



The Harvest

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Let There Be Love

The first in the list of the fruit of the Spirit is love. The command to love goes back to the Shema – what eventually became a banner prayer for the Jewish people in *Deuteronomy 6:5* – “*Love Adonai your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*” This is a massive calling, one that is not easily fulfilled. Genuine, selfless love (the Greek word *agape*) is incredibly difficult to live out and requires major reliance on the Ruach haKodesh.

*“So we have come to know and trust in the love that God has for us.
God is love.
Now whoever abides in love abides in God,
and God abides in him ...
We love, because He first loved us.”
~ 1 John 4:16, 19 ~*

This passage is very clear: God dwells in our hearts because of His love for us. He gave us the Holy Spirit because He loves us so abundantly that He won’t allow us to stumble through the command to love Him and others without His help. He loved us first, and because of that, we can move forward learning what it means to love God and love others selflessly and in a manner worthy of being called righteous.

So what, then, is love? When you look it up in the dictionary, love is defined as various feelings, usually of a romantic nature. Clearly, that’s not the kind of love God is talking about when He speaks of loving us. Because God is love (*read 1 John 4:8*), we can see how His attributes demonstrate what love is. In addition, *1 Corinthians 13:4-5* details a list of characteristics that also demonstrate how to practically live a life of love.

Pause: What aspects of God’s character can you think of that demonstrate love? List what you come up with below, as well the attributes of love outlined in *1 Corinthians 13:4-5*.

There are a ton of characteristics of God that make Him a good Father, full of love towards us. But there is one that is of utmost importance when it comes to defining love and getting a good overall picture of what genuine love looks like: the unconditional nature of how God loves us. God set up a sacrificial system of atonement for His people so they would be spared (*read 1 Chronicles 6:49, NIV*), and He sent His son for us even though we had sinned against Him (*read Romans 5:8*). There have never been and there never will be conditions for His love. Even in our sin, even in our imperfections, He knows us fully and loves us fully. Loving others is a high calling – one not easily fulfilled. If we are to love the way God loves us, much is required from us.

*“Above all, keep your love for one another constant, for ‘love covers a multitude of sins.’”
~ 1 Peter 4:8 ~*

*“No one has greater love than this:
that he may lay down his life for his friends.”
~ John 15:13 ~*

*“But above all these things put on love, which is the
bond of perfect harmony.”
~ Colossians 3:14 ~*

These verses demonstrate the constancy and sacrifice required with love. When we love the world around us, it takes every bit of strength we have, which is why it’s so important for us to rely on the Holy Spirit to help us. As we love, we give of ourselves. And the love of the Lord fills us up, as if we had never lost anything in the first place. His source is limitless, never-ending. When we feel like we can’t love anymore because it costs us too much, He can and will overflow abounding love in our lives. This leads us forward in ministering to our family, friends, and everyone we come in contact with.

Question: What would it look like for you to let God’s love lead your life? Are you relying on Him for your source of strength and to refill your love? What specific steps are you going to take to love others well?

Worship: Let these songs minister to your heart. Let God’s love wash over you, and allow yourself to be encouraged to go out and love the world around you.

- ~ Reckless Love by Cory Asbury
- ~ Commission My Soul by Citipointe Live
- ~ Build My Life by Pat Barrett
