

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT “Love”

Introduction: Love and the Spirit

Our premise is that by His fruit we may know Him. Does this principle hold true with love?

1 John 4:7-8

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. NIV

*It can't get much plainer than that! If we don't love, **we cannot know God!***

1 John 4:9-13

9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

13 We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. NIV

Love is a matter of relationship. Love initiates relationship. He loved us first, lest we should forget. Living in Him is living in love and the way we know that He lives in us is because He has given us His Spirit. Indeed, it is the Holy Spirit that gives us the capacity to love.

Rom 5:5

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. KJV

2 Tim 1:7 NIV

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

It is the Holy Spirit that pours out the love of God in our hearts. As 2 Tim 1:7 says, He is a Spirit of love.

1 Peter 1:22-23

22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, NKJV

It is the Spirit that leads us in obeying the truth of loving the brethren and thus purifying our souls of selfish notions.

The Nature of Love

1 Corinthians 113 is a hallmark chapter on love. But love issues are brought up in this epistle way before chapter 13. In verse 5 of that chapter we are told that love does not seek its own.

1 Cor 11:17, 20-22 NIV

17 In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good.

20 When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat,

21 for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk.

22 Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not!

A question we can ask ourselves to gauge our love level is: how do we behave at our love feasts?

1 Cor 12:21-27

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"

22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,

23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty,

24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it,

25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. NIV

Another question we can ask is: how do we behave toward our uncomely members?

1 Cor 13:4-8

4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;

5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails. NKJV

This section of Scripture tells us how the Spirit of God will deal with us. First of all, He is patient.

Matt 18:26-27

26 "The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.'

27 The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. NIV

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. NIV

He is kind.

Luke 6:35

But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. NIV

He doesn't envy. A quick study of envying will show us that its most vicious manifestation is among religious leaders trying to keep their doctrine or flock. Any move which puts a minister viciously seeking party is not of God or His Spirit.

He isn't a braggart, arrogant, or rude. He certainly isn't selfish (He gives gifts, remember) and neither should we be.

Phil 2:4

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. NIV

He is not easily angered.

Ps 103:8 "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love." NIV

He bears us up, causes us to hope, energizes our faith, makes us persevere and keeps no records of our wrongs. Praise the Lord!

Love and Covenant

Love is not merely an emotion. We cannot simply say, "I love God" and it be true. Love is always manifested in action. In the Old Testament, love has to do with covenant and covenant keeping.

Deut 7:9 RSV

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,

God's covenant is a covenant of love and to walk in that love, we must walk in the covenant.

1 John 5:1-2

1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.

2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. NIV

The great commandments have to do with love.

Luke 10:25-29

25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

27 He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" NIV

Note the man's question: who is my neighbor? He might as well asked Jesus, who do I have to love?

Luke 10:30-37

30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.

31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him.

35 The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." NIV

Notice how Jesus turns his thinking around. He doesn't tell him who he must love, he tells him how to be a neighbor!

Love and Shame

Romans 5:5 said that hope made us not ashamed because of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 13:7 tells us that love hopes all things. Because love deals with covenant, its consummation is seen in the future as all covenant promises are fulfilled. The central theme of the covenant is God's forgiveness of us and our relationship with Him.

Gen 2:25 "The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame." NIV

Gen 3:7, 10, 21

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. NIV

Shame has the idea of fear which holds us back from doing what we should do because of having done something we shouldn't have. Adam and Eve's shame and fear is seen in their covering themselves and hiding from God. In love, God covered them in skins (covenant blood).

Ezek 16:4-5

4 On the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloths.

5 No one looked on you with pity or had compassion enough to do any of these things for you. Rather, you were thrown out into the open field, for on the day you were born you were despised. NIV

This is where we were before God found us. Look what he did in love for us.

Ezek 16:8-9

8 "Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine.

9 "I bathed you with water and washed the blood from you and put ointments on you. NIV

In love, He covered our nakedness and washed and anointed us!

1 John 4:16-18

16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

17 In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.

18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. NIV

Fear has torment. Part of this torment is the paralyzing shame that sin brings. Praise be to God that through the blood of Jesus and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, we can be free of sin and without shame approach the throne of God.

Love is relationship and we must be in relationship to reap its benefits.

1 John 2:28

And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. NIV

Conclusion

How are we to walk in love? We need to care for one another and walk in forgiveness.

1 John 3:16-17

16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? NIV

Isa 38:17

Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: **for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.** KJV

Eph 4:29-5:2

29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children

2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. NIV

Let us not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, rather let us walk in kindness, charity, and forgiveness and in such a way sow for a harvest of love. Amen!