

The Attackers: Acquisition of Agape Love; Love for God & Christ Requires One to Go Beyond Gnosis, Eph 3:19; the Love *of* God cf. the Love *for* God: the Genitive with the Noun of Action, 2 Cor 13:14; Rom 5:5–6

- (32) These are the characteristics of mental attitude love and how they are expressed toward others. These are the behavior patterns and character traits that make up the sophisticated lifestyle of the mature believer.
- (33) Love is the mental attitude of Christ that we are to aspire to according to 1 Corinthians 13:4–8a, and commanded by Him in John 13:34 and by Paul in Ephesians 3:19.
- (34) If you want to know how to love others try 1 Corinthians 13; specific applications are also provided in the Royal Family Honor Code noted in Romans 12:9–21.
- (35) So, if you want to know how you are to behave before the Lord, here is your homework:
 - 1. See John 13:34 for the commandment to love.
 - 2. See 1 Corinthians 13:4–8a for the definition.
 - 3. See Ephesians 3:19 for the commandment to learn and retain in the stream of consciousness.
 - 4. See Romans 12:4–21 for application to others.
 - 5. See 1 John 2:9–11; 4:7–8; and 5:20–21 for a test on how you’re doing.
- (36) Ephesians 3:19 begins with the commandment “Begin to know the love of Christ.”
- (37) He loved us to the extreme by dying for our sins and providing for anyone who would believe in Him deliverance from the lake of fire and the imputation of eternal life.
- (38) To have this kind of love, ours must become sacrificial toward God whom we serve as bondslaves and toward our fellow believer likewise.

- (39) To do this we are to acquire this love that “surpasses knowledge.” The word “surpasses” is a translation of the present active participle of the verb **ὑπερβάλλω (hyperballō)**: to go above and beyond; to surpass.
- Present: Static: a condition that is assumed as perpetually existing, or to be forever taken for granted as a fact.
- Active: The love of Christ produces the action.
- Participle: Ascriptive: the participle is used as an adjective which in this case describes “knowledge.”
- (40) Knowledge is the translation of the ablative singular of **γνώσις (gnosis)**: to perceive, understand, or comprehend. This is knowledge understood academically.
- (41) There are several other words that have to do with certain categories of knowledge: (1) the imagination: **νοέω (noeō)**, (2) objective thought: **φρονέω (phroneō)**, or (3) subjective thought: **δοκέω (dokeō)**.
- (42) All of these and others describe the normal machinations of the human mind but are not capable of comprehending divine thought.
- (43) To go beyond these requires the intellect to go beyond *gnosis* in order to understand the love of God. You can never approach the sophisticated life of *agapē* love until you get beyond your human-viewpoint ideas about love.
- (44) Clue: It’s not about you. It is about God first, others second, and you third.
- (45) A major key to the whole doctrine of love is found in the Greek phrase: **ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ (hē agape tou Theou)**.

- (46) This phrase may be translated either “the love of God,” or “the love for God” dependent upon the Greek grammar and context of the passage. The former speaks of the divine attribute while the latter refers to the believer’s reciprocity.
- (47) These two must be accomplished in the believer’s soul before he can possibly fulfill the commandment to love his fellow believer. Problem-solving device #7 must precede problem-solving device #8.
- (48) These excerpts explain the concept of the genitive with the noun of action:

The noun *agapē*, “love,” with its definite article *hē*, “the,” are both in the nominative case. *Agapē* is a noun of action because it expresses a verbal idea. *Agapē* represents action because it has a verb, ἀγαπάω (*agapaō*), “to love,” as a cognate. The proper noun *theou*, “God,” with its article *tou*, are both in the genitive case. A noun in the genitive case connected with a noun of action is a grammatical construction taken from the Attic Greek of the fifth century B.C. Greek playwrights, such as Aeschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles, used such phrases as a literary device—the noun in the genitive case identifies the ‘hero’ of the drama. In the Greek of the New Testament, the phrase *hē agapē tou theou* is meant to dramatically identify God as the Hero on the stage of human history.

When in the context of a passage of Scripture, “God” produces the action implied by the noun of action, “love,” *tu theou* is called a subjective genitive because it functions as the subject of *agape*. As a subjective genitive, the phrase *hē agapē tou theou* is translated “the love of God.” (An example) of this usage (is) found in ... 2 Corinthians 13:14 In the subjective genitive, God produces love toward the believer.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. (2 Cor. 13:14)

If “God” receives the action implied by the noun of action, “love,” *tu theou* is called an objective genitive because it functions as the object of *agapē*. In this case, the objective genitive phrase should be translated “the love for God” (Rom. 5:5; 2 Thess. 3:5; 1 John 2:5; Jude 21).¹ God receives love from the believer.

¹ “Although in most English versions of the Bible *he agape tou theou* is translated “the love of God,” in these four verses they are all objective genitives and should be translated “the love for God” (R. B. Thieme, Jr., *The Unfailing Love of God* [Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2009], 80n79).

And hope [confidence does not disappoint, because the love of [for] God [*hē agapē tou theou*] has been poured out [*ἐκχέω, ekcheō*] within our hearts through [the personal agency of] the Holy Spirit who was given to us [for our advantage]. For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died [as a substitute] for the ungodly [the saving work of Christ emphasizing the love of God]. (Rom. 5:5–6)

The fact that “love for God has been poured out within our hearts” suggests that “love” in this context is reciprocal love. The grammar of verse 5 authenticates this conclusion.²

(49) The subjective genitive is also found in Ephesians 3:19 where it speaks of the love of Christ:

Ephesians 3:19 - ... to know the love of Christ [*ἀγάπή τοῦ Χριστοῦ (agapē tou Christou)*]: **subjective genitive with the noun of action**] which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (NASB)

(50) When we know the love of Christ then we have gone past academic perception of the Word of God and moved doctrine into the stream of consciousness.

² Thieme, *The Unfailing Love of God*, 79–81.