

# NEED LOVE (*STORGE, EROS, PHILIA*) ENCOURAGED

“I need Thee, Oh I need Thee, every hour I need Thee . . .”

## I. PARENTS WELCOME & ENCOURAGE IT (understanding the love-impetus in their children, who singularly reach out to & acknowledge need of them in particular)

### A. Acknowledged **Dependency**

1. Comfort in mother’s arms, sustenance from her breasts
2. Safety in father’s strength (jumping from bench, laughing while tossed aloft)
3. Security/pride in familial identity—“he’s my dad; she’s my mom;” so I know who I am”—needed identity found only in parents (thus adoptees’ oft-unmet need)
4. Legitimate inheritance concerns (shared by both parents and children)

### B. **Petitions** Welcomed

1. “I want food” followed by meals (joyfully? prepared)
2. “I want shoes” followed by (sometimes extravagant) purchases
3. “I want friends” followed by arrangements/activities facilitating process
4. “I want to play” followed by purchases (footballs) activities (little leagues)

### C. **Confessions** Cultivated

1. Childlike impulse (along with impulse to hide transgressions)—desiring harmonious relationships ruptured by misbehavior
2. Children asking for help (with schoolwork, projects etc.) warms a parents’ heart—reveals singular trust in father/mother as well as confession of limitations
3. “I’m sorry” mends countless wounds, erases barriers, restores communion
4. Forgiveness essential to sustain bonds—and parents easily grant it when asked

## II. TEACHERS WELCOME (and understand the love-impetus motivating students’ attitudes & approaches)

A. Acknowledged **Dependency**—enroll for class; respect authority; believe assertions

B. **Petitions**: questions; requested research

C. **Confessions**: confusion & misunderstanding clarified when admitted

## III. GOD WELCOMES & ENCOURAGES (and understands the love-impetus in us when we singularly reach out to & acknowledge Him)

### A. Acknowledged **Dependency**

1. Being derived, not self-generated—“the One in Whom we live and move and have our being;” “he who cometh to God must acknowledge that He is” (Heb 11:6)
2. Grace bestowed, not earned—“grace to help” (Heb 4:16)—but granted by appeal
3. Goods granted if requested & thanksgiving for goods approved

### B. **Petitions** Welcomed

1. Nourishment—“daily bread” (Mt 6:11); “corn and wine and oil” (Joel 2:19); “rain” (Zec 10:1)
2. “Good gifts” (Mt 7:11); “All things” (Mt 21:22), “anything” (Jn 14:14)
3. Salvation (I Chron 16:11), “deliverance” (Ps 34:17, Mt 6:13), healing (Jesus’ many miracles & James 5:14 prayer)
4. Wisdom (James 1: 5)
5. Children (Hannah *et al.*)
6. Prosperity—Jabez Prayer (I Chron 4:10)
7. Gifts of Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:1-2)—ask & receive

### C. **Confessions** Cultivated

1. “If my people . . .” (2 Chron 7:14)
2. He is “ready to forgive” (Ps 86:5)
3. For He is abounding in mercy (Heb 4:16)

# NEED LOVE APPROVED

in C.S. Lewis: *The Four Loves*

11 //@ “God is love,” says St. John. When I first tried to write this book I thought that his maxim would provide me with a very plain highroad through the whole subject. I thought I should be able to say that human loves deserved to be called loves at all just in so far as they resembled that Love which is God. The first distinction I made was therefore between what I called Gift-love and Need-love.

11 // Divine Love is Gift-love.

11 //@ And what, on the other hand, can be less like anything we believe of God’s life than Need-love? He lacks nothing, but our Need-love, as Plato saw, is “the son of Poverty.” It is the accurate reflection in consciousness of our actual nature. We are born helpless. As soon as we are fully conscious we discover loneliness. We need others physically, emotionally, intellectually . . . .

12 // I cannot now deny the name *love* to Need-love.

12 //@ First of all, we do violence to most languages, including our own, if we do not call Need-love “love.” . . . . We had better not follow Humpty Dumpty in making words mean whatever we please.

12 //@ Secondly, we must be cautious about calling Need-love “mere selfishness.”

13 // But in ordinary life no one calls a child selfish because it turns for comfort to its mother . . . .

13 //@ But thirdly we must come to something far more important. Every Christian would agree that a man’s spiritual health is exactly proportional to his love for God. But man’s love for God, from the very nature of the case, must always be very largely, and must often be entirely, a Need-love. This is obvious when we implore forgiveness for our sins or support in our tribulations.

14 // ‘The highest,’ says the *Imitation [of Christ]*, ‘does not stand without the lowest.’ It would be a bold and silly creature that came before its creator with the boast “I’m no beggar. I love you disinterestedly.” Those who come nearest to a Gift-love for God will next moment, even at the same moment, be beating their breasts with the publican and laying their indigence before the only real Giver. And God will have it so. He addresses our “Need-love: ‘Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy-laden,’ or, in the Old Testament, ‘Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.’”

17 // St. John’s saying that God is love has long been balanced in my mind against the remark of a modern author (M. Denis de Rougemont) that “love ceases to be a demon only when he ceases to be a god”; which of occurs can be re-stated in the form “begins to be a demon the moment he begins to be a god.” This balance seems to me an indispensable safeguard. If we ignore the truth that God is love may slyly come to means for us the converse, that love is God.

18 // Every human love, at its height, has a tendency to claim for itself a divine authority. Its voice tends to sound as if were the will of God Himself. It tells us not to count the cost, it demands of us a total commitment, it attempts to over-ride all other claims and insinuates that any action which is sincerely done “for love’s sake” is thereby lawful and even meritorious. That erotic love and love of one’s country may thus attempt to “become gods” is generally recognized. But family affection may do the same. So, in a different way, may friendship.

20 //@ Our Need-loves may be greedy and exacting but they do not set up to be gods. They are not near enough (by likeness) to God to attempt that.