

AGAPE Class

Table of Contents

1. Class Syllabus/Overview
2. The AGAPE Paradigm: The Definition of AGAPE and Eros
3. The AGAPE Paradigm: Our Eros Dilemma
4. AGAPE in Scripture
 - a. Becoming Sons and Daughters of a Perfect Loving Father
 - b. Jesus' AGAPE for Us: Our Passionate Bridegroom
5. Enemies of AGAPE: The Seven Giants
6. Overcoming Eros and Generational Strongholds
7. Love in Action: The Church Needs a New Face; Dancing and Sailing
8. The Healing Power of AGAPE
9. LOVE IN ACTION: Generosity and AGAPE
10. Review: Questions and Answers
11. Class Feedback Survey

Blue Ridge Vineyard Church

AGAPE Class Syllabus

Class Description:

The purpose of this class is to deepen and anchor the message of God's Love [AGAPE] in the heart of each student. This will be accomplished by laying a solid foundation of the nature of the Father's love. Following this we will explore the Seven Redemptive Gifts shared by Arthur Burke. This will help each individual to know how they have been wired to EXPRESS the Father's love. This teaching will also help them love others (spouses, children, friends and co-laborers) according to how they were created.

Note: This class is designed to be a 101 level class here at BRVC. Those who aspire to higher levels of leadership within this church should complete this class so that they understand the mission and spirit of LOVE IN ACTION.

Class Goals

- Deepen and anchor the message of the Father's Love [AGAPE] in each heart
- Gain a solid working knowledge of the Redemptive Gifts to help each student learn how they were meant to express AGAPE and how to love others according to how they were created
- Empower each person to step out in ACTION to express the love of God in all their relationships.

Teaching Method

As an adult class, this class will involve a lot of lecture with examples written onto the white board. I suggest you draw the diagrams and take as many notes as possible for your future review. This topic is too wide, too high and too deep to absorb in 18 weeks. You will want to refer to your notes again and again. Your notebook has many tabs. Personalize your notebook with other ideas you have gathered from other sources on the subject of the Father's love. I hope to adapt this class to be taught to children of all ages.

“This is the secret of life: the self lives only by dying, finds its identity (and its happiness) only by self-forgetfulness, self-giving, self-sacrifice, and agape love.”

From Philosopher Peter Kreeft

Class Schedule

| <u>Week</u> | <u>Primary Topic</u> |
|-------------|---|
| 1 | The AGAPE Paradigm : Definition of AGAPE |
| 2 | The AGAPE Paradigm: Definition of Eros |
| 3 | AGAPE in Scripture: Becoming Sons and Daughters |
| 4 | AGAPE in Scripture: Our Passionate Bridegroom |
| 5 | Enemies of AGAPE: The Seven Giants/Eros/Demonic |
| 6 | Overcoming Eros and Generational Strongholds |
| 7 | AGAPE in Action: The Church Needs a New Face |
| 8 | The Healing Power of AGAPE |
| 9 | AGAPE and a Generous Lifestyle |
| 10 | Review and Questions and Answers |

AGAPE Class—Blue Ridge Vineyard Church

The AGAPE Paradigm: God’s DNA and the Unfailing Story of the Scriptures

Introduction: The Great Theme of Creation, Israel and Human History is AGAPE

- I. **God’s Nature is AGAPE:** (Eph. 3:14-21; John 15:9-13; Matt. 22:34-40) Everything is centered in AGAPE.

- a. Definition—AGAPE is

AGAPE is pure goodness that is constantly flowing from the Trinity to man. AGAPE originates only in God and flows from Him to us. His desire is that AGAPE flow back to Him and outwardly to our fellow human beings, who created in His image. AGAPE, by its nature, gives value to its object.

- b. God says of Himself, “***God is AGAPE.***” I John 4:16, “***and he who abides in AGAPE abides in God, and God in him.***”

- i. Draw a picture of a waterfall with AGAPE written on the water

- ii. Heaven is a place where perfect AGAPE exists. The Holy Spirit, who is God, who is Love, is likened to living water = AGAPE poured out upon and through mankind.

- c. AGAPE loves without a _____ (Draw a straight arrow)

- d. The Purpose of This Class—To bring you into the _____ so that you can _____ in the _____ of God’s unfailing AGAPE for you.
 - i. This is not about _____ but _____.

 - ii. Paul understood the great need for the revelation of AGAPE.
Read Eph. 3:14-21.

 - iii. Life at its fullest is to live in _____ revelation of the Father’s AGAPE for you.

 - iv. Isaiah said that to prepare a people and a highway for God, we are to cry out “Make straight paths for Him.” Isaiah 40:1-8. Crooked places made straight. Eros to AGAPE.

- e. We need fresh revelations of the Father’s love throughout our lives:
 - i. Mary of Bethany, the apostle Paul, and King David all found the secret of a focused life. They tapped into the glory and pleasure of giving themselves to one thing. God invites each of us to do the same and to give ourselves wholeheartedly to Him. We

can stand with these so-called giants of the faith. The key to sustaining our intense desire to be fully given to God is to have fresh encounters with His heart. We must equip or train our hearts to actually walk out the wholeheartedness that we so intensely desire. This equipping of the heart is best found in intimacy. Our intense desire to be radical for God will be sustained with regular experiences of God's heart —intimacy sustains intensity.

ii. We need regular, _____ with the love of God to sustain a radical, intense heart. Read. Eph. 3:14-21

f. AGAPE is God's Nature—What does AGAPE look like.

Exodus 34:6-7 and I Corinthians 13

i. The Seven Self-proclaimed attributes of God—the _____ of AGAPE.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

ii. The attributes of AGAPE: Read I Corinthians 13:1-8

1. Patient, Kind, Not Jealous

2. Does not boast, is not arrogant, does not act unbecoming
 3. Does not seek its own, is not easily provoked
 4. Keeps no record of wrongs, does not rejoice in unrighteousness
 5. Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things
 6. Never fails
- g. C.S. Lewis Quote: “God, who needs nothing, loves into existence wholly superfluous creatures in order that he may love and perfect them.”
- h. AGAPE is _____. Within the Trinity, AGAPE is constantly flowing between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This divine energy of AGAPE is the most powerful force in the universe, and can overcome death itself.
- i. AGAPE is God’s _____. It is what God desires in the earth, in Asheville, in your home. The greatest commandments are to AGAPE God and AGAPE one another.
- j. There is no higher _____ than AGAPE. It is eternal, preeminent and unfailing. If you pursue AGAPE, you can’t fail. I Cor. 13:8.
- k. The Kingdom flows from the Revelation of the Father’s AGAPE.
- i. It is what Ezekiel saw in Ezekiel 47. AGAPE flowing from the throne of God, refreshing, blessing and healing the earth. The trees represent sons and daughters full of AGAPE bringing life and healing to the nations.

l. The Mountain of AGAPE Revelation. Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3

m. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) wrote

i. The only mark of genuine spiritual maturity and ministry effectiveness is the outworking of AGAPE—a self-giving love for God and others—in a person’s life.

ii. This is the one quality of our lives and leadership that the devil can never counterfeit.

AGAPE Paradigm: Definition of Eros

II. The Nature of Eros—_____ love. (Draw a bent arrow)

a. Definition of Eros—Eros is ultimately _____ and the _____ of all evil. It is the desire to

i. _____,

ii. _____

iii. _____

b. Eros loves _____ of the value of the object. Loves someone because they are beautiful, talented or wealthy.

c. AGAPE is very different. AGAPE _____ VALUE in what is loved. Pandy the ragdoll, is restored by AGAPE.

- d. Eros is love with a hook in it. Eros is the root of original sin. It is a lust for something we desire to fulfill us other than God. Eros exists in our members at birth.
- e. Greek understanding of Eros. It is the mother of all sins and can become a prison. Draw Greek symbol of Eros. (Draw on blank page to the left.)
- f. Eros is love on a _____ . It is not necessarily bad to love something with eros: a person, a sport, a favorite team, a Harley Davidson, unless that love takes control and becomes an idol.
- g. EROS is never _____—there is always something else to possess, acquire or control to make me satisfied and contented. We go through life always wanting more or what we don't have.
- h. Because of Eros we are all rag dolls, but we are God's rag dolls. His AGAPE is restoring and perfecting/maturing us in love as we allow Him.

III. The Result of AGAPE—a whole heart

- a. AGAPE means God is _____—Jeremiah 29:11. What He does is always for your good. He may say, “no,” or “wait,” but there is always a reason. This is very difficult for us to grasp. His plans are for benevolence and good.
- b. AGAPE means God _____ in and _____ you—Isaiah 62:3-5. He is not pained to be with you or bored with you. His love is stirred up when He is with you.

- c. AGAPE means God wants to _____ to you—John 3:16. This is why AGAPE and _____ go hand in hand. We enjoy the process of giving to our children. How much more does our perfect Father love to give generously to His beloved children.
- d. Slowly, a revelation of this AGAPE will begin to straighten out our “bent” eros nature.

IV. Our Eros Dilemma

The Three Arrows

- a. All of life can be _____ to three arrows: straight, crooked, or a mixture of the hook and the arrow.
- b. Draw them below

1. The Human Dilemma—Creation itself is _____. Rom. 8:19-22

a. As you look around you and inside you, you will begin to see all the _____ that exist in our relationships. Let’s take a look at some examples: (In the space provided, draw one of the three arrows)

b. “I love my dog (or cat if your prefer)

c. “I love the Pittsburgh Steelers!”

d. “I love my new cell phone”

e. Parent to a child, "I love you so much."

f. Child to a parent, "I love you, Mommy."

g. Young man to a beautiful girlfriend, "I love you . . ."

h. God to man, "I love you"

i. Christ to His disciples, "Love one another. . ."

j. Man to God, "Father I love you. . ."

k. God to His Son, Jesus, "This is my beloved Son. . ."

2. Biblical Truth: An evil, eros, exists within me that I did not create, but _____ what I do and how I relate to others. (Rom 7:20)

a. Eros is ultimately _____: No one will rule over me. I will have my way. Mt. 7:21-23. I can be doing Christian things and be around God, and yet my eros, lawless nature, is still raging and _____.

- b. Eros is an odorless, colorless _____ affecting all of my relationships.
3. Eros Payoff—there is usually an initial _____ to eros. This is called the Eros Payoff. If there were no payoff with eros, we would have no desire for it.
4. Eros Prison—left unchallenged, Eros can lead to our _____
- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. Over time the _____ of our eros prison can grow thicker and thicker.
5. What Am I to Do? Who shall deliver me from this eros? _____ through _____
- a. Christ, who is perfect AGAPE, takes on Himself the task of _____ out our bent eros nature through the Word and the Holy Spirit. This is called _____ = making me holy, like Jesus.
- b. We need a widespread penetrating AGAPE Conversion/Reformation

AGAPE Class Notes-- Becoming Sons and Daughters of a Perfect Loving Father

- a. Draw two People—One controlled by Eros and the Other Controlled by AGAPE

Perfect Love Casts Out Fear

Eros displaced by AGAPE

Perfect Fear Casts Out Love

AGAPE Displaced by Eros

AGAPE Class Notes-- The Beholding and Becoming Principle

I. The Centrality of the AGAPE Revelation

- a. We are born _____ from God in sin and iniquity
- b. When we receive His mercy and are _____, we become sons and daughters of God. We are now His children.

- c. But without a transformation of our thinking, we can live the rest of our lives as _____ and not as beloved sons and daughters of a glorious and benevolent King.
 - d. I met with a national healing leader who said to me “95% of all brokenness in peoples’ lives are essentially orphan issues.” Restoring the Foundations, Hendersonville, NC
- II. The AGAPE Crisis—God’s Children Do Not Know their Father’s Love
- a. “The present crisis in the body of Christ, in which many people never experience the AGAPE (love) of God, stems from a false view of God. Instead of a God who is full of tenderness, gladness and desire for us, believers imagine a God who is filled with animosity (or indifference, disappointment, or displeasure) toward them. This affects every single aspect of how they approach Him.”
Mike Bickle, After God’s Own Heart, p. 16.
 - b. Our Earthly Fathers—Our view of our earthly fathers
_____ us and often _____ us to a lie.
We are not free because we have the internal image of God being just like our earthly fathers.
 - c. AW Tozer said this, “The single most important thing about you is your mental concept of God.” Why? Because this affects everything about how you relate to Him.

III. The Beholding Becoming Principle

a. Write the Beholding/Becoming Principle in this space:

b. Experiencing the Freedom of a Son or a Daughter of God:

1. To experience and live in the glorious _____ of the sons and daughters of God we must pursue greater revelation about His _____ and _____ toward us. As we learn about how He thinks and feels about us, our thoughts and feelings toward Him will radically _____.
2. This results in a heart set free! Hallelujah! Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.
3. Freedom to
 1. worship,
 2. receive more love,
 3. and give more love away.

4. enjoy the moment and not worry about how well we are doing before God.

4. God enjoys us simply because we are His sons and daughters!

c. Two Hindrances to Growing in AGAPE

1. Wrong Order—I believe one of the greatest hindrances to AGAPE is simply that we focus on _____ before Beholding. We get the order mixed up, and then wonder why we are not really changing much. We wonder why there seems to be so little fruit in our lives and ministries. We are not _____ the Word: Behold then Become.

2. Performance Trap—The other great hindrance is the “_____” approach. Get up earlier to pray, study your Bible more, witness more, have more regular quiet times. There are all GOOD THINGS, but if they are not ignited by the fiery revelation of God’s love toward you, they will simply wear you out over time. Never works.

3. Remember, intimacy and revelation will sustain an intensity in our relationship with God. Revelation of His AGAPE for you will ignite passion and release energy for intimacy, Bible Study, witnessing, and service.

4. The enemy wants to get our eyes off of Jesus, because He is the _____ of

the Father's AGAPE toward us. He wants to occupy our attention on other things: our sin, our past, our failures, our performance, the success or failure of others.

IV. Our Passionate Bridegroom King Song of Solomon -the entire book

a. The Bridal Paradigm: We are positionally the Bride of Christ

1. Describes the _____ that God has for us as sons and daughters. We are redeemed and called as kings and priests to rule and reign with Him

2. But the Bridal Paradigm speaks about the _____ of our relationship with our Beloved King. This relationship goes beyond contractual faithfulness and positions of authority.

3. The Bridal Paradigm is to be marked by

1. _____ love

2. Ardent love and l_____—the way a bridegroom and a bride long for one another.

b. The Bible begins and ends with a wedding (Adam and Eve: Gen 2; Christ and His bride : Rev 19).

1. AGAPE is what we were _____ for

2. Life does not work right when anything else than _____ is at the center.

- c. Christ, our Beloved Bridegroom _____ with such fiery affection that He willingly submitted to the punishment and death on a cross in order to win His bride.
1. It is the picture of *Braveheart* or the movie *First Knight*.
 2. Our King will stop at nothing to bring freedom and life to His beloved bride
 3. This is why the _____ is the perfect, eternal, unfailing picture of AGAPE.
- d. Throughout Scripture, God is portrayed as a _____ who will share His bride with no other. Exodus 19:5-6; Ex. 20:4-5; Deut. 7:3-9; book of Hosea, John 17:24-26, Ps. 45, Ephesians 5:30-32, Rev. 1:4-6; Rev. 22:17
- V. **Draw the AGAPE Road and the place of Intimacy (Secret Place) John 14:6**

The Seven Giants: Enemies who War Against AGAPE

The Seven Giants—The Face of Eros (Deut. 7:1)

- a. These Seven Giants are pure evil within us and fight to keep us from the _____ of _____ ---The place of freedom and blessing God promised us in Christ.
- b. These Giants work _____ and _____ to resist us coming into the peace and rest of the Father's AGAPE love.
- c. Quote: "Hateful! To me as the gates of Hell is he that hideth one thing in his heart and uttereth another." Achilles, From the Iliad by Homer.
- d. Each of these Giants has an _____ .
- e. These Giants have triggers that awaken them and set them off.
 - i. Feeling _____
 - ii. Being _____
 - iii. Revealed _____
 - iv. Demand for _____
 - v. Unmet _____

f. We can react in an eros manner from the effects of

_____ . These are wounds that the enemy uses to keep us in a prison of _____. We believe these lies and need _____ to be spoken to our hearts to set us free.

g. Freedom from these Seven Giants releases the power of AGAPE to move through your life to others. We gain

vi. Freedom from _____ due to religious striving and earning merit.

vii. Freedom from _____ .

viii. Freedom to pursue God's Ultimate _____ for our lives.

ix. Freedom from Trading our _____ for immediate, short-term rewards.

x. Freedom to _____ and _____ God.

h. In a group, eros can take complete control and

_____ is born. I turn the other way from your eros ways and you do the same for me. Eros then becomes an embedded _____ of _____ for a church, family or nation.

The Enemies of AGAPE: The Seven Giants Deut. 7:1; James 4:1-5

These are the Enemies of AGAPE that can rage in our lives, both openly and simmering under the surface, waiting for some opponent to rear its head. Then these Giants will lash out with a fierceness that will surprise and appall us..

The Seven Giants do not play fair. They work in conjunction and are handed down from our parents and grandparents to keep us from living in the peace and rest of AGAPE.

Just as Israel could not tolerate any of the pagan nations within the promised land if they were to build a Community of AGAPE under Almighty God, these Giants must be destroyed, opposed and rooted out from our lives and our families.

Do not play with these Giants. They are the Enemies of AGAPE, and they will stop at nothing to keep you from AGAPE. They are DEMONICALLY EMPOWERED to keep you and your loved ones bound and living as orphans.

One of the first enemies of AGAPE is simply telling us that love is simple and easy and we already know what it means and how to give it away. This is a demonic tactic to keep us from true AGAPE.

Look Good—

Focused on appearance vs. Reality

Set apart by clothes, car, language, tattoos

“Image is Everything”

Pastors/Christian Leaders—overemphasis on title

I Sam. 15 “Make me look good to the people.”

Saul desired to look good before men than to be right with God. Contrast with David.

Ambition, drive, vows, promises

Stretching the truth, false impressions

A free floating anxiety

Fear of Man strong Prov. 29:5

Pride—reluctance to repent. Looks bad.

Madison Ave values and advertising drive this Giant.

“You will look really good with _____.”

Feel Good—**James. 4:3**

Wants to control emotions, mind and heart
 Avoids pain or discomfort at any cost
 Committed to personal pleasure or gain.
 Given to the senses, sensual.
 Controls by making gratification paramount
 1960's theme "If it feels good, do it."
 Affairs, sexual brokenness
 Source of all addictive and compulsive behavior
 Food, sex, porn, drugs, gambling, spending, video games
 "I must feel good." "Anything is better than feeling bad."
 Religions can be built on not feeling bad; no sin/ New Age
 Won't repent because it feels bad to change.
 Girls give in sexually because the little attention feels good
 Universal law of reduced return—takes more and more
 Pastors lose their influence over an affair
 Entertainment industry feeds on this giant
 The way out—embrace pain, face reality even if it

Be Right-**Job 40:8**

Original Fall—Is God really right? No, He's wrong.
 You know better. Knowledge of good and evil.
 "Know it all" Person. Outwardly appear to know it all
 Inside they are insecure lest they be found out.
 Can't ever admit they are wrong.
 Focused on mind over emotions, judgmental; opinionated
 Rigid, stubborn, rebellion. Primary cause of divorce
 Anger—biggest mechanism to hide and shift blame
 Will not and cannot bend or give in
 Will sacrifice relationship to be right
 When full blown—person is in denial on their own island
 Significant lack of joy.
 Hard to live in community where give and take required
 Justice, duty, obligation, responsibility, self-righteous
 Getting free requires grace, patience, space, understanding

STAY IN CONTROL—worst & strongest of 7 Giants Is. 14;13-14

“I Will become like the Most High” Pure Eros. Satan
 Always must be in control. Think they are god-
 Believes “If I am in charge everything will be better”
 Must determine the outcome of everything
 Anxiety of the future they can’t control. Stress constant
 Will boil over until they break down. “The Kid” eye twitch
 Doesn’t do boundaries well. Will control you and your stuff
 Will eventually use and consume others for their own ends
 Tells themselves they are the only ones who can do it right
 Often have sleep or anxiety attacks.
 Being a loner is a way to isolate and stay in control
 No one will get close to me. I won’t be hurt again.
 When feel out of control leads to rage, violence, suicide.
 Arrogant, overbearing, fussy, dominant, determined.

Hidden Agenda-**Jude 12 “Hidden Reefs”**

Covert = Words of peace with a heart of criticism
 Like a snowball with a rock in it.
 Looks like one thing, but can be devastating.
 Absalom—wooed the people, stole the hearts of Israel
 Waiting in ambush, looking for weakness, vulnerability
 Proclaim one thing, hide another in their heart.
 This giant is the ultimate USER.
 Uses everything, and everyone to advance their interests
 It is everywhere—church, families, politics
 Might be the MOST DESTRUCTIVE in relationships
 Trust is broken with this giant.
 Heb. 4:12 –God sees the thoughts and intents of the heart
 II Cor. 4:1-2—Craftiness, trickery, cunning. Calculating

2015

Jude 16

Personal Advantage-

Constant maneuvering for title, position or recognition
Greek word = Selfish Ambition Phil 2:3
When not center of attention-- suffers pain and envy
Disciples Matt. 20:20-25. Mother positioning her sons
The most self-centered of all 7 giants
Asks always, "What's in it for me?"
We were created to be dream enablers.
This giant makes us become dream stealers
Leaders who see others only for how they can serve THEM
Subtle and dangerous in church
Money, crowds, mailing lists, evangelism used for success
Obsessive focus on success, profit or advancement.

Remain Undisturbed-

Jer 48:11

Secretive, insidious, difficult to expose.
Most subtle and sophisticated giant; not blatant
Disguised as need for stability, preserve reputation, honor
Says "No" when asked to contribute more than they want
Will not be de-centered, troubled or stretched
Matt 13:14-15 Choose not to hear, don't have to change
Luke 10:30-35 Good Samaritan Story
Priest and Levite not willing to cost \$, time, relationship
Won't embrace adventure of following Jesus
Apathy, disengaged, overly cautious, uninvolved.

AGAPE Class Notes

Overcoming EROS and Generational Strongholds

Terms From Restoring the Foundations (RTF) Material Hendersonville, NC Echo Mountain Inn

- i. **Ungodly Beliefs**—Lies we believe that the Enemy has sown into our lives through hurts, abuse, neglect, sins of our parents and forefathers, and painful experiences.
- j. **Forgiveness**—The unconquerable power that releases healing and transformation in the human heart through the death, atonement and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- k. **Wounds**—Soul and spirit hurts that remain in our lives until they are healed. It is possible for you to have forgiven, and released others, but a wound/hurt remains and needs healing.
- l. **Sins of the Fathers**—Generational iniquity which is passed down through families to the third and the fourth generation (Ex. 34:6-7). This can be overcome through repentance, forgiveness and the cross of Christ.
- m. **Demonic Oppression**—Satan and demons traffic in the realm of sin, unforgiveness, and deception. Christians can be oppressed. Christ came to break demonic possession and oppression.

II. The Belief–Expectation Cycle–Draw it and Discuss

III. Love, Freedom and Responsibility

a. This is one of the key processes we need to learn

i. As we grow in AGAPE, God’s love will _____ us of

1. Our Hurts
2. Slavery to Sin
3. Fears and insecurities

ii. This Healing will result in greater

1. We will stop _____ and start
honestly looking at our actions and attitudes.
2. We will be able to hear _____
more easily when others need to correct us.

iii. This growing freedom will result in us taking more

_____ for the eros in
our hearts and in the church.

b. When we accept responsibility for where the church is and for our behavior, we can repent and God's love can heal us more deeply.

c. This results in an upward spiral, or an AGAPE

_____.

d. One of the keys to a healthier, more loving church is the subject of BOUNDARIES.

i. This is an important topic as we move into the Redemptive Gifts.

ii. Healthy Boundaries will result in a healthier church, more
_____ and thus more AGAPE.

e. Draw below two large circles and we will examine boundaries together

AGAPE Class Notes

AGAPE IN ACTION: The Church Needs a New Face; Dancing vs Sailing

II. The Church Needs a New Face

a. What face do people see when they encounter the church?

i. *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. 2 Cor. 4:6*

ii. God desires to reveal the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

1. The vision that started LOVE IN ACTION.

iii. As the church, and the instrument of the Kingdom of His AGAPE, we are what our culture looks at to _____ Him and His mission.

b. The place where AGAPE is supposed to flow, is often one of the greatest sources of _____ and _____.

i. _____ rages in the church.

ii. The _____ are alive and well in the Christian Community.

c. Watch Youtube Video of Gabe Lyons on CNN. Let's discuss this for a while.

d. In order to reflect the AGAPE nature of God, we must

_____ to our selfish, eros ways. We must
_____ of our sin, bring our eros ways to the
_____ and let God's _____
_____ transform us from the inside out.

e. What an exciting possibility: A church of _____
AGAPE.

f. Matt 5:14-16-- *"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. "*

g. What does it mean to let our light shine before men? Let's discuss this.

h. Why is it important for people to SEE our good deeds? Discuss

III. The Church Needs to Start Dancing and Sailing

a. Dancing in the Power of AGAPE

i. Perichoresis—the Divine Dance of the trinity. AGAPE flows between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

ii. Sailing vs. Rowing

1. God’s power can make the work of LOVE IN ACTION a power-filled adventure instead of a draining, never-ending process of self effort.

2. We want to be a dancing and sailing church! Opening the doors.

b. The Dance Steps of Dynamic Cooperation with the Holy Spirit (from Growing the Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit, Dr. Brad Long)

i. Divine Love (AGAPE) Draws us into Participation

ii. Intercessory Prayer invites God’s Engagement

iii. Faith Clothed in Obedience Increases the Flow

iv. Receiving Divine Guidance (learning to listen to voice of the Holy Spirit)

v. Spiritual Discernment (makes listening and obedience safe)

vi. Welcoming the Gifts and Manifestations of the Spirit

vii. Seeing and Responding to Kairos Moments

c. AGAPE is the context within which all of these dance steps takes place.

d. Why is dancing more powerful than working for God?

i. Jesus, our Bridegroom, is leading us.

ii. We are only _____to Him, not having to be in control of everything.

iii. _____and _____are released for the Body of Christ and the world to see.

iv. Our churches become places of power, love and beauty.

v. The church is beautiful and _____, she is no longer:

1. worn out,

2. beat up and

3. discouraged.

4. She looks like a beloved bride!

- I. The Healing Power of Walking in the Light with Others I John 1:5-10
- a. We are only as _____ as our _____.
 - b. God's perfect love drives out (displaces) fear. We often do not get healing because
 - i. We fear others knowing how sick and _____ we are
 - ii. We fear the _____ that might come
 - iii. We fear that we _____ have these issues.
 - c. So we continue to let areas _____ go on inside of us and Love doesn't grow in us. Eros grows in the dark.
 - d. The purpose of the gospel is that AGAPE would _____ within you through your abiding relationship with Jesus Christ through His Holy Spirit.
- II. Rooted and Grounded in AGAPE—Paul's Revelation Eph. 3:14-21
- a. Paul understood that we need to be continuously _____ by God's unfailing AGAPE. Down in our root system, we need His AGAPE _____ flowing to us and _____ us.

b. Four areas critical to healthy development–

i. The Need for Unconditional Expressed Love

1. _____ –Critical to healthy future relationships
2. _____ –Child knows that their needs will be met.
3. Time Spent Speaks _____ to a child

ii. The Need for Safety/Security and Comfort

1. _____ safety
2. _____ safety
3. Tender _____ when life and others hurt us.

iii. The Need for Praise and Affirmation

1. Every one of us needs others to say _____
_____ about us.
2. This is true of _____ and _____.
3. Many forms of eros can result from a
_____ of _____.

iv. The Need for Nurture of our Purpose

1. Recognition of our _____ and _____.
2. Establishes a sense of _____ and _____ to the world.
3. Children learn they can make a _____.

c. Damage to Little Minds and Hearts

- i. When these four needs are not met or, worse, we experience some form of physical, mental, sexual or spiritual _____, our hearts carry around soul/spirit _____.
- ii. We can even experience _____.
- iii. Satan attaches _____ to our unmet needs or abuse and we then form _____.

III. Finding Healing in AGAPE

- a. Unconditional, unbroken benevolence and goodness from God and others allows us to heal because
 - i. We no longer feel the need to _____ and cover our _____ . I John 1:7

- b. AGAPE frees us to go from looking at our wounds, hurts or blame and we can start to look at
- i. Our underlying belief systems that drive our behaviors
 - ii. The wounds and hurts that Satan used to sow _____ into our belief system.
 - iii. How to move from _____ to forgiveness, which is the foundation of all healing and transformation.
- c. We can begin to take responsibility for the _____ of our relationships and quit the cycle of blame.
- d. We can _____ our brokenness to Jesus Christ in the AGAPE-filled, and caring presence of others and find real, lasting healing and peace in our lives. James 5:13-16

AGAPE Class Notes

LOVE IN ACTION: AGAPE and a Generous Lifestyle

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." 2 Cor. 9:7-8

Generosity is one of the most _____ and _____ expressions of AGAPE. Generosity makes our world a better place. It improves the life of the receiver. And it improves the life of the giver. Yet, despite the benefits, generosity is still too rare in our world today.

Instead, our society craves and pursues more at every turn. We seek enjoyment by directing most of our resources towards our own pursuits: security, possessions, experiences, enjoyment, and luxury. Meanwhile, significant opportunities for generosity surround us every day at every turn. In order to unconform our thinking in a consumer-driven world and begin taking greater advantage of the abundant benefits of generosity, we need to shift our worldview. We need to practice AGAPE generosity.

Consider then these thoughts on how generous people think.

1. They recognize the resource pie is not _____.

The mindset of competition—that my resources only grow when someone else's shrinks—is based on a faulty premise. It assumes there is a finite sized pie and if someone else enjoys success, my opportunity shrinks. But quite frankly, this thinking is incorrect. The pie of resources is not finite. God has unlimited resources. He can multiply our seed to sow.

2. They know that generosity leads to greater _____.

Studies confirm what generous people already know: Giving increases happiness, fulfillment, and purpose in the life of the giver. We were not designed to be creatures of selfishness. Instead, we were designed to seek and discover happiness in loving and caring for others. And those who decide to look for fulfillment there, quickly discover it.

3. They find joy in helping others _____.

The easiest path to finding success in your life is to help someone else find theirs. After all, our contribution to this world has to be measured by something more significant than the size of our savings account. Our lives are going to find their greatest significance in how we choose to live them—and how we enable others to live theirs.

4. They believe changing _____ is worthwhile.

Generous people are quick to admit the world's problems will never be solved by one person. But perfection does not slow them. To them, changing even one life within their sphere of influence is reward enough. God always pursues the one.

7. They see there is _____ to give than money.

We have so much more to offer this world than just financial resources. We have time, talents, experiences, and lessons learned. Giving people think beyond their money and begin to invest their lives into others. Often times, this step can be more difficult than signing a check... but usually, it is more desperately needed.

8. They fully embrace the reality that life is _____. They celebrate it!

Life is short. And we only get one shot at it. Those who fully embrace this reality learn to live life in light of it. They recognize we have but a short time to leave our imprint on this world. And they cheerfully give their resources to accomplish it.

9. They are content to live with _____.

By definition, true generosity requires a level of contentment. It recognizes the reality that giving our resources to another person means we have less for ourselves. In this way, contentment forms the foundation for generosity. But in response, surprisingly enough, generosity also becomes **the fuel for greater contentment**.

Our world is desperately seeking cheerful and generous givers. They improve society. They inspire us. They push us forward. And their view of the world is one I desire to further grow in my own life.