

Love
(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction:

1. In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul listed 9 characteristics that are called "*the fruit of the Spirit.*"
2. The first characteristic is "love."
3. Much has been said about love the last 2 weeks.
4. Unfortunately, much of what has been said is not based on Scripture.
5. Perhaps this is a good time to study passages that reveal God's will on this important subject.

Discussion:

- I. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT LOVE IS
 - A. The Bible speaks of different kinds of love.
 1. One kind is "*brotherly love*" (Hebrews 13:1).
 2. However, this is not the kind of love under consideration.
 - B. The kind of love included in the fruit of the Spirit seeks what is best for someone else, even though the other person may not deserve it and great sacrifice is required.
 - C. This the kind of love that:
 1. God has for us (Romans 5:8)
 2. Jesus has for us (Ephesians 5:2)
 3. was demonstrated by the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33-35).
 - D. Now that we know what love is, . . .
- II. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND HOW IMPORTANT LOVE IS
 - A. Jesus commanded it (John 13:34-35).
 - B. (2 Peter 1:5-11) "Charity" [love] is one of the graces that will keep a Christian from falling and from being unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord.
 - C. (1 Corinthians 13:13) Love is greater than faith and hope.
 - D. With love being so important, . . .
- III. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHOM WE ARE TO LOVE
 - A. God is to be loved above everyone and everything else (Matthew 22:37-38).
 1. (1 John 4:19) "*We love Him, because He first loved us.*"
 2. (1 John 5:3) Loving God includes obeying His will.
 - B. We are to love our neighbors (Matthew 22:39).
 1. The parable of the Good Samaritan shows us that our neighbors are those in need (Luke 10:29-37).
 2. We show our love by our actions (1 John 3:17-19).
 3. Those whom we are to love include:
 - a. brethren (1 John 4:7, 11)
 - b. enemies (Matt. 5:43-44).
 - C. We are to love ourselves (Romans 12:1-3).
- IV. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND HOW LOVE ACTS
 - A. (Romans 12:9) "*Let love be without 'dissimulation' [hypocrisy].*"
 - B. See 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
 - C. True Christian love will:
 1. eliminate the sins listed in Galatians 5:26 -- the desire for vain glory, provocation, envy
 2. prevent Christians from biting and devouring each other (Galatians 5:15)
 3. eliminate "*hatred*" which is a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:20).
 - D. See Galatians 5:13-14

Conclusion:

1. The fruit of the Spirit begins with love.
2. To bear the fruit of the Spirit we must sow correctly (Galatians 6:7-8).