

# Expressing Love to the Men in Our Lives

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February! The month of love culminates in Valentine's Day. Every woman has a number of men in their lives. We usually think of spousal love or boyfriend/girlfriend love during this month, and rightfully so. These types of relationships are designed to be the most meaningful and fulfilling between the opposite sex. But there is also a myriad of other possible relationships we can have with men that are also important to God. These need a different type of love exchange so that they remain wholesome and godly. But love still needs to be expressed.

Four words express love in the Bible:

Philia – bond of friendship

Storge – familial affection

Eros – sensual and romantic love

Agape – divine, perfect, unconditional, sacrificial love

So how should we express these acts of love?

First, let's recognize the boundaries of various relationships.

Eros should be reserved for marriage. So let's put that one aside for a minute and deal with how to express love to other men in your life.

Storge will encompass our father, brothers, cousins, grandfathers and uncles. This is love that comes because of intimacy within the family circle. It should never express eros love. It also should have boundaries according to the preferences of family members. What one member's definition of storge is, may not agree exactly with another.

Philia will encompass most of our acquaintances and co-workers in business and ministry. Eros and Storge should never be expressed in these relationships...no matter what! But there are other boundaries that are helpful to remember as we negotiate these relationships in a healthy manner.

First, no flirting. Women have a mastery in this area as our emotions desire acceptance in the male world. But innuendos and coy looks show your weakness in full display. These may draw men to believe something is between you that does not exist. They can also put us in a compromising situation quickly.

Second, no one-on-one meetings without the door open and someone else nearby. This rule should apply even to business meetings. You just need to quickly say, you prefer the door open when asked to close it. The other person may wonder why and you should explain that you do not want others to assume anything that does not exist in the relationship.

Third, no touching unless in public. This means, not even a shoulder to cry on! The only form of touching in public should be greeting hello or saying goodbye. You can move away from someone discreetly if an arm goes around you.

Fourth, dressing appropriately to not be a distraction. Men are usually taller than women. Have you ever thought about how someone higher than you can look down your V-neck dress? If your dress is too tight, men look at the curves and their imaginations can easily take a wrong direction.

This brings us to the fourth word for love: agape. Agape takes love to a divine level expressing how God is love in a pure form. Being unconditional, it forgives easily, submits quickly, seeks the good no matter what, and displays what God desires for the relationship. Agape can take place between any two people on the planet. We as ladies sometimes need to work at agape, because when there are hiccups in a relationship, we must choose to quit emoting and look at the situation from God's perspective. Agape is proved through the stress and strain of relating to others.

Let's look at some unique aspects of women. We embrace life and concepts with our minds and emotions. We also express our love for our Creator openly, and with others who also feel as we do. 1 Corinthians 13 has a whole list for you to demonstrate.

As Women we have a testimony. Our details may differ than many men, but the reasons for resisting God initially and then coming to salvation have many common elements with persons of either sex. There are different ways to tell the same story. Ask God to show what highlights and conclusions might be most beneficial to the person to whom you are witnessing.

Love on Earth would be incomplete if we women did not show the part of God's character that we so easily display. Understand your male relationships and pray for each one so they can develop through God's direction and your obedience to love. You probably has between 35 and 50 male relationships currently that you could affect.

Ladies let's save the Valentine card for our husband or fiancé, but we can do acts of kindness that stay within the boundaries listed above for various men in our lives. Allow God's love to be expressed this holiday. More than any other, playing love is the most rewarding!