

The Fruit of the Spirit: "Love"
(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction:

1. In our lesson we are studying the first of 9 special characteristics that make up the fruit of the Spirit: "love."
2. We are examining passages that answer 4 important questions.

Discussion:

I. QUESTION #1: WHAT IS LOVE?

- A. The Bible speaks of different kinds of love.
 1. One kind is "brotherly love" that we are commanded in Romans 12:10a.
 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 sacrifice may be required.
- C. This is the kind of love that:
 1. God has for us (Romans 5:8)
 2. Christ has for us (Ephesians 5:2)
 3. the Good Samaritan demonstrated (Luke 10:33-35).
- D. Now that we know what love is, let us answer . . .

II. QUESTION #2: HOW IMPORTANT IS LOVE?

- A. Jesus commanded it (John 13:34-35).
- B. "Charity" [love] is one of the graces that will keep a Christian from falling and from being unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord (2 Peter 1:8, 10).
- C. Love is greater than faith and hope (1 Corinthians 13:13).
- D. Since love is so important, let us answer . . .

III. QUESTION #3: WHO ARE WE TO LOVE? (See Matthew 22:36-39)

- A. God is to be loved above everyone and everything else.
 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.
 1. The parable of the Good Samaritan shows us that our neighbors are those in need (Luke 10:29-37).
 2. According to 1 John 3:17-19, love is active.
 3. Included in those whom we are to love are:
 - a. brethren (1 John 4:7, 11)
 - b. enemies (Matt. 5:43-44).
- C. We are to love ourselves (Romans 12:1-3).
- D. For our last point, let us answer . . .

IV. QUESTION #4: HOW DOES LOVE BEHAVE?

- A. (Romans 12:9) *"Let love be without 'dissimulation' [hypocrisy]."*
- B. 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).
- C. Love is the motivation for service (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).
3. We will reap what we have sown.