

The Fruit of Love

First on the list of fruit that the Apostle gives is Love. It is important that we first define the concept of love from a Biblical standpoint. The Greek language has a way of making those fine distinctions by a word rather than a descriptive phrase. We want to look carefully at each one and draw conclusions of what this particular fruit is.

1. "EROS"--This word, as such, does not appear in the Scriptures, but was used much among the Greek speaking world. We have carried this Greek word over into our English language that gives a clue to its meaning—"Erotic!" The idea is that of sexual desire, passion, lust for another, etc. Many people in our society today use the word "love" with reference to their passion or lust for another person. Such does not do justice to the concept of love that the Spirit brings into our lives.

2. "STORGE"—This word is used in the Bible, but is combined with other terms to show its intended concept. It is found in the following passages: a) "ASTORGOUS"—"Without natural affection." (Rom. 1:31; 2 Tim. 3:3). b) PHILOSTORGOS—"Kindly affectioned" (Rom. 12:10). This verse also adds: "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love." Since we are brothers and sisters in Christ, we should have or show a natural affection to one another.

3. "PHILEO"—This word is used over 20 times in the New Testament. It carries with it the concept of a warm, tender, intimate relationship with another human being. The words: "friend" or "companion" identifies with this Greek word. It denotes the closeness between human beings. David and Jonathan's relationship illustrates this concept (2 Sam. 1:26). Jesus' relationship with Lazarus, Mary, and Martha illustrates this concept also (John 11:3). In Romans 12:10, two words are combined that gives an idea of the closeness of this relationship: "brotherly love" (Phila- delphia). This kind of affection or love can be between any other human being that we have drawn close unto—but not indicating "eros" nor necessarily "storge." This love is prompted by the mind and the emotions and usually denotes an attachment with another person.

4. "AGAPE"—This word is used over 100 times in the New Testament. This word does not necessarily require an emotional, affectionate, or passionate response to another. This love is more from the mind, reason, or intelligence. It is a concern for the well-being of another person even if he is your enemy. Jesus said we were to "love" (agape) our enemies (Matt. 5:43-44). You want his welfare even if he doesn't want yours. Jesus is here showing that we can exercise our will to seek the good for another person no matter what he has done. Jesus illustrated this in the 23rd chapter of Matthew. Jesus obviously love the world of human beings who were in rebellion to God....to the extent that He gave His life to redeem us (John 3:16). But His strong rebukes were obviously given to these religious leaders to try to awaken them to their doomed condition and their need of immediate repentance. He ended the chapter with a compassionate picture of God's love for them illustrated by a "mother hen" (Matt. 23:37-39). When the Apostle Paul told the Corinthians that they were carnal, it was not because he hated them, but rather that he loved (agape) them! (2 Cor. 12:15).

THE HIGHEST CONCEPT OF LOVE—AGAPE!

Agape is Godly love! There is no higher concept of love than this. God's love for His creatures, even though undeserved, was freely offered to all (Jn. 3:16). Jesus showed the importance of this concept of love when he pointed out what the two greatest commands were: (1) To love

God with our whole mind, soul, and heart; and (2) To love our neighbor as ourselves. (Matt. 22:37-39). Then, He added something that is very important to see—"On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matt. 22:40). Another time, Jesus stated it this way: "If you love Me, keep My commandments." (John 14:15). Or, as the Apostle Paul expressed it: "Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the Law." (Rom. 13:10). Love causes us to do what is right, even if it means our physical death (1 John 3:16).

Love (Agape) needs to regulate and guide "eros" so that our actions will be for the best to all concerned. Love (Agape) needs to be added to "storge" so that even though my family is not deserving of my affection, I will extend it anyway. Love (Agape) needs to be present even when there is "eros," "storge," and even "phileo" in my marriage—because the first three may wane over time, but "agape" can grow stronger and cement that relationship all the way to the end. "Agape" is the primary reason why I remain faithful as a Christian, even when things seem to be coming apart (1 Cor. 15:58).

Read 1 Cor. 13, Love Does.....

1. Love is Patient. "Love suffers long." "Love is slow to lose patience"
2. Love is Kind. Love looks for ways of being constructive, useful, profitable, and encouraging to others. Mark's Gospel pictures Christ as busily engaged in doing good for people. His life was filled with kind deeds and a sympathetic heart. And.....one of the bases of judgment will be on whether we have shown this Love to those about us (Matt. 25:31-46).
3. Love is Generous. "Love envies not." "Love never boils with jealousy." Love is being generous hearted to others. This is Love in competition with others. Any work that we try to do, there will be others doing the same thing and maybe even better. Love helps us to rejoice with them—not envy them. Envy can be a main cause of division in the home or church.
4. Love is Humble. "Love is not puffed up." Love is not arrogant, conceited and does not put on airs, nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance. This is Love hiding itself! It does not "toot" its own horn. It does not do good works to be seen of men, but rather to be seen of God. It is not a "show off," nor a braggart. Love does it have a mind full of itself.
5. Love is Courteous. "Love does not behave itself unseemly." Love is not rude, unmannerly, nor is it indecent. The church at Corinth had all kinds of unseemly behavior. They were using their gifts without concern for other people. They were elevating men beyond what they should have. They were guilty of division, immorality, going to Law with brothers, etc. It is to be considerate of others—their feelings, wishes, well-being, etc. (1 Pet. 3:8). "Noble manners are the fruit of noble minds."
6. Love is Unselfish. "Seeks not her own." Love does not insist on its own way. It does not insist on its rights. It is never self-seeking, nor does it pursue selfish aims. Selfishness is at the root of most of our problems in life. Most sin can be attributed to seeking for self, rather than for others. (1 Cor. 10:24, 33). Love helps us to become other-person centered, rather than self-centered. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35). There is no real happiness in having and getting—it is only in giving!

7. Love has a good Temper. "Not easily provoked." Love does not bear malice toward others, nor is it quick to take offense, or to be irritated, or become resentful. A seeming good disposition can be marred by easily ruffled, quick-tempered, touchy disposition. Love is needed to control such actions towards others.

8. Love is Guileless. "Love thinks no evil." Love does not keep score of wrongs, nor does it keep account of evil. Love is what the overly suspicious person needs. Guilelessness is one secret of personal influence. The reason is that they believe in you. In an atmosphere of suspicion men shrivel up. In an atmosphere of faith and trust men expand and find encouragement. So, Love thinks the best of people. It puts the best construction on others' actions. Love is forgiving and does not hold a grudge.

9. Love is Sincere. "Love rejoices not in iniquity but rejoices in the truth." Love takes no pleasure in others' wrong doings, It does not gloat over other men's sins. It is never glad when others go wrong. Rather, it rejoices in the victory of truth in a person's life. It joyfully sides with truth. It is always glad when truth prevails. Love does not take pleasure in people who sin, nor in those who fall into sin. It does not like to expose the weakness of others or make "capitol" out of other's faults. It does not rejoice in error, but accepts, keeps, and upholds truth. It also rejoices when truth triumphs in the lives of others.

10. Love bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things. Love can overlook the faults of others. It wards off the insults and injuries of others. It can bear up under many things. Love is always eager to believe the best about others. There is no end to its trust in others. Love makes our hope strong that can keep us steadfast, faithful, and stable. Love gives us endurance under all kinds of undesirable circumstances.

11. **Love never fails.** All else will come to an end, but not love. It is the ever-enduring quality of God Himself. ¹

http://camphillchurch.org/study_books/FRUIT%20OF%20THE%20SPIRIT,%20Bearing%20the.pdf

¹ This study was taken from Paul Cantrell,
http://camphillchurch.org/study_books/FRUIT%20OF%20THE%20SPIRIT,%20Bearing%20the.pdf

My Notes and Thoughts

Read Gen 22. In your own words how was Abraham responding in “agape”?

Write out Matthew 22:37-40 _____

After looking at 1 Cor 13 and what love does, write down your 3 strongest areas and 3 areas you need to work on.

What is one new nugget you got from this study? _____

Love is a verb. How are you increasing your fruit of love? _____

What current mindset or attitude is hindering you from cultivating love? _____

What are some ways you love God and what are some experiences you have encountered while loving Him?

THOUGHT: Take some time to pray and ask Holy Spirit if there are people in your heart that has taken His place. God doesn't want us to isolate ourselves but to make sure our relationships are in proper order and to establish healthy boundaries.

Take a moment and write down thoughts and specific areas He spoke to you about:
