

MADE TO LOVE

Scripture used: [Ephesians 5:1-2 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon concluded the series *Made for This* with his sermon titled “Made to Love”. The writer of Ephesians urges us to imitate God in everything we do. How are we supposed to do that? Ephesians 5 clarifies that we are able to fulfill this call if we learn to love like God loves, which is referred to as “agape” love. This type of love is not sentimental or emotional nor is it given out of obligation. Agape is a love of choice and willing that good things will happen to another person. The writers of the New Testament provide us with specific directions for how to love like this.

KEY POINTS

- 1. You were made to love (agape).** [1 John 4:15-19](#): Why should we seek to love like God? According to [Romans 12:21 \(NLT\)](#), we should conquer/defeat/transform evil with good. In order to do that, we need to examine our own experiences, hearts, and actions. Suffering that is connected to humiliation or trauma leads us to deeply shaping our soul and character, but this depth can lead us to either empathy and compassion or bitterness/resentment/vengeance. One key area to examine is how we engage with anger in our lives.
- 2. Two important questions to explore about anger.**
 - a. How do I respond to anger?** There are four ways that we respond to anger that can lead to destroying relationships: criticism, contempt, defensive, or stonewalling. These reactions are the opposite of agape. Agape requires engaging with another person which heals and builds relationships.
 - b. How do I react to my enemies?** In [Romans 12:14-21 \(NLT\)](#) we are provided with directions for how we should respond to everyone, including our enemies. We are urged to bless our enemies. We should be open to forming deeper relationships with anyone, being happy when others are happy and weeping with those who weep. We are not to seek revenge. We are to pray for our enemies ([Matthew 5:43-44 \(NLT\)](#)). This does not mean that we are to stay in abusive dangerous relationships. In fact, this does not always mean reconciliation. Blessing our enemies brings restoration to our hearts first. Loving our enemies protects and preserves our own hearts so we can become instruments of love that break the cycle of violence and bitterness. Love is the only hope for overcoming the darkness. We are to be the light in the darkness ([Matthew 5:14-16](#)).
- 3. Choose to bless and not curse.**
 - a. I can bless by what I say:** [Numbers 6:24-26 \(NLT\)](#) provides us with an example of what we can say when we pray and proclaim a blessing over someone.
 - b. I can bless by how I pray:** [Romans 12:14-15 \(NLT\)](#) instructs us to pray a blessing, not a curse. We should seek to have empathy in our prayers.
 - c. I can bless by what I do:** Jesus forgave us by His actions on the cross ([Luke 23:34 \(NLT\)](#)). We should seek to put our blessing into action. If circumstances prevent us from engaging directly with others, we can still write a note or send a card to the person.
- 4. God chooses to bless and not curse you.** God deals with us with great patience and love. He seeks to bless us in spite of our sins and our inability to measure up to His perfect holiness.

DISCUSSION

- 1) HEAR** - Where has trauma, pain, or suffering shaped your life? What things in life have made you more compassionate? What things have made you more resentful? God has the ability to heal old and new wounds. He can bring restoration and transformation to those wounds. Think about places in your life where He has already brought such healing, and share them with others.
- 2) UNDERSTAND** - Reflect on the two questions presented in the sermon: How do I respond to anger and how do I react to my enemies? Can you think of times that you reacted to anger in ways that hurt your relationships? Have there been times that with God’s help, you have reacted with agape? How was the outcome different?
- 3) DO** - Who will you choose to bless and not curse? Look for opportunities to bless someone who perhaps has made you angry or whom you consider an enemy. How can you seek to transform evil into good?