

2 Love: The Choice Fruit

“The fruit of the Spirit is love” (Galatians 5:22). The inspired writer starts his presentation of the fruit of the Spirit with *love*, for none other fruit is possible without love.

Love in its highest concept is embodied in God. The best definition of love is God. God *is* love. God’s love was unveiled to humanity by His Son Jesus Christ: “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). “Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love” (John 13:1).

Whom did Jesus love so much that He willingly gave His own life for them? Perfect people? No! One of His disciples denied Christ; another doubted Him; three of those in the inner circle slept while He agonized in the Garden. Two of them coveted high places in His kingdom. One became a traitor. And when Jesus rose from the dead, some did not believe that it was so. Yet Jesus loved them to the full extent of His love. He was abandoned, betrayed, disappointed, and rejected, yet He loved.

Jesus wants us to love others as He loves us. John records Jesus’s words: “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12). That would never be possible through limited human love. But as the Holy Spirit develops Christlikeness in us, we learn to love as He loved.

In this lesson you will study the meaning of love as the fruit of the Spirit and how it is manifested in the believer. You can love even as Christ loved, as the fruit of love is developed in you.

lesson outline

Love Identified

Love Described

Love in Action

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

1. Describe the three kinds of love and the three dimensions of *agape*.
2. State what our attitude should be toward God.
3. Show how we should love others as taught by Jesus in Luke 6:27–36 and Luke 10:30–37.
4. Discuss how believers should love themselves.
5. Explain why a balance of spiritual gifts and spiritual fruit is important.
6. Demonstrate the characteristics of *agape* to others.
7. Discuss principles concerning love that we can learn from biblical examples.

learning activities

1. Carefully study each part of the lesson development as you were instructed in Lesson 1. Be sure to read each Bible verse mentioned.
2. Answer each study question and compare your answer with the one given at the end of the lesson. If your answer is wrong, correct it after reviewing the section in which the question appeared. Then continue with your study.
3. Review the lesson and complete the self-test. Check your answers with those given at the end of this study guide.

key words

agape

encompasses

instinctive

compassion

eros

intolerance

devotion

fervent

reciprocal

lesson development

LOVE IDENTIFIED

Kinds of Love

Objective 1. *Describe the three kinds of love and the three dimensions of agape.*

Love is the choice dimension of spiritual fruit. Jesus left no doubt about that when He said to His disciples, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34–35).

What kind of love was Jesus talking about? There are at least three kinds of love that we will consider:

1. *Agape.* *Agape* is a Greek word meaning “selfless love; deep and constant love.” This divine love is referred to in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” This perfect and unequalled love encompasses our mind, emotions, feelings, thoughts—all our being. This is the love the Holy Spirit wants to manifest in us as we give ourselves fully to God. It is a love that causes us reciprocate and to obey His Word. “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Jesus demonstrated this love every step of the way from the manger to the Cross. *Agape* is the love described in 1 Corinthians 13.

2. *Philia (brotherly) love.* As illustrated in 2 Peter 1:7, *philia* is brotherly love/brotherly kindness. This friendship or human love is limited in that we love if we are loved. Luke 6:32 says, “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them.” Brotherly kindness or friendship is essential in human relationships, but it is inferior to *agape* because it depends on a reciprocal relationship; that is, we are friendly and loving to those who are friendly and loving to us.

3. *Eros (physical) love*. Another aspect of human love not mentioned in the Bible, but strongly implied, is *eros*. This is physical love, which flows from the natural senses, instincts, and passions. It is one important aspect of the love between a husband and wife. But because it is based on what one sees and feels, *eros* can be selfish, temporary, and superficial. In its negative aspect it becomes lust. This love, too, is inferior and often abused.

The greatest of these is *agape*—the divine love of God that was manifested in the life of Jesus. *Agape* has three dimensions:

- 1. The vertical dimension—love toward God.
- 2. The horizontal dimension—love toward fellow humans.
- 3. The inward dimension—love toward ourselves.

Luke 10:27 says, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbor as yourself.” This is *agape*!

Application

1 Match the definition with the kind of love it describes. Write the number of your choice in each blank space.

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|--|-------------------|
| ... a <i>Eros</i> —love that depends on what one sees or feels | 1) Divine love |
| | 2) Brotherly love |
| ... b <i>Agape</i> —selfless love which controls all our being; perfect love | 3) Physical love |
| ... c <i>Philia</i> —love that causes us to return kindness to those who show us kindness | |

2 Explain why *agape* is greater than brotherly love.

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Love Toward God—the Vertical Dimension

Objective 2. *State what our attitude should be toward God.*

To love God is our greatest duty and privilege. How are we to love God? With all our heart, soul, strength, and mind. The word *heart*, as used in the Bible, does not refer to the physical organ that pumps blood through our body. It refers to our inner being, involving our spirit and soul. We are to love God to the full extent of our mind, intellect, will, strength, and emotions.

When we love God with *agape*, which is one aspect of the fruit of the Spirit, we also love everything that is His and everything that He loves. We love His Word, His children, His work, His church. We love the lost sheep, and we are willing to suffer for their sake. Paul reminds, “For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him” (Philippians 1:29). When we suffer for Christ, we willingly accept persecution in order to glorify Him and reveal His love to sinful humans. When we suffer with Christ, we feel what He felt for sin and the sinner, as described in Matthew 9:36: “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

We learn *agape* from the example of Jesus. Jesus said, “He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him” (John 14:21). The love of Jesus for us is difficult to comprehend. The apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 3:17–19:

I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

This is Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian Christians. These saints were already grounded in the greatest truths of the Word of God that Paul had taught them, but through love they should

learn more. Here we see that love leads to love: rooted in love, to understand love, to know love.

Do you have *agape* toward God? The test of this love is obedience. Jesus said, “If you love me, you will obey what I command” (John 14:15). “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me” (John 14:21). “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. . . . He who does not love me will not obey my teaching” (John 14:23–24). In this same chapter Jesus said that He would send the Holy Spirit to teach us all things and to remind us of everything that Jesus taught. The Holy Spirit reveals the love of God to us, that we might know Him better. To know Him better is to love Him more. Through the Holy Spirit we are rooted and established in love, receiving the enablement to be yielded fully to Him as He produces the image of Christ in us. Our sensitivity to His direction is an expression of obedience, and that pleases God.

Application

- 3** Which statements are TRUE concerning our love of God?
- a)** It is easy to understand and explain the extent of God’s love for us.
 - b)** God wants us to love Him to the full extent of our heart, soul, strength, and mind.
 - c)** We demonstrate our love toward God through obedience of His commands.
 - d)** To love as Christ loved means suffering for His sake.
 - e)** Love toward God causes us to hate those who do not believe in Him.
 - f)** The love that Christ revealed depends on being loved in return.
 - g)** The greatest proof that we love God is that we praise and worship Him.
 - h)** Knowledge and understanding of the truths in God’s Word must be supported by love if we are to have the fullness of God in us.



Love Toward My Neighbor—the Horizontal Dimension

Objective 3. *Show how we should love others as taught by Jesus in Luke 6:27–36 and Luke 10:30–37.*

We cannot love our neighbor with *agape* unless we first love God. It is the Holy Spirit producing the fruit of the Spirit who enables us to fulfill the second greatest commandment of the Law: “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18). The apostle John emphasized the importance of *agape* toward other people:

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love . . . If we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us . . . If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. (1 John 4:7–8, 12, 20)

When Jesus exhorted an expert in the Law to love God and his neighbor, saying, “Do this and you will live,” the expert asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” Read Jesus’ reply in Luke 10:30–37.

Application

- 4** Read Luke 10:37. Which of these showed neighborly love?
 - a)** The priest
 - b)** The Levite
 - c)** The Samaritan
- 5** According to this story, who is your neighbor?

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- 6** *Agape* enables us to love even our enemies. Read Luke 6:27–36. What lessons was Jesus teaching here that He also taught in the story of the Good Samaritan? Circle the letters in front of the answers you choose.
- a) Do good to those who will be able to repay you.
 - b) Be merciful to everyone in the same measure that God is merciful to you.
 - c) Show kindness to others even if you know they won't return your kindness.
 - d) Consider the needs of others as more important than your own needs.
 - e) If someone is a stranger, it is all right to pass him by even if he has needs. Someone else will take care of him.



Love Toward Myself—The Inward Dimension

Objective 4. *Discuss how believers should love themselves.*

It may seem strange to suggest that *agape* includes love for oneself. But to love with *agape* is to love as Christ loved. You must see yourself as He sees you—as a sinner saved by grace, as a human made in His likeness, created to give Him glory. This is not selfish, self-seeking love, but self-giving love, which recognizes that the greatest personal happiness and fulfillment are found through obedience and devotion to Jesus Christ.

When Jesus said that we should love our neighbor as we love ourselves, He recognized that it is natural for us to look after our own human needs for food, shelter, companionship, freedom from pain, and all the other necessities. *Agape* causes us to be concerned about our spiritual self and to seek first the kingdom of God because we recognize that our eternal life is far more important than our earthly life. The Christian who loves himself with *agape* will not only take care of his personal needs for physical health, education, career, friends, and other such things but will also allow the Holy Spirit to develop his spiritual nature through study of God's Word, prayer, and fellowship with other believers. He will desire that the fruit of

the Spirit be manifested in his life, conforming him daily into the image of Christ.

Some people find it difficult to love themselves because of past mistakes they have made. They feel guilt and self-condemnation. But *agape* provides complete forgiveness for every sin that we have committed. Paul reminds us, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:1–2). What a glorious reassurance! We can see ourselves as Christ sees us, cleansed from all sin, purified by His precious blood, with a new nature given to us by His Spirit. We can love what we have become through His grace, and pass on that love to others.

Each of these three dimensions of love is interdependent. You cannot love your neighbor if you do not love God. If you despise your neighbor, you do not love God. If you hate yourself, you cannot show the proper concern for the needs of fellow humans.

If we do not learn *agape*, we may love the wrong things. Ephesians 5:10 says, “Find out what pleases the Lord.” How do we do that? Through the Holy Spirit! Without Him one may love praise from people more than praise from God (John 12:43); love the most important seats (Luke 11:43); love darkness rather than light (John 3:19); love family more than Jesus (Matthew 10:37). The person who puts Jesus first will find that because of *agape* his love for his family becomes greater.

Application

- 7** Which best describes the way I should love myself?
- a)** My greatest concern should be to satisfy my own needs and desires, because unless I am happy with myself I will not be able to show love to others.
 - b)** I should see myself through the eyes of Jesus, recognize that I am made in His image and am worthy to be a part of His family through His grace. I find self-fulfillment through pleasing Him.

- 8** To learn and express agape, which dimensions must come first in order for the others to follow?
- a)** Vertical (love toward God)
 - b)** Horizontal (love for others)
 - c)** Inward (love for self)
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LOVE DESCRIBED

Love and Spiritual Gifts

Objective 5. *Explain why a balance of spiritual gifts and spiritual fruit is important.*

First Corinthians 13 tells us more about love as the fruit of the Spirit. As a discourse on love, this chapter is unparalleled, defining both what love is and what it is not. It is most appropriate that this chapter describing the fruit of the Spirit come between the two main chapters dealing with the gifts of the Spirit—1 Corinthians 12 and 14. The apostle Paul wanted to emphasize that balance must exist between our Christian service (gifts) and our Christian life (fruit). In 1 Corinthians 14:1 we are encouraged to seek the gifts of the Spirit without ignoring the primacy of the fruit of the Spirit: “Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts.” Because gifts are related to service and fruit to spiritual life, it is clear that one cannot replace the other. Some of God’s people may display wonderful gifts, yet fail to manifest the fruit of the Spirit. Thus, with their lack of a Christlike life, they discredit their exercise of the gifts of the Spirit.

Others go to the opposite extreme: they try to keep a blameless life before the church and the world and have a Christlike character, but fail to seek the spiritual gifts. The gifts of the Spirit are supernatural in their operation. They are given by the Holy Spirit to edify the church and glorify God. Without the exercise of the gifts, the Christian lacks power which is needed to build up the church and provide spiritual growth. The gifts of the Spirit and fruit of the Spirit complement one

another. The fruit of the Spirit being produced in a person should result in his or her exercise of spiritual gifts.

Donald Gee suggests that this balance is indicated by the listing of nine gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:8–11, and nine fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23. Also, the great chapter on love comes between the two chapters dealing with spiritual gifts and is an integral part of the subject (Gee, 66). For further study of spiritual gifts I recommend the course in this series: *Spiritual Gifts*, by Robert L. Brandt.

Application

9 What should be the proper relationship between the manifestation of spiritual gifts and spiritual fruit?

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10 What is the result when a Christian displays a gift of the Spirit but not the fruit of the Spirit? Choose the best answer.

- a)** Since gifts are supernatural, there will be no negative results, and he will be a blessing to the church.
- b)** His lack of Christlike character may discredit or lessen the effect of the gift he exercises.

11 What is the result of possessing the fruit of the Spirit but not manifesting gifts of the Spirit? (Choose the best answer.)

- a)** The Christian lacks needed power to strengthen the church.
- b)** The fruit of the Spirit without the gifts is of no value to the church.



In 2 Timothy 1:7 the relationship between love, power, and self-discipline is stated. We are not to be timid in ministry, but we are to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit to make the ministry effective. And we must minister in love. There is a temptation to become proud when we see a demonstration of God’s power through us. Genuine love for God and others

makes us aware that this power of God is to glorify Him alone and make us able servants to others.

The Nature of Agape

Objective 6. *Demonstrate the characteristics of agape to others.*

Look at the apostle Paul's description of love. The person who has *agape* will reflect these characteristics:

1. **The person who has love is patient.** This is passive love, love waiting, enduring, in quietness. Patient love never gives up hope. It is the love of a person who tenderly cares for a sick or elderly loved one month after month or year after year. It is the love of a spouse who ministers to the unbelieving partner and prays for the partner's salvation without ceasing. It is the love demonstrated by the father of the Prodigal Son, who returned to his father after wasting his life and his inheritance (Luke 15:20). *Agape* is patient.

2. **The person who has *agape* is kind.** One author calls kindness *love active*. Much of Christ's life was spent going about showing kindness. Someone said, "The greatest thing a man can do for his heavenly Father is to be kind to some of His other children." If you love someone, you naturally want to give him or her pleasure. The most menial task, the most unpleasant function, becomes a joyful experience if it is done out of love. It is the nature of *agape* to be kind

3. **The person who has love is not envious.** A loving person is not jealous of another's success. He rejoices when good things happen to his co-workers, his fellow Christians, or even his enemies. He does not covet what belongs to his neighbor (Exodus 20:17).

4. **The person who has *agape* is not boastful or proud.** Henry Drummond¹ says that to be humble is "to put a seal upon your lips and forget what you have done. After you have been kind, after Love has stolen forth into the world and done its beautiful work, go back into the shade again and say nothing about it."

¹ Henry Drummond, *The Greatest Thing in the World*. (New York: James Pott & Co., 1890), 18.

5. The person who has Christlike love is not rude.

Another Bible translation says that love “doth not behave itself unseemly” (1 Corinthians 13:5, KJV). It is natural for a loving person to be courteous, to show consideration for others. He does not try to attract attention to himself.

6. The person who has love is unselfish. He is not self-seeking, but gladly gives up his own rights. Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). Jesus taught His disciples that “if anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all” (Mark 9:35).

7. The person who manifests love is not easily angered. Drummond points out that the anger of the elder brother in the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) is made of jealousy, pride, uncharity, cruelty, self-righteousness, touchiness, and stubborn determination to turn his father against his younger brother (23). These are not the characteristics of a Christlike nature.

8. The person who loves keeps no record of wrongs. He does not go about looking for the mistakes of others, and he does not allow himself to be offended when another acts wrongly against him. He is not suspicious of the motives of other people, but expects the best of everyone.

9. The person who has real love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. *Agape* is honorable, truthful, and avoids the appearance of evil.

The apostle Paul concludes his description of the characteristics of love by saying that love “always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres” (1 Corinthians 13:7). John writes (1 John 3:16–18),

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. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

Application

12 Circle the letter in front of statements below that reflect the nature of *agape*.

- a) “I would like to help you, but I am too busy with my own plans.”
- b) “Though she can’t walk, my mother is always cheerful and easy to care for.”
- c) “We always give him the best seat, because he is rich.”
- d) “My parents prayed for me many years before I became a Christian.”
- e) “I did most of the work, but my boss got the credit.”
- f) “Even though he tried to do me harm, I forgive him.”

13 Although the Holy Spirit produces spiritual fruit in us, it is a cooperative effort—we must cooperate with Him to conform to the image of Christ. Check your progress in showing the characteristics of *agape* by marking the appropriate column below to indicate how often the characteristic is seen in you.

Characteristic	Always	Usually	Some- times	Seldom	Never
Patience					
Kindness					
Not envious					
Humility					
Courtesy					
Unselfishness					
Good temper					
Not offended					
Not suspicious					
Honorable					
Truthful					
Avoids evil					



The Primacy of Love

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13). Love is eternal—“Love never fails” (13:8). Faith one day will close its mission when it becomes reality in the glory of God (Hebrews 11:1). Hope, too, will have its mission ended when we have that for which we have long hoped.

According to 1 Thessalonians 1:3, faith moves us into action, love prompts us to labor, and hope brings us into endurance. In verses 9 and 10 we see the result: faith brings salvation, love results in service, and hope looks for the return of Jesus.

Application

14 Based on 1 Corinthians 13, state your opinion of why love may be considered greater than faith and hope.

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LOVE IN ACTION

Objective 7. *Discuss principles concerning love that we can learn from biblical examples.*

Collective Love

The Christians of Colosse. The Colossians had the fruit of the Spirit growing among them (as do all Christians, because of the nature of the Christian life and relationship). Paul heard of their love while he was in prison in Rome, through Epaphras, a Christian minister of Colosse. Twice Paul mentions their love (Colossians 1:3, 7–8):

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, . . . You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow

servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

Because they had the love of the Spirit, Paul knew they were candidates for producing more fruit: “that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work” (Colossians 1:10). This is love active.

Even though the Colossians manifested agape, Paul reminded them of the importance of love in all their actions:

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3:12–14)

Application

15 What is the role of love in relation to other attributes of the fruit of the Spirit?

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The Church of Ephesus. Probably no other New Testament congregation received more Pauline teaching than Ephesus. For three years the apostle Paul taught the believers the great truths of the gospel (see Acts 20:20, 27, 31). Paul rebuked other churches in his letters, but not the Ephesians—he only gave them warning and challenge. But the Ephesians became lukewarm and negligent in their devotion to the Lord. In Revelation 2:4 is the loving voice of Jesus rebuking them:

“I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first” (vv. 4–5).

In addressing believers of this church, the Lord Jesus first commended them for their hard work, for their sound doctrine, and for their perseverance. But their deep devotion for their Lord was gone. Their hard work, doctrine, and steadfastness were empty without love. *Agape* is the most important thing a church can give to its people, to those without Christ, and to God. Without love, there is nothing left but routine, formalism, intolerance, and unconcern.

Application

16 What lesson can we learn from Jesus’ words to the Ephesians regarding their lack of love?

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Individual Love

Mary of Bethany. This saintly woman had total love for her Savior. Sensing, perhaps, that Jesus was in her house for the last time before the Cross, she adored Him in a moving way. Her story is told in John 12:1–8. She did not mind the cost of her high-priced perfume when she anointed Jesus’ feet at that memorable occasion. Fervent love is thankful and sacrificial. Judas, a man with a cold heart, criticized Mary for what she had done, but her deep devotion remains an example to us. Mary gave everything she had to show her love to her Savior.

John the Apostle. John truly loved Jesus. He always remained close to his Master: at the last Passover he sat beside Jesus; he was the only disciple to remain with the women at the foot of the Cross (John 19:25–26). He often referred to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved (see John 13:23; 19:26). Here we have a lesson: love approaches the loved person. The

epistles of John are messages of love. (Read 1 John 3:11–18; 4:7–19; 2 John, verses 1–6; 3 John, verses 1–6.) Do you want to love as John loved? Remain close to your Savior, love Him as He loves you, and do those things that please Him.

The Apostle Peter. In John 21:15–17 the story of an important conversation between Jesus and Peter is told. Three times Peter is required to consider the depth of his love for the Master, as Jesus asks him, “Simon, do you truly love me more than these?” The Amplified Bible translates this dialogue as such:

“Simon, son of John, do you love Me [*agape*] more than these [others do—with reasoning, intentional, spiritual devotion, as one loves the Father]?”

Peter’s reply was: “Yes, Lord, You know that I love You [*philia*]*—that I have deep, instinctive, personal affection for You, as for a close friend.*”

The third time Jesus took Peter’s answer, and asked, “Do you love me—with a deep, instinctive, personal affection for Me, as for a close friend?”

Although Peter was grieved, surely he learned here that his love for the Savior must be total devotion if he were to carry out the Savior’s command of “Feed my sheep” (v. 17). Jesus was saying to Peter that love comes first, then service. All other things in the spiritual life are an outgrowth of love: prayer, Bible study, Christian service, fellowship, worship. How deep is your devotion to your Savior? Do you love Him more than anything else? Can you say, “Yes, Lord, I love you more than everything, with reasoning, intentional, spiritual devotion, as one loves the Father?” That is His desire for you.

Peter and John both proved their deep devotion to the Lord later in their ministry, when they courageously defended their faith before the Sanhedrin. Acts 4:13 records, “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took

note that these men had been with Jesus.” To know Him is to love and serve Him.

Application

17 State the two principles we can learn from the experience of the apostles John and Peter.

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The Love of Jesus. We could not conclude this lesson without mentioning some of the many examples of Jesus’ perfect *agape*.

18 Tell what divine characteristic Jesus reveals in each Scripture:

- a) John 15:13 and 1 John 3:16
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- b) Matthew 18:21–22; 27:11–14
- c) John 8:11; Luke 7:11–15
- d) Isaiah 53:8–9
- e) John 5:30; Luke 22:42
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- f) Luke 23:32–34
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May you be inspired by Jesus’ love, and desire to be like Him. Let these final words challenge you as you consider them:

Contemplate the love of Christ, and you will love. Stand before that mirror, reflect Christ’s character, and you will be changed into the same image from tenderness to tenderness. There is no other way. You cannot love to order. You can only look at the lovely object,

and fall in love with it, and grow into likeness to it. And so look at this Perfect Character, this Perfect Life. Look at the great sacrifice as He laid down Himself, all through life, and upon the Cross of Calvary, and you must love Him. And loving Him, you must become like Him. (Drummond 1890, 31)

Agape encompasses all the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22–23. In the remaining lessons we will examine the other eight aspects of spiritual fruit.

self-test

- 1** Which kind of love depends on a reciprocal relationship: We love if we are loved in return?

 - a) *Agape*
 - b) Brotherly
 - c) *Eros*
- 2** What love is described here: “with reasoning, intentional, spiritual devotion, as one loves the Father”?

 - a) *Agape*
 - b) Brotherly
 - c) *Eros*
- 3** *Eros* is love that is based on

 - a) kindness.
 - b) obedience.
 - c) a spiritual relationship.
 - d) a physical relationship.
- 4** Which statement best expresses the importance of each dimension of *agape*?

 - a) The vertical dimension is the only one that is necessary.
 - b) The horizontal dimension is of greatest importance.
 - c) The inward dimension must come first.
 - d) All three dimensions are essential.
- 5** Which verse describes the dimensions of *agape*?

 - a) “All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.”
 - b) “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, . . . soul, . . . strength, . . . and . . . mind, and, Love your neighbor as yourself.”
 - c) “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.”
- 6** Which two actions reveal your love toward God?

 - a) Obedience; love for one another
 - b) Love for one another; service
 - c) Service and obedience
 - d) Faith and hope

- 7** To love your neighbor as Jesus taught means to
- a)** show kindness to those who are kind to you.
 - b)** help those who live next door to you.
 - c)** take care of others in your church who have needs.
 - d)** help anyone whom the Lord brings into your life, whether friend, enemy, or stranger.
- 8** *Agape* for self means that I should
- a)** consider my own needs before the needs of others.
 - b)** see myself as Jesus sees me, made in His likeness.
 - c)** try to overcome my past mistakes by helping others.
 - d)** seek personal happiness by doing good deeds.
- 9** In 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14, the apostle Paul teaches that
- a)**spiritual fruit is more important than spiritual gifts.
 - b)** spiritual gifts are more important than spiritual fruit.
 - c)** there must be a balance of fruit and gifts for effective ministry.
 - d)** if a person has love he has no need for anything else.
- 10** In Jesus' conversation with Peter (John 21:15–17), Jesus' message to Peter was that
- a)** love is an outgrowth of service.
 - b)** love comes first, then service.
 - c)** love approaches the loved person.
 - d)** he had forsaken his first love.
- 11** Which church is the most consistent example of *agape*?
- a)** The church of Colosse
 - b)** The Corinthian church
 - c)** The church at Ephesus
- 12** The example of Mary of Bethany shows us that
- a)** fervent love is thankful and sacrificial.
 - b)** the greatest love is to give to the poor.
 - c)** some people express their love in foolish ways.
 - d)** everyone is given *agape*.

answers to study questions

- 10 b)** His lack of a Christlike character may discredit or lessen the effect of the gift he exercises.
- 1 a)** 3) Physical love
b) 1) Divine love
c) 2) Brotherly love
- 11 a)** The Christian lacks needed power to build up or strengthen the church.
- 2** *Agape*, as demonstrated by Jesus, causes us to love even our enemies. It does not depend on being loved in return.
- 12** Statements **b)**, **d)**, and **f)** are examples of *agape* in action.
- 3 b)**, **c)**, **d)**, and **h)** are true.
- 13** Your answer. This exercise should reveal areas where you need to pray for help to express the love of Christ to others.
- 4 c)** The Samaritan (probably the only one of the three who did not live in that area; thus, he was a stranger).
- 14** Your answer. Perhaps you have suggested some of these: Love is the only one of the three that is eternal. Love includes many aspects of the Christlike nature. Love results in service to others.
- 5** Anyone whom the Lord brings into your life who needs your love and attention.
- 15** Love binds all of them together in perfect unity.
- 6** Answers **b)**, **c)**, and **d)** express the teaching of Jesus.
- 16** Your answer. I would say this: Unless our actions are done in love, they are empty and are not pleasing to God.
- 7 b)** I should see myself through the eyes of Jesus.
- 17** If we love, we want to draw close to the loved person. Before we can properly serve, we must love.
- 8 a)** Vertical (love toward God).

18 Your answers. Here are suggested answers:

- a)** Great love
- b)** Great patience
- c)** Great kindness
- d)** Complete purity, goodness
- e)** Unselfishness, submission
- f)** Forgiveness

9 Both should be evident in the life of a Christian—a Christlike character is of greatest importance, but it should result in the exercise of spiritual gifts.

