

## Overview of C.S. Lewis's classic book *The Four Loves*

C.S. Lewis (1898-1963), an atheist until age 30, was one of the intellectual giants of the twentieth century and among the most influential Christian writers of his day. He wrote such celebrated books as *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In *The Four Loves*, a wise and warmly personal book, Lewis provides a candid, profound reflection on both the virtues and failings of human loving.

His exploration of the theme of love opens with the distinction between two different kinds of love: "Need-love," such as the love of a child for its mother, as distinguished from "Gift-love," epitomised by God's love for humanity. Lewis provides insights into these as well as other variations of human love, such as love of country, love of home, and "Appreciative-love," when special attention is offered to another of value. From this foundation, love is considered from four categories, based in part from the four Greek words for love. While these can each be understood uniquely, they are actually intimately connected – *"the highest does not stand without the lowest."* These four loves are:

**1. Affection [storge] (στοργή):** The fondness through familiarity, especially between family members or people who have otherwise found themselves together. This kind of love is about being comfortable with another person or group of people. It is the most natural, emotive, and widely diffused of loves. These factors lend it strength, but also make it vulnerable, for affection has the appearance of being "built-in" or "ready-made," and as a result people come to expect, even to demand, its presence, irrespective of their own behaviour. This love can work for ill as well as for good.

**2. Friendship [philia] (φιλία):** The love between genuine friends. Friendship arises out of companionship when two or more people discover they have common interests and an inward connection that others do not share. This love is often spontaneously discovered when the two realise that they are sharing a different, eminently spiritual journey. While lovers are pictured face to face, friends are side by side, their eyes looking forward.

**3. Romance [eros] (ἔρως):** The sense of "being in love." Sexuality is part of Eros but is distinct from it and can operate without it. Eros wonderfully transforms what is essentially a desire for pleasure into longing for genuine emotional connection with another person, desiring intimacy with another who is the focus of one's attention. Eros is about wanting another person whom is known as "beloved."

**4. Charity [agape] (ἀγάπη):** Love that brings forth care regardless of circumstance. The natural, human loves are not self-sufficient - their glory lies within the greater love of Agape, which is the greatest of all the loves. God is love, and therefore in Him there is no hunger that needs to be filled, only plenteousness that desires to give. While God, as Creator, has implanted in people the first three loves, Agape is God's own Gift-love and comes by pure grace. The other three natural loves are thus subordinate to this Agape love of God, which is characterised by full, charitable, self-giving love. Because of God's love for humanity, he has bestowed a supernatural Need-love for Himself as well as a Need-love of one another. Our very being is made to seek and abide in Agape love.

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February 5, 2012

## Loved By God

**Charity [agape] (ἀγάπη):** Love that brings forth care regardless of circumstance.

1. Agape love is \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Agape love is \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ followers.

*And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love [agape] one another as He commanded us.* 1John 3:23

3. Agape love provides \_\_\_\_\_.

*<sup>9</sup> Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. <sup>10</sup> Anyone who loves [agape] their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble.* 1John 2:9-10

4. Agape love \_\_\_\_\_ for us.

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*<sup>12</sup> Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. <sup>13</sup> But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, <sup>14</sup> and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."* Luke 14:12-14

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*<sup>28</sup> Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. <sup>29</sup> If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. <sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.* Luke 6:28-30

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*<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" <sup>22</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. <sup>23</sup> "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.* Matthew 18:21-23

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9.30am  11.30am  5pm  1st Floor  2nd Floor