion; selfless love which acts in the best interest of the object loved.
  - 1. Phileo, on the other hand, is affection that grows out of relationship; our feelings come into play more. This is the concept of *friendship*, an association that we enjoy because it is pleasurable to us.
  - 2. It is true that we are not commanded to “phileo” God. And it is true that “agape” must rule in all our relationships of life: we must seek the good of sinners and strangers, family and brethren, lost and saved.
- B. But perhaps these concepts have become imbalanced along the way.
  - 1. Some may overstress *agape*: “I have to love you, but I don’t have to like you.”
  - 2. Others may overstress *phileo* and determine their associations solely upon the basis of who they like to be around.
  - 3. Either extreme will hurt our association with each other.
- C. The strength of the Hueytown church lies in the relationship we sustain with each other. Our unity will give us support, encouragement, joy; disunity will destroy our influence, breed jealousy and suspicion; and lead to misery.

### 2. Phileo and Agape Together

- A. 1 Pet 1:22 - Summary of conversion to Christ:
  - 1. Purified your souls in obeying the truth - Spiritual rebirth.
  - 2. In sincere love of the brethren (philadelphia) - Fundamental to spiritual rebirth is loving others who have been reborn and adopted into God’s family. Here the love is based on *commonality* between the lover and the object: his brother.  
“ the love which Christians cherish for each other as ‘brethren’ ” (Thayer, p 653).
  - 3. Love one another fervently with a pure heart (agapao) - We are to treasure each other as brethren and serve each other for his/her good. This involves a pure, sincere heart, genuine affection. It will not act kindly in the presence of one and harshly in his absence. See 1 Pet 4:8 - “*have fervent love for one another ...*”.

B. 2 Pet 1:7 - Growth in Christ-like characteristics:

1. Note the context: *“all things that pertain to life and godliness”* (1:3); *“exceedingly great and precious promises”*; *“partakers of the divine nature”* (1:4); *“be more diligent to make your calling and election sure”* (1:10).
2. “Brotherly kindness” (philadelphia) and “love” (agape) are distinct but both are necessary.

C. 1 Th 4:9 - Always be increasing in love for brethren.

1. “But concerning brotherly love ...” (philadelphia).
2. “Taught by God to love one another” (agape).
3. “Increase more and more” - 4:10.

### 3. Notes on Friendship

A. Clarifying friendship:

1. It is not wrong for the preacher or anyone else to have special friends. Only envy and jealousy would deny **any** person this freedom. Even **Jesus** had such friends.
2. We will naturally be drawn to people of similar character, interests, age/experience. This is not wrong.
3. It is not wrong to have non-Christian friends. But are they friends who pull you up? What is the basis for such friendship? What do you get/give? Our *closest friends* **should** be our brethren.

B. Exhortations on friendship:

1. Don't make it exclusive or closed. Friends always have room for other friends. Such “friendships” are often marked by gossip, condescension toward others. Remember the hurt of being “on the outside looking in.”
2. Don't base friendships on pure selfishness. Some are simply “used” by those they think are their friends. Friendships break up in cataclysmic explosions when selfishness is betrayed or goes unfulfilled.
3. Be supportive, generous and forgiving toward friends. We all do and say things that are thoughtless, unwise, callous or otherwise unpleasant.

C. Close: 1 Pet 3:8-12