

speaking to God's people

freegiftfromgod

bible studies

Subject: **Fruit of the Spirit – Pt 2 – Love**

Scripture

Introduction

Commentary

Let's get into this study on the fruits of the Spirit by looking at the first of the fruits Paul writes about. The scripture discussing the fruit of the Spirit comes out of Galatians 5:22-23 which says:

*22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23 gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.*

The first of these fruits we can see is: love.

This fruit of the spirit is probably the ultimate and most desirable of the fruits that we can bear. The love of the Spirit is the love of God. It is not like love as the people of this world understand it and definitely not like the love portrayed by Hollywood and in modern music and books. Their version of love is probably more akin to lust than the love of God.

So what is the love of God, and by connection the love fruit of the Spirit like? Let's check a few scriptures.

1 John 4:7-13

The best place to start to understand the love fruit of the Spirit is to look at love. In this scripture we see that God is love and there are several other important things we learn from John here too.

7 Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God.

8 He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.

9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

10 In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

12 No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his own Spirit.

In verse 7 we are told to love one another for love is of God. The children of God need to learn how to emulate their parents, that is, the Father. In verse 8 we see that “God is love.” The very nature of God is defined by love, not as man knows love, but the love of God.

This is followed by the greatest act of love that man will ever know. In verses 9-10 we see that God loved us so much that he sent His only Son to die for our sins so that could find life through His death. The scripture in John 3:16 says exactly the same as this. It is through love for man and the hope that man would find and follow the love of God that Jesus came to be the Way, Truth and Life through which we receive salvation.

So we see from this that the nature of the love of God, and thus the love fruit of the Spirit, is sacrifice. When we sacrifice ourselves for the sake of others to help them in some way, and to serve them in the ways of Jesus Christ, then we too are showing the love of God. When John says in verses 11-12 that we ought to “love one another” he is talking about service. He is talking about sacrifice. He is talking about putting the needs and desires of our brethren ahead of our own for their sake, not ours.

	<p>And when we do this we are blessed for we receive the blessings of the Lord as we show the love of God in our life. In this way, as John says finally in verse 13, we show and prove that we are children of God and we abide in His love. How? Through the working of the Holy Spirit in us bringing out the fruit of the Spirit, and in this case the fruit of love.</p>
Ephesians 2:4-7	<p>Look at how much God loves mankind in these scriptures.</p> <p><i>4 But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.</i></p> <p>His mercy is so great that He chose to show His love for us by sending Jesus Christ to die for us and give us the offer of salvation... while we were His enemies! How many people would give so great a gift as this to an enemy? And be certain of this fact that when we were living as sinners in the world, doing all manner of evil in opposition to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we were definitely His enemies.</p> <p>The grace of God was so great towards, born out of His immeasurable love for us, that He overlooked all of our sins and shortcomings and still extended mercy to us when what we deserved was destruction.</p> <p>This is the truth of love. Love is merciful and it does overlook wrongs that may have been done against it. God overlooked our wrongs against Him, and we too must learn to overlook the wrongs done against us by people and show them the same mercy and love as God through Jesus Christ showed us.</p> <p>Why would God do this and why should we reciprocate with the people of this world? Hope! God did this in the hope that man would turn from his evil ways and seek God. We too need to do this in the hope that people will see the love of God in us and likewise question their own motives, actions and behaviours and seek God too. It's all about hope for the fruit love of the Spirit is partially based in and brings forth hope in us.</p>

1 John 2:4-6	<p>So how do we get this fruit of love and how do we keep hold of it and grow in it? These scriptures give us a little more insight into this matter.</p> <p><i>4 He who says "I know him" but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him: 6 he who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.</i></p> <p>If anyone disobeys the words of Jesus they do not have the love of God within them. The Bible tells us elsewhere, "You will know them by their fruits." (Matthew 7:16) So if someone says that they "Know God" or that they "...are a Christian" or anything similar to these, but ignore or go against the teachings of Christ, then they are liars. The fruit of their life is seen in their actions and behaviours, and when their actions and behaviours do not match their words, then they are being hypocrites.</p> <p>But the converse to this is that the fruit love of the Spirit leads a person to live, act and behave in a manner consistent with the teachings of Jesus Christ. When you see a person showing the fruit of love, then you can be assured that Christ is in them, and they will show this fruit by walking as Christ walked. Not just a disciple but also truly a follower of Christ.</p>
1 John 5:3	<p><i>1 Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God, and every one who loves the parent loves the child. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?</i></p> <p>Again John shows that when we follow the commandments of the Lord Jesus we are proving that we love God and that His love is in us. And by the way the commandments of Christ are not the Laws of Moses</p>

	<p>although a follower of Christ would naturally fulfil those as well. It is clear that there is a different for the commandments of the Lord "...are not burdensome..." as the scripture here says. Jesus also said in Matthew 11:29-30, "29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."</p> <p>However in speaking of the Law of Moses we see many references to it as being bound or in bondage to the law. In Christ Jesus we are set free from the Law of Moses to live as new creations in Jesus Christ with the power to truly become the children of God.</p> <p>And in the scripture above we see that whatever is born of God overcomes the world, just as Jesus overcame the world because He was born of God. We too overcome the world when we are "born again" or "born from above" as it says in John 3:3 through entering the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in our baptism. It is by this method we take on Christ Jesus and both see and enter into the Kingdom of God.</p> <p>And all of this is based upon faith for as it says above it is our faith that gives us the victory in Jesus Christ.</p>
1 Corinthians 13:4-8	<p>In this scripture we see that whatever we may do in the name of God, whatever gift we may receive and operate, whatever we may give up for His sake is worthless if we do not have the love of God. Love is all that matters for love is eternal because God is love and He is eternal.</p> <p>So in this section of scripture we then see some of the attributes of the love of God and the fruit love of the Spirit. Paul describes what this Spirit love is all about here by giving us examples.</p> <p><i>4 Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; 5 it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never ends</i></p> <p>Note that this form of love is not about feelings and emotion. It is about actions and behaviours. It is about action and reaction and how we relate or have relationships with those around us, as well as with God.</p>

1 Corinthians 13:13	<p>All of these attributes of love are things that we can do or behaviours we can emulate. Someone once said that “Love is a verb” (I think it may have been the band DC Talk...but I might be wrong). And that is what we can see in these aspects and attributes of Spiritual love and the love of God.</p> <p>Look at how God relates to each of us. Does He smother with emotion? Is it about feelings? No. He loves us by doing what is best for us and not giving us grief when we fail Him as we do from time to time. He shows us mercy, kindness, tenderness, caring and He provides for all of our needs, both physical and spiritual. That is the truth of love.</p> <p>Also you will recall in the discussion above that I spoke about hope and faith. These are necessary aspects of our walk with Christ for now because we do not yet see all that is to come and we have not yet seen God. We live in hope and extend hope to others through showing them the same love God showed us. And we stand before God in His love only through the faith we hold in Jesus Christ.</p> <p>This is what the much-quoted last verse in this chapter is telling us.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love</i></p> <p>These three are so closely entwined in each other that it is impossible to have one part without the others. If you have no hope, how can you love? If you lack faith where is your hope? And if you do not love, what is your faith all about and what is your hope resting upon? They are all facets of the nature of God and of course the greatest of these is love because it is the only one that stretches into eternity. Faith will not be needed when we are living with God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Hope will not be necessary when we are fully in His presence and ruled by Him in His Kingdom for who hopes for something that he already has? But love is about relationships and they go on forever.</p>
	<p>So in order to learn the ways of love we need to look at the examples set before us. In Jesus Christ we have a perfect example and in the lives of His people in the Bible we see how this love fruit was born in them. And we see Paul talk about how to emulate the love of God in this scripture.</p>

Ephesians 5:1-2	<p><i>1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.</i></p> <p>Paul entreats us to imitate God. This is not about being a “fake” but through imitation we learn what love is like. We can know something, but until we act on the knowledge it is not real. By imitation we learn and build positive habits and so the imitation ceases to be something we put on and becomes part of who we are as the Spirit transforms us into the image of Christ.</p> <p>And part of this process again is in sacrifice and service. We imitate Christ by serving His people as He served us. By so doing we learn how to walk in His ways and walk with Him.</p>
James 1:12	<p>By walking in the love of Christ and by learning how to love and bearing the love fruit of the Spirit there is a great promise.</p> <p><i>Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him.</i></p> <p>Those who love the Lord will go through testings and trials and the fiery ordeals of temptation and opposition. But the outcome when we have stood the test through holding fast to our faith in Jesus Christ and applying His teachings in our life, is we receive the crown of life. This is the promise within the love of God that He has for us. But what will it be like? No one really knows the fullness of this, but it will be truly amazing and a great blessing. Paul writes,</p>
1 Corinthians 2:9	<p><i>But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him,"</i></p> <p>The promise of God to those who love Him and Jesus Christ is far, far beyond the wildest dreams and speculations any man could even begin to imagine. Living with Him will be gift enough and knowing there will be eternal peace, joy and happiness. That we will be able to speak to the Lord and His people face to face. That there will be time eternal to live and learn anything of value. And finally to know that this does not even</p>

Romans 8:37-39	<p>begin to scratch the surface of what God has prepared for those who love Him.</p> <p>What a truly amazing and fantastic promise. And even in this time there is more as Paul writes again.</p> <p><i>37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.</i> <i>38 For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,</i> <i>39 nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.</i></p> <p>We know that we will need to stand and work through the trials and tribulations of this life. But we can take comfort in these words. That those whom the Lord God loves will not be taken out of His hand. He will keep them from all things that would destroy them. Yes we will be tested, but not to the point of destruction.</p> <p>So we must seek and find the fruit of the Spirit that is love. There is a great blessing in this and as the Spirit works in our life it will bud and spring forth.</p>
So what next?	<p>I hope this study gave some insights into this first of the fruits of the Spirit. I hope it will encourage you to keep studying for this is just a taste of this fruit. Please feel free to send me any comments or things you have learned in your own studies also so that I too can learn.</p> <p>So now it's your turn. What would you like to add to this conversation? Send me an email (link below) or engage with me on Twitter (@JohnBLemmon) or send me a comment on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/FreeGiftFromGod and let's have the discussion continue.</p> <p>Feel free also to send this to others so they can join the conversation. I hope this has added value to your own walk with Christ.</p>

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