Love Is the Chain That Binds

Introduction:

1. What is the chain that binds?
2. Love has many definitions.
   1. “Love is a feeling that you feel when you feel that you’re going to get a feeling that you never felt before.”
   2. “I Love” by Tom T. Hall

I love little baby ducks,

Old pick up trucks,

Slow moving trains, and rain.

I love little country streams,

Sleep without dreams,

Sunday School in May, and hay,

And I love you, too.

I love leaves in the wind,

Pictures of my friends,

Birds of the world, and squirrels.

I love coffee in a cup,

Little fuzzy pups,

Bourbon in a glass, and grass.

And I love you, too.

I love honest open smiles,

Kisses from a child,

Tomatoes on the vine, and onions.

I love winner’s when they cry,

Loser’s when they try,

Music when it’s good, and life.

And I love you, too.

* 1. Spencer ad.
  2. Dear Ann Landers: I am 11 years old and I read your column all the time. I notice sometimes you print letters from people who aren’t asking for advice – they just want to tell you how they feel about something. So here is another one of those letters. Like I said, it’s not really a problem but I hate it.

When you watch TV, all of a sudden you see a commercial that says if you put a certain kind of baby powder on a baby’s behind he will love you. Then, a few minutes later another commercial says if you add a certain something to the gravy your husband will love you. The worst one is that commercial for chicken soup: “If you buy brand X your children will love you.”

Why doesn’t somebody tell the fools who write those things that there’s more to love than talcum powder, gravy and chicken soup? Sign me – Had My Say

Dear Had: I guess a great many TV commercials are geared to the mentality of eight-year-olds because you, at 11, aren’t going for it. Thanks for writing. I hope somebody on Madison Avenue takes the hint.

1. What love is the chain that binds?
2. The Greeks had four words for love.
3. *Eros* ⎯ THE IRON CHAIN.
   1. *Eros* is love based on physical attraction.
   2. *Eros* says: “Show me a man or woman, and if he or she is beautiful by my standards, I will love him or her, and by loving him or her will appropriate the value that he or she embodies to myself for my enjoyment.”
   3. “Dear John: Words cannot express the deep regret I feel at having broken our engagement. Will you please come back to me? Your absence from my side leaves a void which no one can ever fill. Please forgive me and let us start again. I love you. I love you. I love you. Your ever adoring, Susie

P.S. Congratulations on winning the Powerball Lottery.

* 1. The Bible does not use the word Eros .
  2. However, it does not neglect this aspect of love.
     1. In marriage, it is commanded and beautiful. 1 Corinthians 7:1-5
     2. Out of marriage it is ugly and sinful. Hebrews 13:4
     3. Dear Abby: Do you remember the column you had about girls needing to go all the way like a moose needed a hat rack? Well, I cut it out when I was 12 and gave it to a girlfriend who needed it more than I did at the time. She said it helped her make the right decision. It helped me, also, later on.

Please run it again for other girls who are struggling with that problem. Thank you. Miss R. in Ohio

Dear Miss R.: Here it is:

Girls need to “prove their love” through illicit sex relations like a moose needs a hat rack.

Why not prove your love by sticking your head in the oven and turning on the gas? Or playing leapfrog out in the traffic? It’s about as safe.

Clear the cobwebs out of your head: Any fellow who asks you to “prove your love” is trying to take you for the biggest, most gullible fool who ever walked. That proving bit is one of the oldest and rottenest lines ever invented!

Does he love you? It doesn’t sound like it. Someone who loves you wants whatever is best for you. But now figure it out. He wants you to:

Commit an immoral act.

Surrender your virtue.

Throw away your self-respect.

Risk the loss of your precious reputation.

And risk getting into trouble.

Does that sound as though he wants what’s best for you? This is the laugh of the century. He wants what’s best for him...he wants a thrill he can brag about at your expense.

Love? Who’s kidding whom: A boy who loves a girl would sooner cut off his right arm than hurt her. If you want my opinion, this self-serving so-and-so has already proved that he doesn’t love you.

The predictable aftermath of “proofs” of this kind always find Don Juan tiring of his sport. That’s when he drops you, picks up his line and goes casting elsewhere for bigger, and equally silly, fish.

* 1. This is not the chain that binds.

1. *Storge* ⎯ THE RED CHAIN.
   1. Storge is love based on family ties, blood relation.
   2. It is only used in the negative sense in the New Testament. Romans 1:31; 2 Timothy 3:3
   3. Storge is seen in
      1. Affection between parents and children, brothers and sisters – even in some cases where there is ill treatment.
      2. The phrase “blood is thicker than water.”
      3. Brothers and sisters feeling mad at each other throughout the year and still showing up for the family reunion.
   4. This is not the tie that binds.
2. *Phileo* ⎯ the silver chain.
   1. *Phileo* represents tender affection, “I like you.”
   2. This is the love of friendship.
   3. However superfluous the suggestion may seem to some of us, it is well to remember that many well-intentioned people are sincerely puzzled and are hampered in their human relationships because they have not distinguished or cannot distinguish between the natural love which prefers and has the right to prefer its own kind and that Christian love which has nothing to do with likes or dislikes or with kind but transcends human differences and disagreements. All preaching and teaching of the Gospel of Christian love must acknowledge, indeed must stress, the difference between the exclusiveness which filial love requires and the inclusiveness which Christian love demands. Where people are considering who will not be invited as guests into their homes, whom they will accept as intimate friends and confidants, whom they will marry or not marry, their own codes of acceptability are the final authority. It is not bigotry to prefer the company of those who share one’s interests who have similar tastes and manners; it is not prejudice in the usual and vicious sense of the word to seek those with whom one has natural feelings of congeniality and to avoid in personal intercourse those whose interests and personalities clash with one’s own. Jesus spent his leisure with Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, not with Herod and Caiaphas. Where personal friendship is concerned, there personal and mutual preference is supreme.
   4. The word used for the relationship of Jesus and Lazarus. John 11:3, 11, 35, 36
   5. *Phileo* is not the chain that binds.
3. *Agape* ⎯ The Golden Chain.
   1. *Agape* is the decision, commitment to treat other people right. Matthew 7:12
   2. *Agape* “can be known only from the actions it prompts.” - W.E. Vine
      1. God to man. John 3:16; Romans 5:8, 9
      2. Man to God. Mark 12:30, 31; John 14:15, 23; 1 John 5:3
      3. Brothers and sisters in Christ. 1 John 4:11, 20; 1 John 3:17, 18; 1 John 5:2; John 13:35
      4. Husbands, wives. Ephesians 5:25
         1. Is there any problem that a man could possibly have with his wife that Christ hasn’t had with the church? Yet He continues to love her. If one partner refuses to obey his responsibilities and violates his role, that does not relieve the other person from responsibility. God does not say, “Wives be submissive to your husbands when they are loving,” or “husbands love your wives when they are submissive.” Two wrongs still don’t add up to a right. Retaliation brings no honor to Christ.
         2. After discussing their paragraphs, commenting and expanding as they give occasion, I usually turn rather abruptly toward the young lady and present the following situation. “Let’s say you have agreed to save 50 percent of your combined salaries for the first three years of your marriage as a down payment on a home. At the end of the first year, he comes home one night and is very quiet. When you ask what is bothering him, he replies, “Well, Honey, you know that I’ve always had a desire to have a Porsche. And, well, I’ve been thinking about the $8,000 we have in the bank. That money could make it possible for me to buy a new 914, and the payments wouldn’t be any more than our car payments have been this year. I think tomorrow I’m going to the bank, withdraw that money, and buy that Porsche I looked at today.’ If after you make every reasonable effort to persuade him otherwise, he still goes out and buys that car, will you support him as your husband? Will you enjoy the car with him? Will you be long-suffering and not become angered? In short, will your behavior continue to be loving?”

Or, to think in terms of the male partner, I might ask, “Jim, if ten years from now Mary drifts from the Lord, becomes seventy-five pounds overweight, sloppy and foul-mouthed, will you continue to protect, to trust, to hope, and to persevere with her?”

* + 1. Christians to enemies. Matthew 5:43-48; Romans 12:20
    2. Norman Patterson – helping Jerrie Wayne, Daddy, and me put up the chain that goes around the building – said at 11:00 p.m., “I didn’t know love was such hard work.”
  1. Agape is the chain that binds.
     1. Agape described. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (NEB)

“Love is patient; love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful, nor conceited, nor rude; never selfish, not quick to take offence. Love keeps no score of wrongs; does not gloat over other men’s sins, but delights in the truth. There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, and its endurance. Love will never come to an end.”

* + 1. In agape , we have
       1. Security.
       2. Predictability.
       3. Choice, not circumstances.
          1. A wonderful Bible teacher once told a group of men an illustration none of us present will ever forget. As a lad he had a dog that was very dear to him. There was a mutual admiration society between them. The boy and the dog were real pals. They hunted, fished and played together constantly. It was comradeship personified. One day the boy came home from school to find the dog in serious difficulty. His hind legs were caught in a meshed wire fence. Try as it might the canine could not gain freedom. The dog was not only hurt but also extremely perplexed and frightened. Quickly his master rushed to the aid of the dog. He grabbed the legs trapped in the fence and began to pull. Much to his surprise the dog bit his hand and drew blood. It was animal instinct. The dog knew nothing better to do. Did the lad kick the canine offender? No, instead he rushed around to the other side of the fence to work from another angle to free his friend from imprisonment and pain. Why was this reaction so natural? Because, in a child’s own heart he loved the dog more than anything else on earth: Love has a way of overlooking those things that strangers cannot tolerate. Johnny Ramsey
          2. 1 Peter 4:8
    2. The chain, relationship, cannot be broken without the commitment, the obedience to God’s will, being broken.
       1. What about a marriage being broken by adultery? The chain was broken. Romans 13:8-10
       2. What about a “church split.”
          1. The chain was broken.
          2. Someone disregarded, abandoned, rejected the commitment, commands: love, be kind, be merciful, confront, rebuke, repent, confess, forgive.
       3. The chain will not be broken unless one or both parties break God’s will.

Conclusion:

1. The God-man relationship and the man-man relationship is broken by sin. Isaiah 59:1, 2
2. The break can be repaired.
   1. God - man. Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:9
   2. Man - man. Luke 17:3, 4; Ephesians 4:32
   3. A lot of sentimental slush about Jesus forgets that “love so amazing so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.”
3. Love is the chain that binds.
   1. Not *eros*, although it is appropriate in the confines of agape .
   2. Not *storge*, although it is enjoyed in families but can only know its highest fulfillment when relatives also have agape for each other.
   3. Not *phileo*, although these feelings and relationships are enjoyable.
   4. But *agape* – the decision, commitment to respond to God’s love by determining to obey God and to treat other people right.