

Fruit Of The Spirit

Love (I Co 13:1-11)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on the "Fruit Of The Spirit."
 - a. Last week we had the introductory material for this series.
 - b. Today we are going to look at the first of the nine characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit...AGAPE/LOVE!!!
3. This love is the most prominent in the scriptures by far.
 - a. It is found 320 times in 263 verse of the Bible.
 - b. It is in every book of the Bible.
 - i. I John and the Gospel According to John use it the most, with I John more than doubling every other book but John.
 1. I John 52
 2. John 44
 3. Romans 24
 4. Ephesians 22
 - c. It is the ultimate goal to achieve.
 - i. **II Pt 1:5-11** "For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection **with love**. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities **you will never fall**. 11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."¹ (emphasis mine)
 - d. It is a name of God.
 - i. **I Jn 4:8** "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."
 - e. It is the active soul caring love.
 - i. **Ep 2:4-7** "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."
4. With that in mind let us now look at this great characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit so that we too might bear such fruit in our lives.

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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I. Love Is Not Unconditional

- A. We hear people say things like...
 - 1. "I thought you loved me no matter what?"
 - i. You can love someone no matter what they do to you.
 - ii. You can love someone no matter how "evil" they are to you.
 - iii. You cannot love someone no matter what though, because...
- B. Love is not an emotion but an action
 - 1. It is based on conditions or things done for others.
 - i. God loves for us is seen in the fruit of His love toward us.
 - a. **Jn 3:16** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (NKJV)
 - b. **Ro 5:8** "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
 - c. **He 12:6** "For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."
 - ii. Our love for God and others is seen in the fruit of our love toward God and man.
 - a. **Jn 14:15** "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."
 - b. **I Jn 5:1-2** "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments."
- C. Thus love is not unconditional, but rather based on certain conditions

II. Love Is Commitment

- A. The early church was very committed
 - 1. They were committed to God.
 - i. **Ac 2:41-42** "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."
 - ii. **Ac 4:18-20** "So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, 20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.""
 - iii. **II Co 11:23-28** "
 - 2. They were committed to each other.
 - i. **Ac 12:12** "When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying."

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- ii. **II Co 8:1-5** "We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, 2 for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, 4 begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— 5 and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us."
- B. The church today must be committed as well
 - 1. It must be committed to God.
 - i. **II Ti 2:15** "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (NKJV)
 - ii. **II Ti 2:15** "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."
 - 2. It must be committed to each other.
 - i. **Ga 6:2** "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."
 - ii. **I Th 5:14** "And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all."

III. Love Is Sacrifice

- A. The early church sacrificed a great deal
 - 1. Their means.
 - i. **Ac 2:44-45** "And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need."
 - ii. **II Co 11:9** "And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way."
 - 2. Their time.
 - i. **Ac 6:3** "Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty."
 - ii. **Ja 1:27** "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."
- B. The church today must sacrifice a lot today as well
 - 1. We must sacrifice our means.
 - i. As individuals when needed.
 - a. **I Co 16:2** "On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come."
 - ii. As a congregation when needed.
 - a. Loads of money in the bank is not biblical by any stretch.

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2. We must sacrifice our time too.
 - i. As individuals when needed.
 - a. **Mt 28:19-20** "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
 - b. **Mk 16:16** "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."
 - ii. As a congregation.
 - a. **He 10:25** "not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."
 - b. **Ac 20:7** "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight."

IV. Love Is United

- A. The early church we find was united in love
 1. One church, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God.
 - i. **Ep 4:1-6** "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."
 - a. **Mt 16:18; Ep 1:22-23; Co 1:24**
- B. The church today must be united in that same love
 1. One voice, one mind, one judgment.
 - i. **I Co 1:10** "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (NKJV)
 - ii. **I Co 2:16** "For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ." (NKJV)
 - iii. **Jn 12:47** "If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world."

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CONCLUSION

1. Rainer Rilke once said, "For one human being to love another: that is perhaps the most difficult of all tasks..."
 - a. Why, because when we put others spiritual wellbeing above their emotional whims we will have a conflict or two.
 - b. However there is nothing greater than this and thus we see the reason it is a characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit.
 - i. **I Co 13:13** "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."
2. Question: Do you love God and others?
 - a. If so continue therein brethren.
 - b. If not why not, and are you willing to make it right?
3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**