

## Fruit of the Spirit - LOVE

Read Galatians 5:16 - 26

**The gifts of the Spirit are free gifts, but, the fruit of the Spirit has to be grown.**

**What is love?** We say I love my wife/husband; I love my mother; I love my Christian brothers; I love chocolate! These are different kinds of love, but one word, so the meaning is not always clear. Love, mercy & compassion can be part of our natural personality, but most of us find sometimes love runs out and we need more than our natural capacity. We need the character of God. **1 John 4:16** *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.* **1 John 4:8** *Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

Love between God and His Children, embraces affection, responsibility, obedience and faithfulness. We cannot counterfeit it, we have to develop it and refine it in our lives, by the power of Holy Spirit. Praise God the language of the Bible, gives the true **spoken** meaning. For some words it is necessary to go back to the original language it was recorded in, that is Hebrew in the O.T. and Greek in the N.T.

There are many words in the Greek for love, but these 3 are the basic 'root' words.

**Agapao** - independent of human affectations - to love in a moral sense out of principle and duty. I love my neighbour out of duty to my heavenly Father because he is the child of my heavenly Father.

**Agape** - selfless, sacrificial, unconditional. The love of God or Christ for humankind.

**Phileo** - to be a friend - (fond of an individual or an object). To have personal attachment out of sentiment or feeling;

Look at these examples and see the words in action.

**1 John 4:7-8** *Dear friends, let us love [agapao] one another, for love [agape] comes from God. Everyone who loves [agapao] has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love [agapao] does not know God, because God is love. [agape]*

**John 13:34-35** *"A new command I give you: love [agapao] one another. As I have loved [agapao] you, so you must love [agapao] one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love [agape] one another."*

**1 John 4:18-21** The word for love in each instance in v. 18 is Agape (noun).

*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.*

The word for love in each instance in v 19-21 is Agapao (verb).

*We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

**Agapao** love needs no response from others; is not fearful of relationships; It allows us to be vulnerable without fear; It is not fearful of intimacy; It allows us to say 'no' (in love); It acknowledges boundaries are not just OK but good; It enables us to give ourselves to others with commitment; It withstands the bad times; it enables us to be sacrificial this love is supernatural; it comes from God, not from man. We need to develop our love for God and man by the power of the Holy Spirit of God

**Recognise** this Agapao love starts with a sense of moral responsibility, but it moves on into the most powerful motive in the World. Love conquers hate, Why? - **God is love.**

**Matt 22:37-40** These verses are all focused on the **Agapao love of God**

*Jesus replied: "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "love your neighbour as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

### **Value systems of Life**

We need to ensure our lives display the character of the Spirit of God rather than the basic nature of man. Love is a decision and should be part of our personality, but we all find that love runs out and we need more. We need more than personality we need the character of God. When natural love runs out we need the 'supernatural love of God' to flow.

**What is the character of love? 1 Jn 4:19** *we love because he first loved us.*

**Real love is secure.** He loved us before we were able to love in return!

Love does not depend on a response; It is not offended by rejection; it loves when there is no response in return; love releases, it does not try to control, or manipulate people; love is not fearful of relationships and does not look back at the past pain, but is able to let people get close and be real and vulnerable. Love is not fearful of intimacy.

**Real love is free from fear. 1 Jn 4:18 NIV** *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. Perfect love casts out fear –

**Real love can say no!** love is not just soft and powerless. Real love has boundaries for safety. Discipline and love always walk together. God loves you just as you are but also loves you enough to not leave you as you are! Love challenges attitudes to bring out the best in a person – love always wants the best

**Real love has commitment** Real love gives itself to people with commitment; love has the ability to trust at its heart. Love says I am yours and it's more than a feeling it is evidenced by the choice of a life given. Love is prepared to make the sacrifice of commitment and share the good – the bad and even the ugly times.

Love can be motivated by the mind, soul and spirit. Supernatural love is inspired by God – but most of us just us love on 2 levels – we love from the mind and the soul. But if we are to be truly effective and fulfilled we need to love on 3 levels. We are made to love from the mind, soul & spirit. When all three levels are flowing together we are fulfilled.

**Mat 22:37-39** Jesus replied: *"love [agapao] the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'love [agapao] your neighbor as yourself.'*

**Love your God** Some of us struggle to love Father, because of human Father image. If this is you, do you love Jesus? Well then recognise Jesus loves Father who is in the Jesus you love!!

**Love your neighbour** not as a religious duty, loving your neighbour comes from knowing the love of Christ is leading you to love them. Remember Jesus died for them as well as you. Some struggle to love our neighbours, people can be difficult to love but remember we are into Agape love

**Love yourself. Deut 26:18** *the LORD has declared this day that you are his people, his treasured possession as he promised, and that you are to keep all his commands.* We must believe that we're loved and valuable. We must accept we are designed and wanted by God – there are no mistakes or failures. Every human being needs to know their significance and that they are born for destiny. Each one is created with a value system and a story to tell.

Some think it sinful to love ourselves, (confusing it with being self centred) If we do not have a correct value system of who we are we will never be able to love others and give them value. If we do not love ourselves, we will fall prey to all sorts of enemy tactics, like; Rejection, Fear, Insecurity, etc If we are still experiencing rejection then we will reject others. As you continue to love God He reveals His heart to you and you know you are loved.

It takes healed people to minister healing and in a society that suffers so much rejection, we need to have this unique message of love!

You know you have to share the love that you have found – you have a story!

This is the season to LOVE – a relationship of trust and relationship.

**1 Cor 13:4-8** *love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. love never fails.*

**1Cor 13:13** *now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

**Acts 6:59** *They were stoning Stephen as he called out: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin!" And saying this, he fell asleep.*