TWO TYPES OF LOVE?

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Category: Bible Translation

A recurring theme in much evangelical teaching is the difference between two Greek words,Â *agape* and *phileo*. The former is seen as being 'real, Christian love; the love of God' and the other a more common or garden, lesser form of love. Andy Cheung has just written an interesting post which takes a look at this question especially in the light of John 21.

> *... in many passages of the Bible, agapao and phileo are used interchangeably and it is very difficult to discern a clear distinction in meaning - despite what is claimed in many popular Christian writings. Examples can be found even in Johnâ€™s Gospel where agapao is used for evil, worldly love (3:19) and phileo is used to describe Godâ€™s love for his Son (12:43) - exactly reversing the alleged hard distinction between agapao and phileo. Also, and very tellingly, in a number of places the LXX (the Septuagint, an ancient translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek) interchanges between agapao and phileo for the same underlying Hebrew word. (read more)*

I must admit that I've long believed that the reasons for choosing these two words in Scripture is more to do with writing style than it is to do with meaning.