

Types of Natural Love

Natural love is undoubtedly the greatest gift that the Father has bestowed on humankind, and without it, humanity would be in a very unhappy condition. It brings humans into unity and a greater state of happiness than any other human quality. When perfected in the spirit world, it results in supreme happiness (though not as great as for those who have through soul transformation by the Divine Love reached the Celestial Heavens). However, natural love has limitations and is not guaranteed to last. Also it may not be strong enough to resist temptation, and is not sufficient to bring about true salvation through the new birth whereby one can enter the Celestial Kingdom – only the Divine Love can accomplish that.

The different natural loves include

- * love for God: both Moses and Jesus exhorted people to love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength (Deut. 6:5; Luke 10:27)
- * mother's love, father's love: mother's love is one of the strongest loves, yet it too can fail – in contrast to God's love which will never fail (Isa 49:15)
- * self-love in the proper sense: If we are to love our neighbor as ourselves (Luke 10:27), proper self-love (sense of self-worth) is necessary. This is not the same as selfishness or self-indulgence.
- * married love: this includes, among other things, mutual respect and mutual submission (Eph. 5:21)
- * sibling love and love for relatives: this is exemplified in some of the Old Testament stories alluded to below
- * love of children for their parents: this is exemplified by obedience and honor when under parental authority, and respect and honor throughout life. There is a blessing promised for honoring one's parents (Exodus 20:12; Prov. 6:20; Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 3:20)
- * friendship love: in the highest sense, we are Jesus' friends if we love as he loved – with God's Divine Love (John 15:8-17). For human examples, see below.
- * love for neighbor in the broad sense: this is the second of the two great commandments – to love one's neighbor as oneself. In the broadest sense, every human being is our neighbor (Lev. 19:18; Luke 10:27-37).
- * and even love for enemies: this would be the most challenging, but Jesus exhorted to love and pray for our enemies (Matt. 5:43-46)

On a different level, and yet still natural love, is soulmate love (see below). Natural love fulfills the laws that govern the human and spiritual existence.

Love Illustrated in Old Testament Stories

The Old Testament, written during the time in which Divine Love wasn't available, contains wonderful stories of love where the natural human love becomes a forerunner of the Divine Love. In other words, before humans could understand God's Divine Love and mercy, they first had to learn to appreciate what true love is.

Examples include, among others, the love of *Abraham* for his sons Isaac and Ishmael, his nephew Lot, as well as the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah who were about to be destroyed for their sins (Gen. 13:7-11; 14:12-16; 18:16-33; 21:8-13); the magnificent and touching story of *Joseph*, whose love for God and fellow man, as well as incredible forgiveness shines through despite hate and betrayal by his brothers, false accusation by his employer's wife, and forgetfulness of Pharaoh's cup bearer, to whom he had rendered service and who had the opportunity to bring about his release from unjust imprisonment (Genesis, chapters 34-37; 39-45; 46:1-7, 27-34; 47:1-6); the mutual love and friendship between two widows – *Ruth, the Moabitess and her Israelite mother-in-law, Naomi*, as well as *Ruth and her new husband Boaz*, a relative of Naomi (Book of Ruth); and finally, *David*, a man after God's own heart – despite much sin in his own life – who expressed *love to God* in many of the Psalms, and exemplified love to others in his *friendship with Jonathan*, his *respect for his enemy, King Saul*, and his kindness to Saul's and Jonathan's crippled relative Mephibosheth (1 Samuel 18:1-4; 19:1-6; 24:1-22; 26:1-25; 2 Samuel 4:4; 9:6-13).

Soulmate Love

Human souls created by the Father are duplex – male and female – each of which will undergo a separate incarnation. These two individuals are soulmates, but they may or may not meet during their earthly lives. Each may be born in a different time, place, culture and circumstances. If they meet and marry in this life, but come from different backgrounds and influences, such marriage is not guaranteed to be happy. After death, soulmates will eventually meet and stay together in real soulmate love, though not before a period of purification, and in accordance with their condition of soul.

Soulmate affinity is a part of God's loving plan for two individuals, who at the beginning were united as one soul, to after their period of incarnation come back together and live with each other through all eternity. While they may not recollect their former unity during their mortal life, at some time after they become spirits, they will realize their relationship to each other and, if nothing insurmountable intervenes, will come together again in true union and happiness.

Soulmate love is a special kind of, and the highest form of, natural love that, in contrast to the other natural loves discussed above, will last forever. It is a highly purified love, a spiritual love, only transcended in its quality by the Father's Love. Soulmate love is in reality not the love of two souls, but one and the same love manifested in the two opposite sexes. This love becomes complete when the two apparently independent souls come back together in perfect unity. In comparison, natural love has limitations and is not guaranteed to last. Also it may not be strong enough to resist temptation. None of the types of natural love, including soulmate love, are sufficient to bring about true salvation through the new birth whereby one can enter the Celestial Kingdom – only the Divine Love can accomplish that.

Reference for this section: True Gospel Revealed Anew by Jesus, Volume 2, p. 21