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**No Greater Love**

(John 15:12-14 KJV)

*12This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. 13There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14You are my friends if you do what I command.*

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t is a common thing to hear in church that "God is love" and that "Jesus loves you", but seldom do we ever stop to think about what that exactly means. Where do we even get our ideas about what love is in the first place?

We likely get many of our ideas about love from watching television—from watching characters on TV who claim to have "fallen in love". It is also likely that contemporary music has impacted and shaped our views about love.

Anyone who listens to a lot of music can attest to how much of today's music deals with the concept of love. Yet, it does not take a theologian to point out that the music and media largely present love in a superficial outward manner. To point out an example, I think of the popular Muni Long x August Alsina song “Hrs & Hrs” that contains the lyrics, "**Yours, mine, ours, I could do this for hours, Sit and talk to you for hours, I wanna give you your flowers, And some champagne showers, Order shrimp and lobster towers, But it's me that gets devoured**". But really that type of love is considered Philo Love not Agape Love!

The love we hear about in popular songs and the love we witness on TV is almost always portrayed as a feeling. Love, as it is portrayed in the Scriptures, however, is NOT portrayed as a feeling. Love may indeed produce feelings, but it is not in itself a feeling. Love, as it is revealed in Scripture in particular, John chapter 15 is always portrayed as a decision “Agape”. We begin our examination of what love means in John, chapter 15, verse 9: "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love".

The word "abide" is what theologians would call the "key word" in chapter 15. It occurs 9 times in the first 11 verses. What does it mean to "abide in (Christ)" or to "abide in (His) love"? The Greek word, translated to "abide", literally means "to stay" or "to remain".

The meaning here is crucial because it places the onus for "abiding" on us. That is to say, that if we are not walking with God, it is not God who has abandoned us, but it is us who has abandoned God. Jesus, in John chapter 15, is urging us to not flee from God.