

LOVE IS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

1 John 4:8; 1 Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 5:22-23

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: Everybody has loved something or someone at one time or another but for the Christian there is a special kind of love which he/she needs to have. What kind of love? Where does it fit in in the life of a Christian? How is a Christian to show love toward God and to others? Is it the same kind of love or are there different kinds of love?

I. "LOVE" DEFINED:

1. There are four different words used to express the single word "Love:"
 - There is a word used for carnal, sexual love - "eros"
 - There is a word used for the love of a close friend - "philia"
 - There is a word used for the love of family relationships - "storge"
 - There is a word used for love that seeks only the highest good of others - "agape"
 - "agape" is the word used to express the kind of love God has - 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a
 - Jesus used the same word in Matthew 5:43-48
2. What exactly is "agape" love?
 - It has to do with one's mind and is not some sort of emotion which suddenly rises up.
 - it is a principle by which one deliberately lives.
 - It is not some uncontrolled reaction of one's heart, but a concentrated exercise of one's will.
 - It is a caring love which becomes involved in the need of others.
 - It does not depend upon being loved back to earn more of the "agape" kind of love.
 - It is not some sort of "exclusive" love which is expressed to a select few, but it is an all-embracing love shown to everyone.
3. "Agape" love has been very clearly illustrated:
 - It started with God - God is love - 2 Corinthians 13:11
 - God's love is completely undeserved - Romans 5:8
 - God's love is an inseparable love - Romans 8:35o-39
 - God's love is a great love willing to save sinners - Ephesians 2:4-7
 - It finds its complete fulfillment in Jesus Christ:
 - God's love reaches its peak in His Son, Jesus Christ - Romans 8:39
 - Jesus fully demonstrated "agape" love - John 15:13
 - One can come to know what "agape" love really is by looking at Jesus Christ - 1 John 3:16

II. "LOVE" IN THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN

1. Where is "love" in the life the Christian?
 - It is to be the very "atmosphere" in which the Christian lives - Ephesians 5:1-2
 - It is to be the "tie that binds" the "garment" the Christian is to put on - Colossians 3:12-14
 - It is to be the "universal motive" for all that a Christian does - 1 Corinthians 16:14
 - It is to prevent the Christian's liberty from turning into selfishness - Galatians 5:13
 - It is to describe/characterize the preaching and teaching of God's truth - Ephesians 4:15
2. "Love" is to be demonstrated:
 - Right ways and wrong ways of demonstrating one's love toward God:

- Improperly:
 - by shouting from the roof top of one's "love"
 - by putting bumper stickers and honking "if one loves Jesus"
 - by thinking that whatever they do "in the name of the Lord" will please Him.
 - Jesus said: Matthew 7:21-23
- Properly:
 - by keeping God's commandments - John 14:15, 21, 23-24; 15:10, 14
 - by loving one's fellow Christians - 1 John 4:20-21
- Showing one's love toward others:
 - Show one's love to other Christians:
 - Love for one another is a basic doctrine of the Lord Jesus - 1 John 3:11; 13:34-35
 - Showing love for other Christians by:
 - helping them in their physical needs - 1 John 3:16-18
 - helping them in their spiritual needs - 1 Peter 4:8; James 5:19-20
 - Show one's love to those who are not Christians:
 - A Christian's love must go beyond those who love him/her back - Luke 6:27-36
 - A Christian shows he/she is truly a child of God when out of love he/she:
 - does good to those that hate him/her
 - blesses those who curse him/her
 - prays for those who spitefully abuse/misuse him/her
 - doesn't resist when they hurt or do evil to him/her
 - does unto them as he/she would have them do to him/her
 - treats them as God treats him/her

CONCLUSION:

1. One who demonstrates the virtue of "love" in his/her life produces the "fruit of the Spirit."
 - God demonstrated His love for mankind in offering His Son as a sacrifice for sin.
 - Jesus showed His love in the way He lived and died for mankind.
 - The Spirit of God revealed what "love" is through God's Word
 - Christians should manifest "love" in attitude and actions because he/she has been born of God.
2. No matter how YOU might excel in "love," there is still room for more growth and there is always the need for more prayers.
3. How have YOU responded to God's wonderful love? Romans 2:4-5