



17 July 2026

Love

Last week I introduced the fruit of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians chapter 5. We noted that, as with fruit trees, if we are spiritually healthy we will be fruitful. Jesus told us “the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit” (John 15:5). As well, character is key to being healthy. Our spiritual health is measured by the degree to which our character is like that of Christ.



Today we move into the first of this nine-fold fruit, love.

Love. Nailing down the meaning of love can be slippery. Without reservation I love pizza. Without reservation I love my wife. None of us think that those two loves are identical!

Dictionaries list over a dozen different kinds of love. The Canadian Oxford Dictionary states that the main senses of love are an intense feeling of deep affection or fondness, sexual passion or relations, a beloved person, sweetheart, or informal term of endearment, and a score of zero in sports such as tennis.

We find three basic words for love in the language of New Testament. One emphasizes a willed and sacrificial care for the good of another, while a second is focused on friendship or family affections. The third, not found in the New Testament, refers to romantic or sexual love. But the distinctions between the first two are not always clear cut in usage. For example, when John’s gospel speaks of the love of God the Father and God the Son, both of the first two words are used (John 3:35; 5:20). Then, even a casual reading of 1 Corinthians chapter 13, the *love chapter*, reveals that Paul was speaking of love which involves both willful, sacrificial acts of care for the good of others as well as feelings for them. God’s love has both, not one or the other, and so His love in and through us will, must have both. We cannot say we truly love someone without having any feelings for them. True love is a commitment for God’s best in another without any tests of their worthiness, and also an affection for them, a delight in them.

The importance of love is underscored in the first two verses of 1 Corinthians chapter 13 as Paul tells us that great personal gifts, acts of sacrificial devotion and sacrifice without love do us no good, they amount to nothing. Don’t rush by that. Let it soak in.

Let's just list 15 things that love is in 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

1. Love is patient.
2. Love is kind.
3. Love is not jealous.
4. Love does not brag.
5. Love is not arrogant.
6. Love does not act disgracefully.
7. Love does not seek its own benefit, or, getting its own way.
8. Love is not provoked, or, is not overly sensitive.
9. Love does not keep accounts of wrongs suffered.
10. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness.
11. Love does rejoice in the truth.
12. Love keeps every confidence.
13. Love believes all things, that is, is not quick to discount or write off.
14. Love always hopes.
15. Love always endures.

Take some time this week to think about what each of these mean. Examine your days to determine the state, the quality of your love.

Then as well, take time to work through these statements about love.

John 14:15 where Jesus tells us, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" coupled with 1 John 5:3, "this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome."

1 John 3:11, "this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we are to love one another" coupled with Mark 12:30-31 which tells us the commandment after loving God is to love your neighbor as yourself.

Back to John's gospel, chapter 15, "Greater love has no one than this, that a person will lay down his life for his friends" (13).

Just one more, Luke 6:35, "love your enemies and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return."

By the grace and power of God, let His love grow in you and flow through you.

Next week we will think about *Joy!*

Pastor Lyle