

## Lesson 3 – The Fruit of the Spirit: Love

### Introduction

This week's lesson will focus on love, the first fruit of the Spirit given in Galatians 5:22. To understand the fruit of love begins with looking at God and His righteousness. The people of Israel worshiped God and were taught to fear Him because of His power and majesty. Israel knew God to be the loving One who would keep His covenant with His people as well as the righteous judge ever true to His word. The nation of Israel was told to love their God with all their heart, soul, and might in Deuteronomy 6:5. This week's lesson will look at biblical teaching concerning love, to help us understand what it means to make known the fruit of love through our lives.

### Love

1. Entire books have been written about the Greek word used for love in Galatians 5:22, translated from the word *agape*. You can look at a simple definition of the word *agape* in the word study in Question 2.

Remember that you are not studying God's holy word to simply acquire more knowledge, but you study the word because it will renew your spirit so that you will be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. As you open in **prayer**, ask God for His truth to change any part of you that does not fully love Him. Now begin with these **observation questions**.

- Please read aloud Galatians 5:22,23 and write out the first group of three fruit of the Spirit, saying the three words a number of times to help you memorize these words.
  
- Please read what Jesus said to His followers in Matthew 7:16-20 and Luke 6:43-45. Jot down the important truths that Jesus spoke. Please include His final words in Luke 6:45.
  
- One way to understand a concept is to think of what concept or quality would be the opposite of what you are studying. Considering what you have studied today concerning the fruit of the Spirit, love, what do you think would be the opposite of that quality? How can you guard yourself against that being a part of your life? Would you stop and ask God why you can sometimes be vulnerable to this attitude?
  
- Today you will look at the Holy Spirit based on what Paul wrote to the church in Rome about those who are followers of Christ in Romans 5:1-5. Please allow these

### Lesson 3

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verses to encourage you in your own faith, especially after looking back at Luke 6:45. You might quietly meditate on the message in Romans 5:5 and then write out this verse in your own words, or draw a simple diagram of this truth to help you treasure this in your mind. Remember to record what you learned about the Holy Spirit on page 15.

2. Please examine these word studies for the **key words** used in this week's lesson.

<b>Strong's # and Transliteration:</b>	<b>Definition from Strong's Concordance, unless written in <i>italics</i>:</b>	<b>Use of the word in other Scriptures:</b>
2617 Hebrew heced Psalm 117:2	<b>Covenant love</b> , kindness, by implication (toward God) piety; ...favor, good deed (-liness, -ness, kindly, (loving) kindness <i>KJV</i> , merciful (kindness), mercy, pity...	Psalm 118:1-4
26 agape agape Galatians 5:22	<b>Love</b> , i.e. affection or benevolence, a love-feast, a feast of charity, dear. From #25 <i>agapao</i> , to love in a moral sense. <i>Used in the New Testament as an unconditional, sacrificial love.</i>	John 3:16
3306 meno meinate John 15:4	<b>Abide</b> , to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy): abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry (for), x thine own	1 Corinthians 13:13

3. Now please take the time to read John's record of Jesus' teaching to His disciples in John 15:1-17, and then answer the following questions.
- How did Jesus describe Himself in this passage?
  - What does John 15:1-17 say is necessary for bearing fruit?
  - How did Jesus say that the production of fruit could be increased and how is that accomplished?

d. What do Jesus' words say to your spirit?

4. In Matthew 22:33-40 quoted Deuteronomy 6:5, mentioned in the introduction. Jesus' words reveal how important the fruit of the Spirit of love is. What did Jesus say was important in these verses? What are believers to do?

Now look at Jesus' teaching to His disciples in John 13:34,35. What did Jesus say would be the evidence of His follower's faith?

5. How do you love the Lord? In Romans 12:1,2 Paul taught the church in Rome how they were to worship God and how they were live their life as a follower of Christ. After explaining some of the spiritual gifts given to edify the church, Paul taught about love that is sincere and without hypocrisy in the remaining of the chapter. Read Romans 12:9-21 to see how the church is to live in community with other believers. Write down several of the instructions that brought conviction to your heart as you read Paul's list.

6. One way to understand the Christian concept of love (*agape*) is to see how Paul described love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a. This list presents a picture of what love is and what love is not, as Paul described the actions involved in love. As you read these words and phrases, note the two that are the easiest for you to live and then determine which two are the hardest for you to express to others.

a. It is easier for me to love in this way:

b. It is hard for me to love in this way:

Continued on the next page.

### Lesson 3

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One way of understanding love is to consider God's grace toward mankind. God's grace demonstrates His acceptance of individuals. God's grace demonstrates the unmerited favor shown through the gift of His only Son the Savior of the world. God in turn asks us to extend grace toward others. This was found on a man's tombstone, "He found God's grace too amazing to keep to himself." Would that be said about you?

Many would say that it is not humanly possible to love with (*agape*) love without the help of the Holy Spirit. (*Agape*) love shows commitment and care for others. (*Agape*) love shows that you desire to give another what they need, even though this might not always be what they want. Jesus promised His disciples that they would have the power of the Holy Spirit to be His witness throughout the world. You are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live out the fruit of love everywhere you go in this world.

What keeps you from living in the Spirit and bearing the fruit of love? I asked a friend that question and she said that when she is stressed because her schedule is often too busy, she is unloving toward her family. Is there something that consistently gets in the way of you expressing love toward others?

How can you become more loving toward others?

Think of one way you might demonstrate love to someone today.

Think of one way you might demonstrate love to someone in this next week.

*Who do you know who manifests the fruit of the Spirit of love? Would you take the time to affirm that person with a note or phone call to encourage them in their walk with the Lord? This would acknowledge that you have noticed their loving attitude toward others.*

Close in prayer, asking God what one truth from today's lesson He would have you carry with you through today and tomorrow. I met a pastor who challenges his church to "sleep on" problems, concerns, or truths. By praying about this concern before you go to sleep, and then upon waking turn your mind to that same issue as your first prayer before the Lord in the morning. When I have done this, I have been encouraged by God's message to me in the morning. Often times a thought comes in the morning after I have given this area of concern over to the Lord the night before. Praise the Lord for His faithfulness.

