

2. The Fruit of the Spirit is Love (1Q 2010—The Fruit of the Spirit)

Biblical material: 1 Cor. 13:13, Deut. 6:5, Matt. 5:43–48, Matt. 7:12, 22:39

Quotes

- The Holy Spirit is the heavenly Lover's engagement ring given to us. *Michael Green*
- Love is a fruit in season at all times, and within reach of every hand. *Mother Teresa*
- There is no greater invitation to love than loving first. *St. Augustine*
- The love we give away is the only love we keep. *Elbert Hubbard*
- Love is, above all, the gift of oneself. *Jean Anouilh*
- To love at all is to be vulnerable. *C.S. Lewis*
- Love comes when manipulation stops; when you think more about the other person than about his or her reactions to you. When you dare to reveal yourself fully. When you dare to be vulnerable. *Joyce Brothers*

Questions

If the fruit of the spirit is love, why is that so many Christians seem unloving? In terms of keeping God's law, what's love got to do with it? How does the on-looking universe see love? How would you describe the fundamental principle of love? In what ways can we demonstrate what love truly is?

Bible discussion

Love is the greatest of the three that remain (1 Cor. 13:13). The call of God in Deut. 6:5 is to love God with all your heart/soul/strength—what does this mean? (Note also that Jesus endorsed this, along with “love your neighbor as yourself” in Matt. 22:39). Jesus tells us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Matt. 5:44)—how is this possible? The “Golden Rule” (Matt. 7:12) could be seen as just wanting to be treated well yourself—how is this loving others?

Biblical concepts of love

In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling. (Ex. 15:13 NIV)

But showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. (Ex. 20:6 NIV)

For the king trusts in the LORD; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken. (Ps. 21:7 NIV)

Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you are good, O LORD. (Ps. 25:7 NIV)

Praise be to the LORD, for he showed his wonderful love to me when I was in a besieged city. (Ps. 31:21 NIV)

Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. (Ps. 36:5 NIV)

For your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth. (Ps. 26:3 NIV)

Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. (Ps. 63:3 NIV)

But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children... (Ps. 103:17 NIV)

Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs. (Prov 10:12 NIV)

Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Rom. 13:10 NIV)

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. (1 Cor. 13:4 NIV)

But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him. (1 John 2:5 NIV)

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. (1 John 3:16 NIV)

No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. (1 John 4:12 NIV)

In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. (1 John 4:17 NIV)

Ellen White Comments

There can be no growth or fruitfulness in the life that is centered in self. If you have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, you are to forget yourself, and try to help others. Talk of the love of Christ, tell of His goodness. Do every duty that presents itself. Carry the burden of souls upon your heart, and by every means in your power seek to save the lost. As you receive the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit of unselfish love and labor for others—you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely. “The fruit of the Spirit is love...” {COL 67-8}

Nothing but divine power can regenerate the human heart and imbue souls with the love of Christ, which will ever manifest itself with love for those for whom He died. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. When a man is converted to God, a new moral taste is supplied, a new motive power is given, and he loves the things that God loves. . . . Love, joy, peace, and inexpressible gratitude will pervade the soul, and the language of him who is blessed will be, “Thy gentleness hath made me great” (Ps. 18:35). But those who are waiting to behold a magical change in their characters without determined effort on their part to overcome sin, will be disappointed. {AG 302}

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace. Discord and strife are the work of Satan and the fruit of sin. If we would as a people enjoy peace and love, we must put away our sins; we must come into harmony with God, and we shall be in harmony with one another. Let each ask himself: Do I possess the grace of love? Have I learned to suffer long and to be kind? Talents, learning, and eloquence, without this heavenly attribute, will be as meaningless as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Alas that this precious treasure is so lightly valued and so little sought by many who profess the faith! {LHU 313}