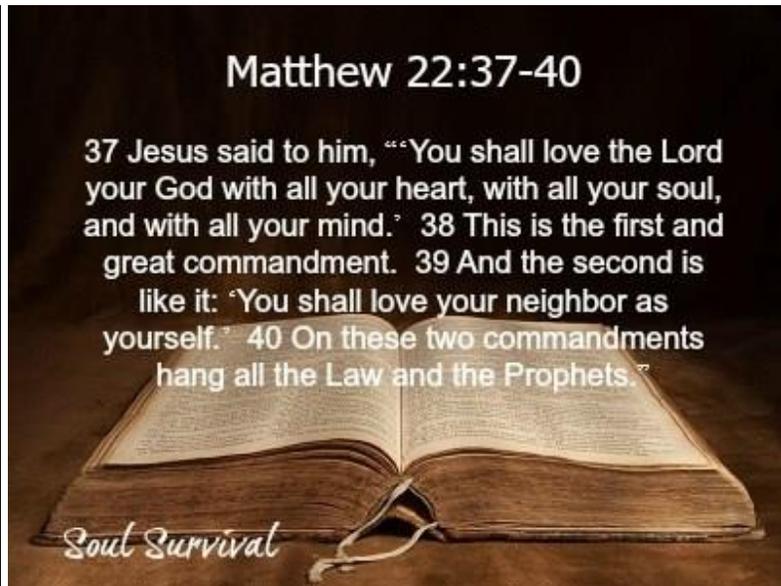
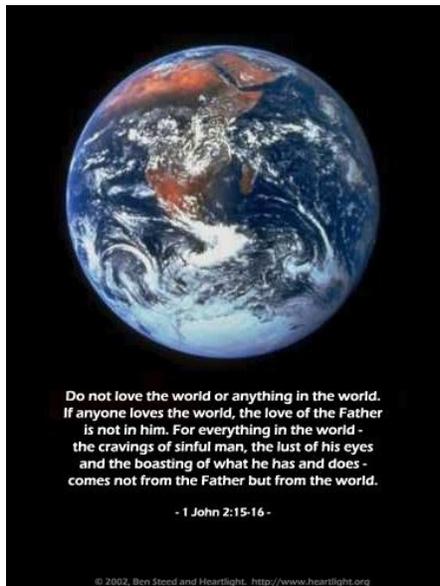


**Daily Life with Christ. Love-18: Understanding the objective, universal, unchanging, eternal nature of love: The proper/improper loves in 1 John 2:15-17 and the various offices of love in Matt. 22:37-40.**



(Online copy at <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/031918.pdf> and <http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>).

**George:** Stephen, I think you are far too critical of my method of interpretation (original languages + isagogics + comparing passages).

**Stephen:** I don't mean to be. . . . besides I did say that these were excellent methods to further elaborate on truth. My criticism is of building ultimate foundation of reality on them. Remember how this conversation started? You said that you were glad that you knew the original languages of Scripture so you can get to ultimate reality? I merely asked how you could make that claim based on the fact that love/*agape* in the original is used for the pure and holy love of God (John 3:16) as well as the dark and evil love of man for darkness (John 3:19).

**Suzu:** Like I said, you two should not try to analyze love so much. You are both wrong—the meaning of love is not in the original languages . . . George. And Stephen, you are trying to make it too complicated with all of your metaphysical talk about proper love and improper love and meaning based on the beings of things. We just need to love more and think less. We need to celebrate love—which is one of the reasons I have “LOVE” in big letters on my purse.

**Stephen:** Suzie, what about 1 John 2:15-17? *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.* Here we are told not to love certain things for they will destroy our love for God. When you say you celebrate love, how do you know that you are not celebrating improper love toward things or improper love for self as per “pride” above? Seems like just the rank celebration of love could be celebration that destroys love for God.

**Stephen:** George, another point . . . as far as me being too critical of the idea of getting to ultimate meaning through the original languages, I am not criticizing your system with my system of Realism. I am criticizing your system with your own system. You say you can get to ultimate reality of meaning of love through the original languages of Scripture. I am simply pointing out the inconsistencies in your system. As illustrated in the passage above, the same Greek word for love (*agapao/agape*) is used for proper and improper love: love for God and love for evil. You are certainly free to explain to me how the meaning is in the word . . . and how Greek is univocal in the above passage.

**George:** I already noted how the Greek scholar dealt with it by saying that John poured new meaning into *agapao/agape*.

**Stephen:** Seems pretty subjective to me, as matter of fact it seems ad hoc. Did Wuest ask John? Seems like he is trying to get to meaning based on John’s mind instead of the biblical text.

**George:** What do you mean subjective? And aren’t meanings based on minds?

**Stephen:** Well, it is subjective in that his claim is not universal, unchanging, and undeniable. As a matter of fact there is no evidence for that claim. And, NO, meanings are not based on minds. They are based on beings, on what is—the unchanging and undeniable law of beings and the law of non-contradiction.

**George:** Well, I still think it is possible that there is some exegetical nuance to how *agape/agapao* are used in John 3:16, 19 and 1 John 2:15-17.

**Stephen:** I have heard that before . . . but no one ever comes back with an answer. It seems like they are committed to their system more than reality as such. There are many other passages that demonstrate what I am saying: that you can’t get to objective, ultimate, undeniable reality through words—whether they are in the original or not.

**George:** Like what?

**Stephen:** Like **Matthew 22:37–40**, *Jesus said to him, “ ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”* There are at least 5 different kinds of love in this passage . . . 3 are explicit and 2 are implicit: (1) we are to love Jesus enough to seek to obey this command, (2) we are to love God with all of our being, (3) we are to love

fellow human beings (neighbors), (4) we are to love ourselves, and (5) we are to love the Word of God because it is the Word of God was written to enable us to have these proper loves.

**George:** What is the point?

**Stephen:** Well, if we just take the three explicit loves—God, others, self—they are all governed by the one word for love (*agapao*). Would you not agree that love for God and love for others and love for self are to be different? For example, our love for God is to a worshipful love, but we are not to have a worshipful love toward others or self. We are not to love ourselves in the same way we love God, we are not to worship ourselves. In your exegetical system, you have no answer to how the meaning of love can be so different because the same word is used—and in the same context. But as I have noted, in philosophical realism, love is predicated according to the undeniable and universal principles of being and the law of non-contradiction. In sum, love is to be understood as proper and improper and according to the various offices of love, and all of this is based on the universal law of beings. My love for my wife and my children are different, not based on some word study, but on the kind of beings they are. Moreover, my love for my wife is not in conflict with my love for my children, because love is appropriate to each being according to the kind of beings they are. In other words, there are different offices of love because there are different beings. This applies to all instances of love, which is why we can say we love people and love certain foods, we cherish them both but the love is different in that I will seek the good of people, but I will not seek the good of my blueberry pancakes. In sum, when you deal with beings at an ultimate level, you get to undeniable and universal principles of which there are no exceptions. There are two broad categories of love: proper and improper; and love is to be viewed in terms of offices that are determined by beings, not by words or presuppositions. There are no propositional presuppositions in Realism. We start with undeniable and universal reality as such.