

# “Who Am I?”

David’s words pierced Mephibosheth’s heart quite unexpectedly. Bowing even lower this time, Mephibosheth cupped his hands over his face. Through tears he whispered, “**What is your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I!**” (2 Samuel 9:8, NKJV).

A dead dog? Much is implied in such a description: “I am a person of low status, no one important. I deserve nothing but death. You should abandon me, dispose of me, throw me out, desert me, forsake me, renounce my name, leave me alone and give-up on me... but you won’t. Instead you have given me that which I do not deserve! You have given me life! I know it can’t be because of who I am, but because of who *you* are.”

## Through the Eyes of Love

Those who look upon us with eyes of love see us differently than we see ourselves...

Read Psalm 8:3-5. In this passage, we find David asking a very similar question to that of Mephibosheth. “**What is man that You are mindful of Him?**” As you consider the stars shining brightly in the night sky, why do you believe God loves you with such intensity?

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David’s response to Mephibosheth was motivated by a love that far surpasses our ability to understand (Ephesians 3:19). It is *agape* love. “[*Agape* love is] unselfish, loyal, and benevolent concern for the good of another.”<sup>1</sup>

Let’s look at this love in more detail. Read the following verses and describe God’s *agape* love.

Jeremiah 31:3 \_\_\_\_\_

Hosea 14:4 \_\_\_\_\_

John 3:16 \_\_\_\_\_

John 13:1 \_\_\_\_\_

David was not able to demonstrate a love of this magnitude on his own. According to 1 John 4:7 and Romans 5:5, how was David able to display *agape* toward Mephibosheth?

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Turn now to 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. This section of scripture is probably the most noted for its description of love. If we stop for a moment and consider how David looked upon Mephibosheth, we will find answers to our own pressing question...

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<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster, Inc. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*. Eleventh ed. Springfield, Mass. : Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003

“What Do You See in Me, Lord?”

**First, *agape* is patient.** The Greek word for “patience” in this passage is *makrothymēō*. It means “to be patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others.”<sup>2</sup>

Read 2 Peter 3:9. What causes God to be patient, or longsuffering, towards you when you are struggling with sin, or in Mephibosheth’s case, lost in the barren land?

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Patience is also “the quality of a person who is able to avenge himself yet refrains from doing so.”<sup>3</sup> How did David show Mephibosheth longsuffering love? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Second, *agape* is kind.** In this context “kind” means the eyes that look upon us are “willing to help or assist”<sup>4</sup> in times of need. It also means “to furnish what is needed.”<sup>5</sup>

What is your greatest need right now? Read Isaiah 41:10 and 40:29-31. What will love do to help you? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Third, *agape* “does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude...”** (NIV). David learned early on what it was like to be viewed through the eyes of jealousy, greed, arrogance, selfishness, and abusiveness. A person who possesses these qualities takes great satisfaction in belittling and harming others.

Review our text, 2 Samuel 9:1-13. Does David mention Mephibosheth’s flaws or inadequacies? \_\_\_\_\_

How would pointing out his flaws have added insult to injury? \_\_\_\_\_

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When Mephibosheth entered into David’s presence, David did not parade what Mephibosheth could have possessed if he were on the throne.

Perhaps looking upon Mephibosheth caused David to remember what it was like to live life in a sheepfold, and then in hiding in the wilderness. When you know someone is able to relate to your situation, is there a greater sense of security in your relationship? Why?

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<sup>2</sup> Strong, James: *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed. Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996, S. G3114

<sup>3</sup> Zodhiates, Spiros, ed. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament.* Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992. G3115.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. G5541.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. G5543.

Read Philippians 2:6-8 and Hebrews 4:15.

**Fourth, *agape* is not self-seeking.** David sought to give Mephibosheth what was best for his life rather than seeking what was best for his own. How is this aspect of love brought to light in John 3:16-17? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Fifth, *agape* is not easily angered.** In Lesson Three we caught a glimpse of this love. What do the following verses reveal about *agape* love? Reread Exodus 34:6-7. Also read Psalm 145:8. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Sixth, *agape* keeps no record of wrongs.** Read Psalm 103:8-14.

Maybe you noticed that David never makes mention of the life Mephibosheth *was* living in Lo Debar. Maybe this is because the **seventh characteristic of *agape* love is that it “does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth”** (NIV).

**Eighth, *agape* always protects.** The Greek word for “protect” in this passage is *stego*, which means “to cover over in silence.”<sup>6</sup> This concept is conveyed best in 1 Peter 4:8. Record this verse in the space provided. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Ninth, *agape* always trusts.** To “trust” in this context means that the giver will always believe in or have confidence in the beloved.<sup>7</sup>

**Tenth, *agape* always hopes.** Hope is anticipation and expectation of fulfillment or success.<sup>8</sup> In laymen’s terms, this means that love is sure of our success and can’t wait for it to be achieved!

**Eleventh, *agape* always perseveres.** To “persevere” means that the giver of *agape* love will remain (instead of leaving), keep going (instead of giving-up), and suffer for the sake of the other when times are the hardest.

Now let’s look at *agape* love in action. Turn to Luke 15:11-32, the story of the prodigal son.

What did the father see in the son when “**he was still a great way off?**” (NKJV).

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How was this demonstrated? \_\_\_\_\_

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Can you see the Father’s love for you?

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<sup>6</sup> Zodhiates, G4722.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. G4100.

<sup>8</sup> Merriam-Webster, Inc: *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*. 10th ed. Springfield, Mass., U.S.A. : Merriam-Webster, 1996, c1993

*Unselfish* love is never based upon what the giver receives in return. It is self-sacrificing and attentive. *Loyal* love is faithful, trustworthy, committed, reliable, dependable, steadfast, and dedicated, no matter how it has been wronged. *Benevolent* love is an overwhelming concern for the well-being and need of another. It is compassionate and generous. As you can see, *agape* love sees the best in you. And even more importantly, **twelfth**, *agape* never ceases, stops, or becomes inadequate!<sup>9</sup> ***Agape never fails!***

In closing, read Ephesians 3:14-21.

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<sup>9</sup> Swanson, James: *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*. electronic ed. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, S. DBLG 4406, #11