

Lifebyte 77

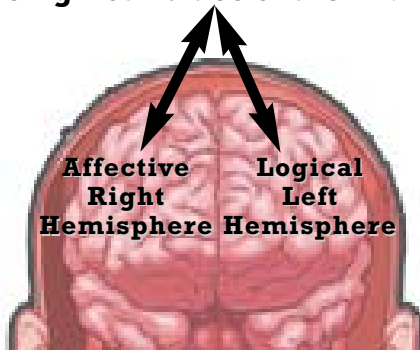
Hellenism—Why Christ-like Love Eludes Most Men

One reason Christians lead this nation in divorce

**Especially For Men
and those who
care about them**

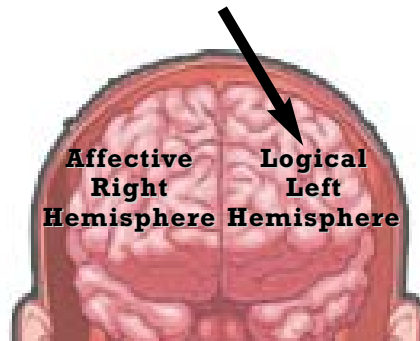
Hebraic Influence On Men

**Capable of Understanding and
Interacting with God and His Word
Using Both Sides of the Brain**



Hellenist Influence On Men

**Understanding God and His Word
Confined to the Logical Left Side
of the Brain**



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Introduction

We are prompted to write this Life-byte by the heartbreaking rise of divorce that's being initiated by Christian wives after many years of marriage. A key reason for this phenomenal increase is found in the **principality of Hellenism**, a philosophical influence which has dominated the minds of Christian men since the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Hellenism exerts its greatest control over right-handed men, whose logical left side of the brain governs their analysis and decision making. However, left-handed men, swayed more by their emotionally affective right side of the brain, aren't outside the impact of Hellenist dominance.

As we'll be discussing, the principality of Hellenism dominates Christian male thinking in their marital relationship to such an extent that it prevents many wives from experiencing the *love of Jesus* through their husbands. The yearning in the hearts of so many women is this: **"Will I ever experience the sacrificial love of Jesus through my husband?"**

The Apostle Paul leaves no doubt that every wife has a right to love from her husband. And our Lord commands husbands to love their wives with *His* love: **"Husbands, love [the powerful *agape* love only Jesus can give a man] your wives, just as Christ loved the collective called-out-ones and gave Himself up for her"** (Ephesians 5:25). Any husband for whom this command is less than the foremost concern of his marriage is sinning against our Lord *and* his wife.

The Bible bears witness against men who call themselves Christian yet refuse to obey God's commands: **"No one who lives in [Jesus] keeps on sinning. No one who**

continues to sin has either seen Him or known Him" (1John 3:6; also 3:9). So many husbands today keep on sinning by failing to love their wives the way our Lord calls for—with the same *agape* love Christ has for that woman.

Years of emotional tension and pain caused by her husband's sin ultimately wears a woman out. And this ongoing sorrow is one of the causes of divorce later in marriage. Many Christian women who aren't experiencing the love of Jesus through their husbands are plagued by feelings of *fear* and *insecurity*. This constant bombardment of self-doubt and sense of diminished worth leads them to focus on their body, their appearance, and their clothing: **"If I look better, maybe he'll love me more."**



Only a husband who humbles himself and keeps on asking the Spirit of Jesus to pour out His love through him can fulfill his wife's need for his love. The love of a man who repeatedly gets on his knees and truly turns to our Lord Jesus for the help and empowerment he needs to love his wife is far deeper and more powerful than the human love he can give her in his own strength.

My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion... Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice"
(Ezekiel 33:31,32).

In 2 Corinthians chapter 11 Paul reveals the depth of suffering and emotional trauma he has endured in his service to the Lord he loves. In verse 28, though, he adds one last anxiety: “Besides all this, I face daily *my care for all the called-out ones.*” His letters in the Newer Testament reveal that his ministry was borne on a *heart-burden* for others.

From Mike:

During 1983-1993, because of the gift of prophecy He’d given me, the Lord assigned me to counsel religious leaders while administering and teaching at a retreat center/farm. When I met with various pastors or elders, the Spirit would often reveal to me certain unconfessed sin(s) they were refusing to repent of. Even though each man *acknowledged* the sin the Spirit had made known to me, I found few leaders who were willing to repent. It was far easier for them to malign the messenger.

I studied the life of the prophet Jeremiah often in those days. My nickname became “the enema” because our Lord regularly sent me to unclog leaders from their unconfessed sin so that fellowship with the Father and Jesus could be restored.

Their refusal to repent broke my heart. Because of the hardness of heart of these men, I learned that over half of their wives were seeking help from professional counselors. After 10 years of having observed the hidden sins of so many, our Father kindly released Sue and me from that ministry and sent us to Israel. There He made known to us the Hebraic foundations we now share with His children. These foundations emanate from an *agape* love and obedient trust relationship with our Father and our Lord Jesus. Out of that ever-growing love flourishes an ever-deepening love and trust within our marriage.

It may be helpful if you understood the driving motivations of many of the clergy I counseled since these motives have contributed to the demise of so many marriage covenants within Christendom. For years Protestant clergy have been among the top occupations for divorce in this nation. Sadly, the **principality of Hellenism** has been using many in spiritual leadership to destroy marital relationships among the flock.

From the vantage point of a younger man fresh out of seminary and armed with vast stores of religious training, there’s a lot of power in being someone everyone in the congregation esteems. You’re one of a kind, and your gracious personality, depth of Bible knowledge, and ability to teach and entertain a captive audience each Sunday morning appeals to your vanity. Perhaps you’re aware of the “emotional/spiritual adultery” you’re committing as the women in the pews are comparing you to their husbands and finding them spiritually inferior. You probably have a faithful and compliant “golden retriever” wife who will quietly stand by you as you pursue a name for yourself by growing your ministry into what others deem “successful”.

These motives don’t sit at the forefront of a clergy person’s thinking. But during my years of counseling, the Spirit would give me insight and questions to ask that unmasked hidden motives. It was painful to me that after their sinful motives were exposed they were more concerned that other people would find out about their sin than they were willing to humble themselves before our Lord Jesus for forgiveness.

While it’s been 18 years since I stopped being a prophetic counselor to religious leaders, I still encounter the same resistant spirit as I try to help men make the Hebraic foundations a way of life in Christ. The humility needed to love their wives as Jesus would continues to elude so many of them. The principality of Hellenism has caused them to

be what the Bible calls “**Hardened**” and/or “**Mocking Fools.**”

We’d like to remind you of the nature of a Hardened or Mocking fool:

A **Hardened Fool** is stubbornly set in his ways: “*As a dog returns to its vomit, so a [hardened fool] repeats his folly*” (Proverbs 26:11). This man may come to you time and again for advice but *he won’t put it into practice*. The most resistant adds insolence and anger to his unwillingness to change and often responds with quarreling and rationale when you try to help him see God’s way.

The **Mocking Fool** is described in Proverbs 21:24: “*The proud and arrogant man—“Mocker” is his name; he behaves with overweening pride.*” This type of fool thinks he knows better than everyone else. His arrogant pride keeps him from admitting his need for correction. It’s a waste of time and effort trying to help such a man because he always has to get the last word in. That way he can show how smart he is.

[See Teaching E-mail 6. *A Woman Imprisoned* for more on these fools.]

A woman should recognize that she’s going to be miserable if her husband doesn’t have either a **friend with a prophetic gift** or an **older man of wisdom** whose counsel he’s willing to put into practice. For the sake of their marriage, how great is their need that “*they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will*” (2Timothy 2:26).

Behind so many divorces in Christendom and alongside every wife who continues to suffer emotionally at the hands of her husband is a Hardened and/or Mocking Fool who serves the principality of Hellenism. These men go through life oblivious of the hurt they cause like a “**bull-in-a-china-shop.**”

- Do you respond defensively, even in anger, when someone tries to show you your error or reveal your sin? Ask others for their input.

A few years after we returned from Israel with the Hebraic foundations, we encountered a man whose wife had filed for divorce after 14 years of marriage. After listening to him, I realized I was talking to the “**Champion of Christian Conservative Causes.**” It wasn’t so much what he stood *for*, but rather the coldness of heart toward whoever and whatever he *stood against* that was damaging his home life.

I suggested that he get his father and father-in-law on a conference call and ask them for their input. He did. They were both emphatic that he quit his causes and begin to wholeheartedly love his wife and their three children. The marriage was soon restored.

- Are you a man who has to get the last word in? Ask those who know you well, especially your wife.

The Principality of Hellenism Steers the Minds of Christian Men

“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ”

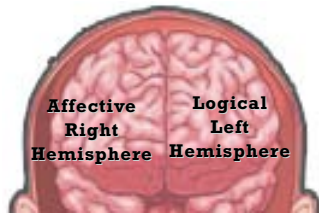
(Colossians 2:8).



As noted previously, the principality of Hellenism began to control the thought processes of Christianity’s leaders in the 2nd and 3rd centuries as the dominant Greek culture swept away the


biblically Hebraic perspective. Right-handed analytical men have been the majority in religious leadership over the centuries. And without the influence of the Older Testament and its emphasis on love-grounded obedience to a faithful God, the creed-based intellectual Christianity so prevalent today took root.

It's important to recognize an essential gender difference here. While women can easily access both hemispheres of their brain, men predominate in either the left or right hemisphere. As we cited in *Discussing How to Restore the Early Church*, Lesson 8: A Hebraic Perspective, the majority of men in this



nation are *right-handed*. This means they rely on the *analytical/logical left side* of their brain. *Left-handed* men, however, rely on the *right side* of their brain. The affective right hemisphere is where compassion, mercy, sympathy, and tenderness originate.

An important point to remember:

Men *can* access both sides of their brain, although more slowly than women are able to.  Regrettably, the Hellenist influence has hindered many right-handed men from accessing their brain's emotional right side.

When men aren't reluctant to access the affective side of their brain, they begin to understand love, compassion and mercy—the tender side of God. Putting to use the right side of the brain is crucial if men are to restore the Hebraic foundations to their lives and families. These truths must emanate as a way of life com-

- Do your conversations reveal more of your knowledge *about* God, or of your experiences that testify you belong to Him?

ing out of love-based emotions rather than just bottom-line logic. Biblical mercy, love, compassion and sympathy can never be manifested if the right side of the brain isn't accessed.

[For more on this subject, see our series *Discussing How to Restore the Early Church*, Lesson 30. Honey, We Aren't The Same.]

The widespread influence of Hellenism pressures right-handed men to depend solely on the framework of mental logic, excluding the compassionate influence of *agape* love.

The vast majority of theological textbooks have been “logically” compiled by right-handed men. And generally teachers of God's Word instruct within an intellectual framework so that the facts can be logically stored in the brain. But there's an unfortunate consequence to this method: the man's *feelings* with which his Creator made him remain unchanged by the instruction because it's in the affective side of the brain that a man attaches *emotional value* to what he holds dear. In other words, his mind may store up what he's heard, but without an accompanying emotional attachment to it, he's not going to apply it to his life.

Again, women can easily access both hemispheres of their brain. They can more readily understand God's Word as a means through which the Spirit transforms them as they *experience it* rather than as an academic subject to be studied and evaluated.

During those early centuries the principality of Hellenism also eliminated from leadership the biblical elders—those older men of love and wisdom

whose lives were personally invested in those of their faith families. Elders were replaced by young educated professionals whose philosophical approach to ministry required little more than head knowledge. **Hence the rise of academically-focused seminaries.**

To the loss of Jesus followers everywhere, the life experience and character that could be role modeled as one generation personally discipled the next like Jesus did was forsaken. In its place came instruction of passive pewsitters with Bible bites dictated by ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Because of their antisemitic perspective, Hellenism disdained the Hebrew Scriptures (the only Bible Jesus and His first followers knew and lived by) and removed the continuity between the Older and Newer Testaments. A distinct but erroneous division between the two texts defined the Older as outdated “law” and the Newer as law-less “grace.” The vast majority of Christendom has been seduced by this lie; but to God ALL of His Word is useful (2Timothy 3:16,17)! The Bible itself reveals that *God’s commands* and the *power of His grace to obey them* go hand in hand.

[For more on the painful history of Hellenism in Christianity, see Chapter 6 of our book *Restoring the Early Church: Greek Philosophy in the Church: How Did Plato Displace God?* For more on keeping God’s commands in both Testaments, see Teaching E-mails 39 thru 41. These are a free download at our website.]

Hellenism’s Contribution to Cold Love In Marriages



Hellenism also introduced to Christendom its philosophical child, **stoicism**. You’re familiar with the phrase, “Men don’t cry.” That Stoic expression is a product of generations of Hellenist influence on the American male mindset. Hellenist philosophers denigrated emotional expression and emphasized hiding your feelings—particularly any strong emotion such as love.

As a result, love and the fullness of its compassionate and merciful expression in the Bible is taught as an impassive academic subject. Think about this in regard to marriage relationships:

For centuries Hellenism and Stoicism have appealed to right-handed men throughout Christendom and caused them to be more concerned with being letter-perfect in factual knowledge than in demonstrating the love of Jesus as He calls for.

When a man remains oblivious to his own feelings, he is equally insensitive to the feelings of others.

Men can’t understand the reality of a loving and compassionate God through logic unless someone holds them accountable to access the right side of their brain. Only then can they fully appreciate and interact with Him as He has created them to do: to be in authentic, loving fellowship with Him.

Emotional expression, especially affection and compassion, are biblical. How often does the Word express the wide range of emotion that our Father has revealed of Himself? Humanity was created in His image to wrap their emotions around who and what they value. The value you place on people you care

- Would people describe you as an affectionate person? Is *agape* love readily revealed in how you treat others?

about is fleshed out in your loving, affectionate expression toward them. But stoicism keeps many men from doing this.

A large sector of Christendom perpetuates detached Stoicism among its men by emphasizing cognitive assent to logically-constructed creeds. And it is creeds that now tragically divide Christendom into thousands of competing groups (currently 38,000+).

The dearth of loving expression by Christian men drags down everyone around them. Rather than affectionate appreciation as the living hallmark of their faith, men throughout Christendom have been trained to pride themselves in their religious knowledge and tradition. As a result they lack loving exuberance toward God, and heartfelt love toward those around them.

- Within your own marriage and family do you take responsibility for the love and joy they experience? Do you see yourself as a primary contributor, or as one who robs others of joy? Ask them...

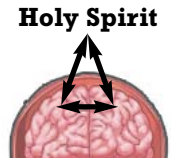
“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight”
(Proverbs 3:5,6).

This passage has tremendous relevance for the majority of men. Most right-handed men in particular see themselves as **logical problem solvers**. When they encounter situations that require attention, they're obsessed with solving it through sheer logic. The influence of Hellenism incapacitates them from paying attention to the emotional issues that may be imbedded within the problem and agitating the other people involved.

Often it's only *after* he has doggedly pur-

sued and solved the problem through his own mind's efforts that he realizes how he wounded his wife and children through his lack of concern for their feelings. At that point he raises a defensive shield and argues with them because Hellenism has trained him not to access the emotional side of his brain to understand how he hurt them.

When *in all your ways* you acknowledge Him, the Spirit of our Lord will interact with both sides of your brain. He'll guide and help you use both hemispheres, just as He created you to. Only by turning to the Spirit of Christ in you can you free yourself from the half-brain thinking you're used to.



- Do you concern yourself with the feelings of the people you interact with? Do you have a habitual pattern of hurting those close to you? Ask them...

Through *Trials* Our Father Teaches A Man To Love

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your **faith**—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you trust in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your **faith**, the salvation of your souls” (1Peter 1:6-9).

The Hebrew word for “faith”, *emunah*, is charged with emotion. It reflects your heartfelt confidence and unwavering

trust in your Father as His loving and grateful child. Anchor this truth for yourself:

Your heavenly Father isn't looking for you to be a problem solver. He would rather use difficult situations, *trials* if you will, to cause you to turn to your affective right side while you become more dependent on Him. Our Father tests both the *depth of a man's love* and the *devotion of his faith* through trials. It's through trials that a man is both tested and perfected.

In order to achieve the depth of love and faith our Father is seeking, a man must access *both* the logical and affective sides of his brain. The apostle Peter presents the pattern of development our Father uses to mature the *agape* love He commands us men to have.

Building a Foundation of Jesus's Love

"Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, [agape] love.

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2Peter 1:5-8).

This passage describes a pilgrimage into Christ-like character development that's intended to produce *agape* love. In order for these qualities to grow in increasing measure, the steps of develop-

- When people, adults and children alike, don't experience affection, they'll exhibit control. It may be overt, or displayed in passive-aggressive resistance. Is anyone close to you doing this?

Building a Foundation of Jesus's Love



ment may be repeated again and again throughout your earthly journey. Let's take a closer look at these eight steps:

1. Faith

This includes trusting:

- in the shed blood of Jesus;
- the veracity of God's Word,
- in our Father's sovereignty over all things in your life.

Remember the Hebrew word for faith is an emotional term representing something you *attach great value to*. Your faith is what our Father promises you that He will test to determine its genuineness (1Peter 1:6-9). He doesn't need people who agree in their mind with who He is to represent him to the world. The demons *believe* and shudder in fear (James 2:19). Rather, our Father wants to see the authenticity and emotional determination of *the value you place* on your trust in Jesus and your willingness to obey Him.

2. Virtue

This is demonstrated as you apply God's Word to every relationship and facet of your life. Virtue is the summation of character qualities you develop as a result of making God's righteous commands your way of life.

3. Knowledge

The *knowledge* the Bible refers to has nothing to do with knowing *about* God. Instead, it's **knowing your Father and our Lord Jesus through *personal experience***. The reality of a born again person is that the Spirit of Jesus dwells *within* them. And His Spirit can be experienced through His guidance, empowerment, comfort, and other Biblical means.

Jesus proclaims, *"I am the way and the truth and the life"* (John 14:6). The word *truth* actually means "reality." Our Lord is declaring that He is *real*, and that He is able to be experienced!

For centuries Hellenism has enticed Christian men to take an intellectual path: to pursue knowing *about* God. This type of knowledge produces no change in a man's life. In fact, his knowledge can puff him up with pride. Is it any wonder Paul admonishes, *"Knowledge puffs up, but [agape] love builds up"* (1Corinthians 8:1)?

4. Self-control

This is the personal discipline you develop as you increasingly rely on the indwelling Spirit. Evidence of self-control is captured in this: *"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a Spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline"* (2Timothy 1:7). As you apply our Father's righteous commands with the help of His Spirit, you become more and more consistent in reflecting a life that reveals your faith and love.

5. Perseverance

During times of trial our Father tests you to see if you're genuinely His child. Don't be surprised when you are tested! Just consider what Job went through and how God blessed him after he withstood his own season of ordeal. Jesus told Peter in advance that he'd encounter testing:

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift

you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:31,32).

Our Lord didn't pray that Peter's testing wouldn't come, but only that the apostle's faith wouldn't fail. Jesus continues to pray for His followers today:

"Therefore [Jesus] is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

Many men fall away during times of testing. We're warned, *"Christ is faithful as a Son over God's house. And we are His house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast"* (Hebrews 3:6; see also 3:14; 6:6; 10:26,38). Some who shrink back and fail to develop the godliness the testing was meant to produce begin an intellectual quest to seek more knowledge *about* God through instructional materials and conferences. Evangelical Christianity is over-populated with such men who forsake spiritual courage and appease their need to *learn* more.

6. Godliness

Our Father recognizes when someone's faith is genuine because the character qualities of His Son Jesus are growing in their life. His Spirit now controls yet another area of the man's motivations and actions. Unlike piety—a veneer to draw attention to yourself—godliness summarizes the faith and character qualities in you that Father has tested and found authentic.

- Do your closest friends in the faith spur you on in loving our heavenly Father and Lord Jesus, and in loving your wife and family? What do you talk about most often with them?

7. Brotherly kindness

With brotherly kindness a man begins to put the interests of God and everyone else ahead of his own. The servant heart of Jesus especially influences him. And, Paul's counsel takes on special significance:

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3,4).

You have arrived at a point in your pilgrimage where you think less of yourself and more about everyone else. Your pilgrimage of transformation can be summed up this way:

“We pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, Who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light” (Colossians 1:10-12).

There's also a warning here. As far down the process of Christ-like character development that brotherly kindness is, it can also be a trap: You may be camping out on brotherly kindness *without agape love*. In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul warns that when we aren't motivated by *agape* love, *“I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal...I am nothing...I gain nothing.”*

Without *agape* love, kindness can become a way for people to feel good about themselves. They get pleasure from the gratefulness shown them as a result of their kind acts, so they're seduced into seeking credit and accolades. Brotherly kindness in its fullness must be controlled

by *agape* love.

8. Agape love

Only the Spirit within you can give and empower you with this sacrificial kind of love (Galatians 5:22). The other building blocks that lead up to this love help you become more affective in your motives. Each building block is our Father's path to developing a humility of heart in which the Spirit can grow His love in you.

Agape love must be sought like something that's more precious than your next breath. It's best obtained on your knees in prayer. But be prepared for the testing that will come. Jesus may ask you the same question He asked Peter: *“Do you truly love Me more than these?”*

- Do you have unresolved issues with your earthly father, especially bitterness? If yes, do people see you as someone who displays a resistant spirit to receiving counsel?

“We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not [lose our marriage]”
(Hebrews 2:1).

If you're a man who truly belongs to Lord Jesus, your wife and family need to see you becoming more loving in an ever-increasing measure. Being motivated by *agape* love is a powerful living testimony that you personally *know* our Lord Jesus in an intimate, life-empowering way. As a result, your love-borne testimonies will be far richer than all the Bible facts or Christian materials you've read.

Just know that in the process of developing *agape* love you'll find yourself most often tested by other people. When it comes to your wife, remember this truth:

Our Father gave your wife to YOU as a helper fit for YOU! She is His most capable instrument for you to learn the humility needed for the Spirit of Jesus to entrust and empower you with His love for her. And, being on your knees asking Jesus to help you love her is more crucial than anything else you can do for her.



“Above all, [agape] love each other deeply, because [agape] love covers over a multitude of sins” (1Peter 4:8). You’ll be amazed how His love blinds you to her faults, real or perceived. As a husband, you’re commanded to acquire the love of Jesus from Him and share it with your wife. The tallest a man can stand who wants to love like Jesus is when he’s on his knees!