

Love

Therefore, be imitators [followers] of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up of us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

(Ephesians 5:1-2)

It is probably no coincidence that *love* is listed first, because all of the other components of the fruit of the Spirit depend on love. To show or live according to love in our daily walk, we need to understand the source of love and how the Bible describes love, which are presented in Chapter 5. I think it is beneficial to briefly summarize the love of God and our Lord Jesus Christ for all believers as follows:

- God loves us so much that He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for our sins (Romans 5:8; I John 4:10), and Christ loves us so much that He died for us (I Corinthians 15:1-4; II Corinthians 5:14-15).
- Love is the greatest gift of God to us (I Corinthians 13:4-13).
- We love, because God first loved us (I John 4:19).
- Nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39).

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

In response to God's love for us and the love demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ at the cross, we should do the following as part of our walk in the Spirit:

- Walk in love (Ephesians 5:1-2).
- Love without hypocrisy (Romans 12:9).
- Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another (Romans 13:8; I John 4:11).
- Love our neighbors as ourselves—love does no wrong to a neighbor (Romans 13:9-10).
- Serve one another through love (Galatians 5:13).
- Show tolerance for one another in love (Ephesians 4:1-3).
- Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:14-16).
- Abound in love for fellow brethren and for all people (I Thessalonians 3:12).

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with [in] the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (I Corinthians 13:4-7)

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. (Colossians 3:12-14)