

# Courted by Christ

by Dr. Steve McVey

*He entered into the room, which was filled with noise and activity. There was music, laughter and talking. His eyes scanned the room, searching for the one whose very face caused his breath to quicken and his heart rate to increase. He loved her, yet it was more than that. He wanted her. He wanted her to be his, not just tonight, but forever.*

*Then he saw her. Across the crowded room, she stood – as if she had been waiting for him all her life. She was beautiful. No, not beautiful. She was stunning. “I must have her!” every fiber of his being resonated. “I want to spend my life with her. I want to love her and cherish her and hold her. I want to take care of her and spoil her!”*

*He walked across the room, never taking his eyes off her even for a moment. The room was filled with people, but his eyes were on her. As he approached her, his presence caught her attention, and she looked upward into his penetrating eyes.*

*This was the moment he had been waiting for, the time he had longed for as long as he could remember. Gently and lovingly he spoke: “Would you care to dance?”*

## A True Story

*The description I have given is a true story. The two did begin to dance that day and they have never stopped. He asked her to marry him and she said “yes.” You may know the people involved in this story.*

*The one He desired to have is you. The Person who wanted you so badly is Jesus Christ. If you are a Christian, one day He walked into the room of the world to find you. He was captivated by you and determined that He would make you His own.*

*Jesus Christ loves you and wants you to enjoy His love for eternity. He wants to court you, to entice you to receive His love and His life every day. Why would you be courted by Christ? It is because He wants you to*

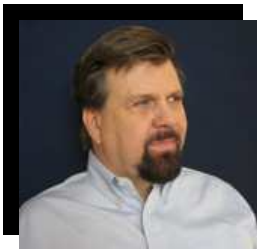
*be His bride for all eternity. Jesus Christ is consumed with you. Speaking of you, He said, “Who is this . . . fair as the moon, bright as the sun, majestic as the stars? (Song of Solomon 6:10)*

*You may not feel that way about yourself, but it makes no difference. What He says is an objective fact.*

*Will you trust Christ and believe what He says? The link between the truth of His love for you and your receiving that love is simply faith.*

*Talk to Him now in your own words and tell Him that you receive His love. Tell Him that you want to be His for all eternity. Then get ready to enjoy the greatest romance of the ages.*

*Tell somebody about this wonderful Love of your life. May God bless you in your walk with Jesus Christ. With Him, life is a dance. Enjoy it!*



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Again, thank you so much for this opportunity to serve you. There's lots more in store at our website. Be sure to visit us there at [www.gracewalk.org](http://www.gracewalk.org). We hope you'll drop by for a visit and that you'll tell a friend about us.

In Him

*flip over for another article by Steve*

## Divine Love Is More Than An Attribute - by Steve McVey

When the Bible says that, "God is love" (1 John 4:8), how are we to understand that verse? Does the statement speak to the core essence of who He is? Are there other aspects of His nature that need to be seen in balance with the reality of His love?

Some say that to teach about the love of God the way I do does a disservice in presenting His nature by suggesting that Agape is *the* defining factor of everything that can be known about Him. They argue that God has other aspects of His nature that must be seen in balance with His love. They particularly point to His justice and wrath as examples. Critics contend that by focusing on His love to such an extent presents a lopsided view of the totality of who He is. I believe that the opposite viewpoint causes the very problem they suggest others create. Those who attempt to align justice, wrath or any other divine qualities alongside His love as separate but equal realities malign His true nature.



Think of it like this: Imagine a pie to be used as an object lesson to illustrate God's nature. How would you show the place His love, justice and wrath holds within His nature? Would you show a division in the pie with three equal pieces, each showing the respective aspects of His essence? Or would you have a very large piece of the pie reveal His love and two smaller pieces show the place justice and wrath hold within His being? How would you divide the love, justice and wrath of God?

The fact is that such a division doesn't exist within the divine nature. Instead, it is the pie-crust that is the love of God and that every other aspect of His nature could be seen as a piece of the pie. In other words, God's justice and wrath must be understood as a part of His love. Otherwise, God is part love and part other characteristics.

To suggest that focusing exclusively on the love of God as the totality of His being leaves out something is to insult Divine Agape. God *is* love. Love is more than an attribute of God. It's His ontological makeup. God is just, but justice is simply an expression of His love. God expresses wrath but wrath too is an expression of His love. Everything that can be known of Him must be seen through the lens of agape or we end up presenting a god with a multiple personality.

Is there a side to God that is not love? Can we argue that divine wrath is something separate from agape? Does divine justice come from a place within God where love does not preside? Is God love *and* something else?

The problem comes with the contemporary use of these words that are based on our flawed concept of a judicial god who is a courtroom judge that demands the books be balanced and that somebody be punished for the wrong that was done. Like Adam in The Garden, we have superimposed our own distorted, legalistic (literally) mindset onto the God who has done nothing but reveal Himself through Jesus Christ as the One who loves us and would never act in any way that contradicts that reality.

The pervasive human understanding of justice couldn't be further from what the Bible teaches about divine justice. The human view is that a wrong was done and somebody must be punished for it, but that isn't at all what the Bible tells us about Justice seen through the lens of agape.

Biblically, to "bring justice" does not mean to bring punishment but to bring healing and reconciliation. Justice means to make things right. All through the prophetic books of the Bible, justice is associated with caring for others, as something that is not in conflict with mercy, but rather an expression of it. Divine justice is God's saving action at work for all that are oppressed, making things right for everybody. Consider these texts:

*Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow (Isaiah 1:17). This is what the LORD says: "Administer justice every morning; rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed (Jeremiah 21:12).*

The way that we "administer justice", the Prophets tell us, is by encouraging and helping the oppressed. In contrast to what we may have been taught, God's justice is not in conflict with his mercy, they are inseparable. True justice can only come through mercy.

*This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Administer true justice: show mercy and compassion to one another"  
---(Zechariah 7:9).*

*Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice  
----(Isaiah 30:18).*

If we want to understand the concept of divine justice as the Bible reveals, then we must see it as a "setting things right again." It's not retribution that makes things right, but restoration. That is the heart of our Father.

What about wrath? The Greek word is *orge* and, while the word is often used to refer to anger, it can refer to any violent emotion, not just anger. It is "an agitation of the soul" and can even mean, "love." If our starting point in understanding the use of the word in the Bible is a concept of a God who is angry about sin and wants somebody to pay, of course, we will automatically see wrath as an expression of anger. On the other hand, if our starting place in understanding a text is that God is love, then we know we haven't reached the pure meaning of the verse if it contradicts love. Will God ever act in a way that contradicts love? Is His essence pure love? Can *pure* love ever express anything that stands in contradiction to Pure Love? If it can, then the love was never pure from the start. Pure water has nothing else in it that would contaminate it or alter it at all. Neither does Pure Love.

If our concept of God is that He is One who insists on punishment for wrong doing, how can we possibly argue that we don't envision a legalistic (i.e. courtroom, gavel wielding, verdict pronouncing, sentence imposing) God? He is not an impartial judge. He can't be because, to the contrary, He is a God who is very biased in our favor. That's what grace means.

Is there punishment for sin? Of course there is, but it is sin that punishes, not God. The wages of sin is death but Jesus has come "so that you might have life and have it more abundantly."

Our God is Love. Not love plus something else. Just Love. Everything else that can be said about Him must be framed inside that reality.