



## Agape—Kind

**T**his series of Artios Letters will expound upon the biblical usages of agape and define each characteristic. They will show the reader what each characteristic means and how to manifest them. Biblical support is provided for each topic. The clear-cut information that follows will enable any Christian to attain a disciplined life through agape, and begin to reap the benefits of such a lifestyle.

We recently covered the characteristic ‘suffereth long’ and came to an understanding that compassion is learned, and is how to counter strong negative passion. Christians are to be compassionate toward those in need.

Agape has long since been translated ‘love’. Research indicates that, while the associated behavior is loving, ‘love’ is a



misleading translation. Nonetheless, I have chosen to use the word ‘love’ at times because so many people are familiar with it, but I also refer to agape as a disciplined lifestyle, and also a code of conduct. You’ll see reference to this terminology through this Artios series.

Today, our quest will continue with the agape characteristic called ‘kind’.

I really have some fun with this characteristic. I often ask people, “What is kind?” To this day, not one person has answered the question accurately. Nearly 35 years ago, when I realized this prob-

lem, it troubled me to no end. If you cannot define “kind,” how can you say you are disciplining your mind to live according to it? This finding actually prompted this study on agape.

**1 Cor 13:4** Charity suffereth long, **and is kind**; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

### [What’s behind the English?](#)

The phrase “and is kind” comes from the Greek word chresteuomai, and means, “to be useful or beneficial.”

Chresteuo is the root form and means “use.” Another form of this word means “to use, *and* to make use of.” From this, we derive “useful.” One can also see it translated “profitable, good, and agreeable.”

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If we are to walk with the greater love in disciplined living, and if one of those characteristics is kindness, it behooves us to know exactly what “kind” really means. Far from the secular definition of kindness stands the biblical definition of “useful” or “beneficial.”

## Kind

The following examples are provided to enhance your basic understanding of the characteristic called “kindness.”

One very familiar verse in the Bible, Matthew 11:30, sheds an important light on the phrase “is kind.”

**Mat 11:30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

The word “easy” is the Greek word chrestos. It means “useful.” Jesus was teaching his disciples that his yoke has a specific manner of use, it is useful, and that it is beneficial. The translation “easy” does not apply when you understand what the Greek word is. There are times when the

responsibilities of God’s Word are not easy, but they are always “useful.” The second part of this verse tells us that the burdens you will be required to carry will be manageable.

## Yoke

“Yoke” refers to an “obligation.” It is specifically a joining of two things.

**Acts 15:10** Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

Why put a yoke [some type of obligation] on yourself or someone else? We were freed from the curse of the law. These people were tempting God by enslaving others to the Mosaic law. God wants His people to be coupled with the things that are useful, things from God’s Word. God’s way is always beneficial and useful. To walk without the discipline of agape would be to require obligatory service from people. Our service is in and by free-

dom. It has nothing to do with bondage. If there are any burdens, they are manageable, never enslaving.

**Luke 5:39** No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

Did you know that often wine was used because of its healing properties? The word “better” is the same word as “useful.” The more seasoned wine is, the more beneficial or useful it is.

**Luke 6:35** But love [agapao] ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

**Luke 6:36** Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

God is beneficial to all people, no matter their state of mind. God’s people are asked to benefit others as well. This means that we are to give, and to not expect to

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receive something in return. That's the way God is. He doesn't look for anything in return. He manifests His benefits to saint and sinner alike because he is not held back due to his expectancy or lack of expectations. If you are always expecting to receive certain results, you'll have a difficult time disciplining your mind with agape. Be useful to others.

1 Pet 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,  
1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:  
1 Pet 2:3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Verses 1 and 2 give us instruction on how to live godly. Verse 3 tells us that God Himself is gracious [kind – useful and beneficial]. Further, God expects his people to taste of this quality. How can you taste something spiritual? This is a figure of speech, where God is placing emphasis on the importance

of believing and manifesting this to others.

“Kind” means “useful” or “beneficial.” We are now ready for the Golden Nugget of kindness.

## Golden Nugget

The following section in 1 Corinthians 9 is our Golden Nugget and it teaches leadership how to use abundant sharing. In this section, we have a wonderful usage of the characteristic of agape called usefulness [kindness].

1 Cor 9:6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?

1 Cor 9:7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

These men were doing the work of the ministry. Paul was asking the question, “can't I use what I helped produce?”

1 Cor 9:8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

Paul asked, “is this just me speaking?” Then he asked, “what does the Word of God say about this?”

1 Cor 9:9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

God's Word is very clear on this subject. God wants His leaders to be able to use the abundant sharing\* collected from the believers. In the Christian Church, Abundant Sharing replaced Tithing. This is one way that God provides for His leadership.

1 Cor 9:10 Or saith he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that ploweth

\*Abundant sharing is “giving out of one's material abundance for the outreach of God's Word and for the care of the saints.” Reference: The Grace of Giving by Jerry D. Brown

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should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

Then the question arises, “did God say this only for them?” The answer is that God said this for the benefit of all. If a leader is plowing in hope, a unique qualifier, then he could also partake of this hope.” How does this fit with abundant sharing? The next verses tell us.

1 Cor 9:11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

The carnal things were the things that had been collected in the weekly collections. The question was, “if we took care of you spiritually, can’t we also reap from you in the physical category?”

1 Cor 9:12 If others be partakers of *this* power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not **used** this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

Verse 12 tells us that the leadership has the ability to use this power. The power they can use is the ability to use the carnal or physical things collected as abundant sharing. This power is an exerted type of power, something that can be controlled. If the leader believes it will not benefit the church, he can decide not to partake of this abundance. If he decides that it will not hinder the move of God’s Word, he can make use of this abundance. In no way is a leader to hinder the move of God’s Word. This responsibility makes it clear that God’s leaders are required to walk in love, especially with the quality of usefulness in the Church.

1 Cor 9:13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

1 Cor 9:14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

Then it is true that those

people who minister about the holy things should live of them also. This is ordained of God. But there is another side of this as well.

1 Cor 9:15 But I have **used** none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for *it* were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

Paul was making it clear that he would never use the carnal things given by the believers in the form of abundant sharing if it was going to hinder the move of God’s Word. He would rather have died!

1 Cor 9:16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

1 Cor 9:17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation *of the gospel* is committed unto me.

All of his efforts were to

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be from free will and nothing else. More important than receiving any type of financial recompense is to keep preaching the Gospel! True rewards come if one preaches from his free will.

1 Cor 9:18 What is my reward then? *Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.*

No matter what he was doing, he refused to abuse his power as a leader. This is a dynamic quality of kindness or benevolence. God expects this of His leadership.

1 Cor 9:19 *For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.*

1 Cor 9:20 *And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;*

1 Cor 9:21 *To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but*

*under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.*

1 Cor 9:22 *To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

1 Cor 9:23 *And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.*

He made clear his objective in verse 23. He did everything for the Gospel's sake that he might be able to share fully with the people to whom he was ministering. He had no ulterior motives. He only wanted God's Word to move in the hearts and lives of those to whom he was ministering. His commitment was that God would take care of him, even if the believers did not. That is the attitude any person should have if they really want to be beneficial to the Church.

We saw the word "used" in verses 12 and 15. This is the same word as "kind" in 1 Corinthians 13:4. Agape asks that you make yourself useful, not

hindering the move of God's Word in any way.

## Examples of how to conduct yourself in usefulness:

This section shows how you are to conduct yourself in usefulness. There are two questions that you can ask yourself: "How do I use myself?" and "How do I use all that God has given me?" These verses should help you answer both of them.

2 Cor 1:17 *When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay?*

Paul asked the question, "did I use lightness?" Paul only wanted to benefit the Corinthian believers, who were having major problems in their walks. He did not want to make people mad, or run them off. He did his best to use lightness in his reproof, but there were times that he had to become rather bold as he proclaimed the

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Word. He had to be sure that he did not purpose according to the flesh. He acted according to the revelation he received. This is what made his work so decisive.

2 Cor 3:12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we **use** great plainness of speech:

Because of the hope that we have, we are to benefit the church by speaking plainly. All the educational training in the world will not make one useful. The application of agape will.

2 Cor 13:10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should **use** sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

Again, referring to how he talked, Paul spoke of how he was ready to use sharpness according to the power given him by God. He wanted to edify the believers, to build them up. He did not want to destroy them with hard words. He had the authority to do either. This is an

example of how God expects His people to discipline their lives through agape. You must learn to manifest them by controlling your mind.

1 Tim 1:7 Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

1 Tim 1:8 But we know that the law *is* good, if a man **use** it lawfully;

The manner of use of the law could be good or it could be harmful. These people were misusing the law. We are not to misuse the Word for our own gain. Our manner of use of the Word has to line up to the Word. We are to benefit others as we live a Christian life.

1 Tim 5:23 Drink no longer water, but **use** a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

The manner of using wine is for the stomach's sake and other infirmities. There are religions, which condemn the use of any type of alcohol. Clearly, either God is wrong or the religions are wrong. A

man must make up his own mind as to what he will believe. The Bible tells us that using wine can benefit you. A person must discipline his mind through agape regarding how much he drinks. Stepping outside of this will cause problems in the church, causing hindrances to the move of God's Word.

Much Love in Christ,

Jerry D. Brown