

Love

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22, 23

The chief fruit of the spirit is love. One short Bible study will certainly not exhaust the topic of love. But let's get a taste of the banquet God has laid before us.

Love comes from God. Examine 1 John 4:7-11, 16. According to John where does love come from?

According to John, what happens to the ability of person to love if that person has not received the love of God?

And yet we see non-Christians who are loving spouses and parents. Explain.

Do you think that people naturally have the ability to love?

Romans 5:8 How is God's love fundamentally different than ours?

Characteristics of love

A. Love is founded on _____. Luke 7:42-47 Do you really think this comparison of Jesus' works?

B. Love _____ God. 1 John 2:5, 1 John 5:2 A person says, "I don't get hung up with all those 'DOs' and 'DON'Ts'!. I just try to do whatever is the loving thing to do." Comment.

How would you explain **obedience** in terms of **sacrificial love**.

C. Love has an _____. 1 John 4:20, 21. Many people claim to love God but hate someone else. Which do you think best explains this?

- they think they hate the other person, but they just can't get along.
- they think God has more reason to love them than the hated person.
- they really don't love God at all
- they have a hard time really loving anyone.

The Attributes of Love Fall in love again with 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a Here are 10 active characteristics of love. While we don't have time to look at them all, it will help us gain an insight into **How to LOVE!**

v.4 P _____ and K _____ You will notice that these are fruits of the Spirit, too. How is each fruit of the spirit actually an extension of sacrificial love?

v. 4 Doesn't E _____ *Karen just couldn't be happy for anyone else. She always wanted what they wanted: job, kids, husband, vacation, looks, what she had was never good enough. It just ate her up. Why is Karen's a love problem?*

v. 4 Doesn't B _____ and Isn't P _____. If you are person who has trouble tooting your own horn, what is going on inside? Will people love us without being impressed?

v. 5 Not R _____ or S _____. Here is the classic definition of anti-love. What evidences of self-seeking behavior have you had to struggle with? Why are *politeness* and *love* so strikingly similar?

v. 5 Not Easily A _____ *Fred said, "You make me so made, I just can't help myself."* Why is Fred fooling himself?

v. 5 Keeps no R _____ of wrongs. Have you ever been in an argument that began today and ended up years ago with some wrong that still hurts? How is bringing up such things not an evidence of **sacrificial love**?"

v. 6 Does not delight in E _____ but rejoices in the T _____. The fruit of the spirit is borne out in what you take delight in. What are some of the evidences of evil in our society that some people get trapped in delighting?

How do you speak the truth when in the Spirit? Ephesians 4:15



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JOY!



1. Joy VS Happiness. As Christians mature in their lives in Christ their understanding of joy deepens. The second of the fruits of the spirit in Galatians 5:22 is joy. Philip Keller in "A Gardener Looks at the Fruits of the Spirit" notes that there is a difference between happiness and joy.

**Happiness comes from pleasant happenings.
Joy comes from the presence of God in your life.**

Find out why joy came to each of the following. Then note reasons each of these might have for not being particularly happy.

	Reason for JOY	Reason for UNHAPPINESS
Luke 1:14		
Luke 2:20		
Luke 10:17		
Luke 24:52		

Growth in the Spirit and in fruits of the Spirit is similar to maturity. Compare the attitudes, goals, and reactions of an immature person to one with maturity in the following categories:

	Immature Happiness	Mature Joy
Job		
Interpersonal Relations		
Time use		
Recreation		
Spiritual Life		
Money use		

2. Suffering for joy. Name a time when you have had to suffer (well, at least be denied something) because of your relationship to Christ. Was it a drag, or did it lead to joy?

What did the potential of joy lead Jesus to do? Hebrews 12:2

What situations can Christians also have joy in? 1 Peter 1:6

What happens to the Christian when he/she suffers for the name of Christ? 1 Peter 4:12-14 Why is this sure to produce joy?

3. Public Joy! Note that the verb form of joy is "to rejoice." In the Old Testament joy and rejoicing are synonymous. How could a person have joy without there being rejoicing?

Maturity in joy is very closely linked to maturity in the worship of God. Investigate Psalm 100:2 and Psalm 132:7-9. Is this a characteristic that many Christians have in worship?

Rev. 19:7 gives the picture of a wedding reception. What makes a wedding so special that lots of people like to go to them, and you WANT a lot of people at yours?

4. Situational Joy? See how your response might change if you respond with human happiness, or Spirit-filled joy.

1. My child is doing great in school.
2. My boss is really on my back at work.
3. I am (my wife is) pregnant.
4. Our church is building a building.
5. I'm going in for tests at the hospital.

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Peace

1. Peace with Roots. The word "peace" is known universally. The Hebrew for the term is "Shalom." The Greek is "Eirene" (hence the name Irene). The Hebrew term "shalom" refers to well being, particularly well-being between God and man. The Greek term in its common usage meant a pause between the eternal strife. Can you guess where the root of Scripture's use of peace is?

Peace is inaugurated by a covenant between God and man. Take a look at Ezekiel 37:26 to see what happens when we are God's people.

Some prophets promise peace but don't deliver. Read Jeremiah 6:13-15

What ways for peace are some modern false prophets suggesting?

- Sigmund Freud
- Planned Parenthood
- United Nations
- The Republican Party
- The Democratic Party

2. A Different Piece of Peace. The coming of the Messiah is the dawn of real peace. What is the "nickname" that the Messiah is to be given? Isaiah 9:5

When Jesus born it was a time of peace. To whom did this peace come? ... did it not come? Luke 2:14

Some had pegged Jesus to be an earthly king giving a political peace. Does he promise that life for the Christian will be "peaceful?" Luke 12:51

Yet what will He give? John 14:27, 16:33

Imagine yourself to be a believer in a country that oppresses Christians. How could you have peace even though the people you lived among were not peaceful toward you?

3. Peace plus. Peace comes wrapped in a package with other qualities. See what they are? Why would it be difficult to experience real peace without the others?

- Romans 2:10
- Romans 8:6
- Romans 15:13
- 2 Corinthians 13:11
- 1 Timothy 1:2
- Hebrews 12:11

Peace with God, Harmony with Others ...

Situation 1: Examine Romans 14:17-19. As you look at the context of the passage what was causing strife among the brothers and sisters? (Particularly, what was the "eating and drinking" that was un-peaceful?)

How do you balance:

Let me do my own thing / Build my brother up

Give you own paraphrase of Romans 10:17 now that you know what the controversy was about.

Situation 2: Examine 2 Timothy 2:22-25. As you look at the context of the passage what was causing strife among the brothers and sisters? (Particularly, what were the "evil desires of youth" leading believers into?)

Complete the following equation:

truth - love = x

In order to keep the peace among Christians should we sweep doctrinal error under the rug?

How do we correct the erring?



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Patience

Psalm 27:14 What is patience waiting for?

Many assume that patience is a “weak characteristic”. Why does patience need a lot of strength? Note the differences between weakness and patience as a:

- ◆ Parent
- ◆ Teacher
- ◆ Team Leader
- ◆ Coach

Psalm 37:7 Can a person be still before the Lord yet still be active in front of people?

What thoughts and attitudes would NOT reflect patience in the situations that this Psalm brings to mind?



Patience the Teacher... Proverbs 19:11 Who are you least patient with:

1. those who lack the ability to accomplish things the way you think they can
2. those who lack the desire to do things the way you think they should
3. those whose desire is directly against you
4. all of the above

How long do you wait before you try to correct someone?

How might these verses give you patience in the mentioned situation?

- Matthew 18:15 ff.
- 2 Timothy 2:25
- Luke 17:4-5

Who is the best teacher that you have ever had? Why?

Tell of something that you had great difficulty learning, but that a careful instructor was able to teach you.

Ecclesiastes 7:8 What is it about patience that seeks the “end of the matter”.

Do patient people love to quarrel? Are they afraid to stick to their guns? How do they manage the two?

Why is patience the opposite of pride?

Tough Patience... Most of the other spiritual fruits can be exercised in good times and bad. Why is it in the nature of patience that it comes only in bad (or in the very least, inconvenient) times?

- ⇒ Revelation 2:3 How has patience been proven out in these believers?
- ⇒ Hebrews 12:3 Can you lose heart and still be patient?
- ⇒ Galatians 6:9 Why does patience not give up?

Folks thought Bernice was the most patient person they knew. She waited years for Benjie to stop drinking. Fact of the matter is that she had just given up... and she was just plain depressed. Comment.

Patience in Church!

Romans 2:4 How does God’s patience lead us to repentance? I thought that people “got saved” when they had “the fear of God” put in them?

Albert was talking religion to his nephew, but Sonny just wouldn’t listen to him, “If you don’t accept Jesus your life is gonna be a miserable mess like your dad’s and then you’re gonna fry in hell!” he shouted as he stomped off! Buddy smirked.

Some believe that James 1:19-20 was meant particularly for pastors and evangelists. Why would it be tempting to be impatient and make people believe by your anger? Why doesn’t this really work well?

1 Timothy 1:16 Come to think of it, who has God had patience with?

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Kindness = Usefulness with love

1. The Ultimate Kindness . . . How does Ephesians 2:7 define the kindness of God?

If we look to our "basic definition" of the word kindness how does this apply to God in the purest sense of the word's use?

Romans 11:22 defines kindness as the opposite of what? How has God been kind to us?

What does it mean to "continue in His kindness?" Does this mean that only "nice" people will be saved?

Titus 3:4-5 speaks of the kindness of our Savior being a prime factor in what?

Now back up to Titus 3:3. What are the negative qualities induced by our sinfulness that Jesus has saved us from?

If we are Christ's representatives, do you think that exhibiting Christian kindness can undo some of these qualities of sinfulness in people that God places us with?

In other words, is kindness greater than mean-ness?

2. What Kind of Kindness? In 2 Corinthians 6 Paul lists some of the things God has done "for" and "through" him. Verse 6 lists 5 qualities granted to the apostle. How does kindness relate to the others?

P _____

U _____

P _____

Kindness

Sincere _____ (agape)

What would you call worldly kindness (kindness not motivated by the Holy Spirit)?

St. Paul commands that all Christians should endeavor to cultivate the qualities that God desires for us. Note his list in Colossians 3:12. What is "kindness" sandwiched between?

What relationship does kindness have to:

...compassion

... humility?

2 Peter 1:5 Peter recognizes that each of the fruits of the Spirit are interrelated. To a great extent, each of the fruits are ineffectual if exhibited without others.

What other fruit does kindness modify?

Have you ever met a Christian who is godly, but lacks kindness. Describe.

Likewise, have you ever met a person who is very kind, but does not exhibit the sacrificial love that Christ can give?

3. Putting it into practice... Check out these verses and see how kindness is put into practice.

- Proverbs 17:17 What is the worst thing about a "fair weather friend". Tell of a time that a friend, though inconvenienced themselves, helped you.
- Luke 6:35 How does Godly kindness reach out to surprising people? Could you be kind to an enemy?
- Galatians 6:10 Why would God have to remind us to be kind to believers? Doesn't it just seem natural?



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Goodness



- ◆ Goodness is the rugged reality of God Himself coming to grips with the awfulness of sin. Philip Keller
- ◆ Goodness is the magnitude which gives meaning to existence. Walter Grundmann

1. What's the standard? Jesus is addressed as good. What does He have to say about it in Luke 18:19.

One person offers, "Maybe God isn't good! What if some of His motives are evil?" Comment.

What was one of the hallmarks of Jesus ministry? Acts 10:38

Was His goodness apparent to all men? John 7:12

We often feel that if something is truly GOOD that it will be known by all. Why is this not true? Illustrate.

2. "So they may see your GOD deeds ..." Jesus command us to do good deeds. Why? Matthew 5:16

What is the connection between:

GOD GOOD DEEDS THE CHRISTIAN

Luke 6:27 Why can you, as a Christian, do good that is unlike anything else the world understands as good?

Go on to v. 35. Would this kind of goodness be difficult for you?

3. How GOOD is GOODness? Examine Romans 16:19. How does one become "wise about what is good?"

What does it say about Christians who know "too much" about the sins of this world?

You are what you read. How can your reading habits affect your wisdom or innocence?

Philippians 4:8 gives a good description of the person who desires to practice goodness. What types of things should he/she study?

Now look at 1 Corinthians 15:33 With whom should you do your "wisdom" study? Does this mean you ignore your non-Christian friends?

Galatians 6:9-10 have two principles for the practice of goodness.

v. 9 Goodness can be _____

v. 10 Goodness should be shown to _____, but don't forget _____.

Peter understands that fruits have a natural relationship. Each one affects another. Take a look at 2 Peter 1:5. What gift of the Holy Spirit should be salted with goodness?

Is it possible to trust in Jesus without doing good things?

Why would the person with goodness want to be well informed?

4. A GOOD example. Acts tells us of Barnabas, a GOOD man. What were some of the characteristics of his goodness?

Acts 11:23a
Acts 11:23b
Acts 9:27
Acts 13:42
Acts 15:37-39

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Faithfulness

The New International Version translates this fruit as "faithfulness."
King James Version translates it "faith." What would be the difference between the two in the English language?

1. Faith says "God can do it." Jesus usually defined faith as trust that God could work in a specific circumstance. Look up the passages below. Which specific circumstances were these people trusting God for?

- Matthew 8:10
- Matthew 9:22
- Matthew 15:28

Who is our faith to be in? Mark 11:22 (John 14:1)

The above seems obvious. But in these days the possessing of faith seems to be more important than the content of what is possessed (see below). Comment.

Why is only a small amount of faith powerful? Matthew 17:20

2. Another kind of faith. There are two aspects of faith as it relates to who I am:

1. The faith _____ believes
2. The faith _____ believed

Which type of faith is described in Romans 1:8 and Titus 1:1, 13?

Is the faith that is believed as important as the faith that believes?

How does the Holy Spirit allow us to grow in the faith that is believed?

Some people say, "I don't get into all that doctrine stuff, just give me Jesus." Comment

3. The mustard seed grows. Paul complimented Christians in two cities concerning their growing faith.

- 2 Thessalonians 1:3,
- Philippians 1:25

How would you contrast a growing faith as opposed to a stagnant or dying one?

Examine the Philippians 1:25 passage. What is one characteristic the fruit of faith had in Philippi?

4. Faith does. We think of faith as a "head trip." Early Christians did not so easily separate heart and hands. How is faith described in Acts 6:7, Romans 16:26.

Take a look at this fruit of the Spirit in Acts 6:5-7. What happens when the Christian allows God's Spirit to build up an alive faith within?

Go on to the "armor of God in Ephesians 6:10-18. What piece of armor represents faith? Why do you suppose that is?

The shield that Paul spoke of was actually very small. It was most effective when locked in a phalanx with other soldiers. How is faith or faithfulness most effective when practiced with other Christians?

Faith is also a gift of the Spirit. Take a look at 1 Corinthians 12:9. What kind of faith is being spoken of here?

How is it that faith and faithfulness is all three of:

- A. a basic necessity of being a Christian
- B. A fruit of maturing in the Spirit
- C. A gift that the Spirit gives to some in special measure?



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Gentleness

Gentleness - is power put aside in love.

1. The Meek One. Breathe in the wonderful promise of Matthew 11:28-30. What does Jesus claim about himself?

Examine the definition of gentleness (or “meekness” in the KJV). As you reflect on the events in Jesus' life, how does he put aside His power in love?

- His birth
- His baptism
- With “sinners”
- In His “triumphal ride”
- At the Last Supper
- During His trial
- At the crucifixion

Herman thought being a Christian was for sissies. “Jesus was a wuss,” he crowed. What do you think?

2. Meek, not weak! Take a look at Psalm 37:11. What promise is given? (And repeated by Jesus in Matthew 5:5)

Now look at the verses in the psalm preceding v. 11. What are some of the things that gentleness does:

- v. 1
- v. 3
- v. 4
- v. 5
- v. 7
- v. 8

Why can the Christian have the courage to be gentle in the midst of a violent world?

3. Not violent. Paul commands that the pastor be a “gentle-man” by not being “violent” (1 Timothy 3:3). Let's think of other opposites for gentleness and meekness.

Against what does Paul warn the Roman Christians in Romans 12:3.

Does this mean that the “meek” Christian should have a “low self-esteem?”

How might the above admonition speak to Christians who have a problem with:

- receiving praise
- politicking
- gossiping
- impossible expectations
- hot temper

4. Gentle correction. One of the most important areas of gentleness is in the correction of an erring brother or sister in Christ. How does Paul command that this be done? Galatians 6:1

Jesus outlined brotherly discipline within the Christian congregation in Matthew 18:15 ff. How do his instructions encourage gentleness?

How are they lovingly firm?

What is the reason that discipline is done?

What could be some of the “sinful” reasons that someone could be “kicked out of church?”

5. Gentle in All things. What does Peter consider gentleness to be a key component of in 1 Peter 3:15? How could you be a “harsh” witness?”

When Juan's brother died in a tragic accident when he had been drinking, Gilbert said, “Well, he's frying in hell. If you don't come to Jesus, the same thing will happen to you.” Comment.

Who should your gentleness be evident to? Philippians 4:5



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Self-Control

For the Christian self-control is the ability to be controlled by the internal spirit of God rather than the sinful nature.

1. Rare fruit. Surprisingly this fruit of the spirit is rarely mentioned in scriptures. But it was a highly regarded virtue to Socrates and other Greek (particularly the Stoic) philosophers. It meant "to have power or dominion over all things and over oneself." How would the Christian's view of "self" make him/her cautious about "self-control?" In this regard compare Romans 7:21 and 8:9.

Everyone is controlled by something (sometimes, many things). Make a list of the powerful controllers that influence our lives and the lives of others. Then put a star by those things that might be objectionable for the Christian to be controlled by.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What is the controlling mission of the Christian? Philippians 2:13

How does "God-control" differ from many of the popular "You can do it" self-control approaches? John 3:30

2. Controlled attitudes. The most important part of your body God desires to control is your _____. Psalm 51:10, 11, & 17.

What is special about this "holy spirit" that is different from the self-spirit controlling your life?

Paul had learned the attitudes of the Spirit controlled self. Translate the following statements from the "conformed" attitude to the "transformed" attitude.

Conformed	Transformed
It's not my fault!	
Everybody is against me.	
Other people must like me.	
I must succeed.	
You can do it!	

Pick a vice out of the list of the "fruits of sin" in Galatians 5:19- 21. How must the mind be transformed before a person could ever control this attitude?

3. Put a lid on it! There are several actions that scripture commands particular attention toward "Christ-control." Let's look at them:

- a. The _____. James 3:9-12. Let's go beyond simple "foul language. In what other situations should the Christian learn to control his/her tongue?
- b. Control of _____. 1 Corinthians 7:9 Do you think that Paul's solution to the temptation is valid?
- c. Control of _____. 1 Corinthians 6:19. When does a fine palate turn into gluttony?
- d. Control of what you _____. Matthew 9:47. How is this self-control increasingly an issue today?

4. Training... Some people have never controlled themselves because they have never tried. It is work, but it is worth it. What does Paul liken self-control to? Corinthians 9:24-27

Athletics can be analogous to developing self-control. How can the following be analogous to elements of personal godly control in life situations?

1. Strength training?
2. Endurance training and running?
3. Flexibility and limberness?
4. Workout drills?
5. Balance and core strengthening?



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