

Apple Of Love Series

February 12, 2025

Scripture: Galatians 5:22, John 13:34

Summary: What is "physical fruit"? "An outward evidence of the inward nature of the tree."

(We know an apple tree is an apple tree because it produces apples).

Likewise, if we are walking in the Spirit, we will evidence His inward presence.

THE APPLE OF LOVE

In John 15:8, Jesus declared, "In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, so shall you be My disciples."

We glorify the Father and prove that we are followers of Jesus, when we produce the Fruit of the Spirit.

The Fruit of the Spirit is much different than the Gifts of the Spirit.

The gifts of the Spirit are "supernatural enabling for spiritual service."

The fruit of the Spirit is "Christ-like character produced by abiding in Christ."

What is "physical fruit"? "An outward evidence of the inward nature of the tree." (We know an apple tree is an apple tree because it produces apples).

Likewise, if we are walking in the Spirit, the evidence of His presence in our lives will be "spiritual fruit."

How many Fruit of the Spirit are there? Nine or One?

Nine characteristics are mentioned, but the word, "fruit" is in the singular.

Why?

- 1. The works of the flesh are many, but the Fruit of the Spirit is produced with a singular purpose: to glorify God.**
- 2. The gifts of the Spirit are many and given to each believer individually, but the Fruit of the Spirit is to be produced in every believer's life.**
- 3. Spiritual maturity is not a matter of living a life of love one day, joy the next day and peace on the third.**

But growing in all these virtues simultaneously.

- 4. Spiritual Fruit is a multiple fruit (like a bunch of grapes).**

It comes from a single source - the Spirit.

But is "many-faceted."

Notice also that the nine characteristics are required in three groups of three:

INWARD QUALITIES:

Love, Joy, Peace

OUTWARD QUALITIES:

Patience, Kindness, Goodness

UPWARD QUALITIES

Faithfulness, Meekness, Self-control

If we are believers, the Spirit is producing His Fruit in us!

But how can we grow better Fruit? How can we increase the harvest?

I believe fruit-bearing involves a unique blend of obedience and dependence. Obedience because we are commanded to bear fruit, therefore we must seek in practical ways to put these attributes into action on a daily basis.

And Dependence, because we understand that the Spirit alone can make us like Christ; it is our continual yielding to His control which supplies the energy necessary to obey.

During our study in the weeks ahead, read and meditate on John 14, 15 & 16 and Galatians 5.

There we will learn how to "abide in Christ" and how to "walk in the Spirit," which are the key to "bearing much fruit," which will glorify God, the Heavenly Gardener!

Let's get started now.

Let's look at the "APPLE OF LOVE" - first and foremost of the spiritual qualities.

I chose an apple because it is the "primary fruit."

You can eat it in all seasons, it is used in many recipes - it's an "all-around fruit."

Likewise, "Love" is basic to all of the spiritual fruit.

In Col. 3:14, Paul calls love, "the bond of perfection" - the one-character trait that encompasses and completes all others.

I. WHAT IS LOVE?

The Hebrew word for love is "aheb," which means "affection or compassion." The Greek word for Christ-like love is "agape," which means unconditional unselfish giving of oneself."

So, we can define love as "an act of the will whereby we choose to give of ourselves to meet the needs of others, without expecting anything in return."

Eph. 5:2 "Walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us."

John 15:13 "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down His life for His friends."

II. HOW IS LOVE EXPRESSED?

Love is three-directional:

First, we love GOD

Mt. 22:37, 38 "Jesus said to him, 'you shall 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.'"

Second, we are to love UNBELIEVERS.

Mt. 22:39 "And the second is like unto it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Third, we are to love BELIEVERS

John 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another."

How do we express our love for GOD?

By giving ourselves to Him in praise, worship, obedience and service. How do we express our love for UNBELIEVERS?

By seeking to meet their needs and by sharing the gospel with them. How do we express love for BELIEVERS?

By practicing all the one-another commands of the NT: Honor one another, serve one another, encourage one another, teach one another, build up one another etc. (by treating others as Jesus treats us.)

So, true love is always expressed in "giving of ourselves to meet the needs of others."

1 John. 3:16-18 "By this do we comprehend the love of God, because He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for others. But whoever has this world's goods and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his compassion from him, how does God's love dwell in him? My little children, let us love not only in word and tongue, but also in deed and truth."

III. HOW CAN WE DEVELOP GREATER LOVE?

First, we can develop a greater love for God by considering how much He loves us and by meditating on WHO He is and WHAT He has done for us.

1 John 4:17-19 "In this is our love made complete, we love Him because He first loved us, there is no fear in love, because perfect love casts out all fear." To KNOW Him is to LOVE Him!

Second, we can develop a greater love for unbelievers by considering their condition apart from Christ and by remembering how much Jesus loved us when we were sinners.

Mt. 9:36 "But when Jesus saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd."

Rom. 5:8 "But God showed His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Third, we can develop a greater love for one another by considering other believers as brothers and sisters in the Lord, and by focusing on the good qualities and abilities God has given them.

Eph. 4:32-5:2 "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. Be therefore followers of God as dear children and walk in love as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us as a sacrifice to God."

BUT is it possible to love those whom we naturally DISLIKE? Yes, it is- through Jesus our example.

As an act of the will: "I choose to give of myself to meet the needs of that person, whether I feel like it or not."

And by the power of the Holy Spirit: "Lord, love that person through me!"

You see, this is what "Spiritual Fruit-bearing" is all about - allowing the Holy Spirit to produce in us that which is unnatural to our sinful nature, depending on the Holy Spirit to give us the power to do things which we, by ourselves, could not do!

If you want to see how impossible agape love is, apart from the Spirit's enabling, consider 1 Cor. 13:4-8a "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails."

Then ask God to begin to develop in you a love that is kind, considerate, courteous, compassionate and continuous!

Find practical ways to grow in your love for God, for unbelievers, for believers, and even for the "unlovable."

In fact, focus on a person you "can't stand," and ask God to give you an opportunity to meet one of his or her needs.

In Jesus' love - yield your "love-life: to the Spirit.

Let Him love others through you!!