

LEARNING TO LOVE

Galatians 5:16-18, 22-23, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

- ***If I or others could change anything about me, what would we change?***
- **The "fruit of the Spirit" are spiritual qualities that bring positive changes to our lives and relationships as we learn to "walk in the Spirit."**
- **In our *Life Groups*, family and friendship relationships we're going to be learning how to develop and implement the "Fruit of the Spirit" in our lives.**
- *"The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love . . ."* (Galatians 5:22)
- **We all need to become more LOVING towards others (Galatians 5:22).**
- **Love is a matter of commitment.**
    - Jesus – *"I command you to love each other in the same way I love you."* (John 15:12)
- **Love is a matter of choice.**
    - *"Clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony."* (Colossians 3:14)
- **Love is a matter of conduct.**
    - *"Let us stop just saying we love each other; let us really show it by our actions."* (1 John 3:18)
- **The Greeks described four different types of love - general (storge), friendship (philia), romantic/sexual (eros) and supernatural (agape).**
- **Most people don't experience or express "agape love" in their lives.**
- **It's possible to love even people we don't like with "agape love."**
- ***What does it take to experience and express "agape love"?***

Learning To Really Love Involves:

DESCRIBING "AGAPE" LOVE

- ***What does "real love" (agape love) look like and act like?***
- **Real Love involves being *Caring*.**
    - *"Love is patient and kind."* (1 Corinthians 13:4)

- **Real Love involves being *Humble*.**
    - *"Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude"* (1 Corinthians 13:4-5)
    - **Jealousy, pride and rudeness are the opposites of "agape love."**
    - **True love rejoices when others are blessed and enables us to always be courteous to others.**
- **Real Love involves being *Selfless*.**
    - *"Love does not demand its own way"* (1 Corinthians 13:5)
- **Real Love involves being *Forgiving.***
    - *"Love is not irritable and it keeps no record of wrongs"* (1 Corinthians 13:5)
    - **True love enables us to overcome negative attitudes towards others, and then forgive others (Luke 6:27-28).**
- **Real Love involves being *Challenging*.**
    - *"Love does not rejoice about injustice, but rejoices whenever the truth wins out."* (1 Corinthians 13:6)
    - *As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend."* (Proverbs 27:17)
- **Real Love involves being *Supportive.***
    - *"Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance."* (1 Corinthians 13:7)
    - **It's hard to love others when they are demanding, demeaning and disappointing - but "agape love" enables us to keep on loving them.**
- ***What characteristics of "agape love" need to be more developed in my life?***

Learning To Really Love Involves:

<u>DEMONSTRATING</u> "AGAPE LOVE"

- *"Let us stop just saying we love each other; let us really show it by our actions."* (1 John 3:18)
- **We demonstrate "agape love" by *Telling Others We Love Them.***
    - **People need to hear our appreciation, admiration and love for them.**
    - *"Kind words can cheer you up."* (Proverbs 12:25)
- **We demonstrate "agape love" by *Spending Time With Others.***
    - **Love is often spelled T-I-M-E.**
    - "Busyness destroys relationships. It substitutes shallow frenzy for deep friendships. Busyness feeds the ego but it starves those who love us. It fills the calendar but it fractures the family." - Chuck Swindoll
    - ***Life Groups* provide great opportunities for us to demonstrate love for others as we learn, fellowship and serve together.**
- **We demonstrate "agape love" by *Forgiving Others.***
    - *"If someone says, 'I love God,' but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom*

we cannot see? . . . Those who love God must also love their fellow believers." (1 John 4:20-21)

- **We demonstrate "agape love" by *Giving To Help Others.***
  - *"For <u>God so loved the world, He gave His only Son</u> . . ."* (John 3:16)
  - **Loving Christians generously support God's work and help others.**
- **We demonstrate "agape love" by *Serving Others.***
  - *"Use your freedom to serve one another in love."* (Galatians 5:13)
  - **When we truly love others we will demonstrate our love in tangible, sacrificial ways.**
- ***In what ways do I need to better express my love for others?***

- **We develop "agape love" as we deepen our relationship with Jesus.**
  - Jesus - *"Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce FRUIT if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be FRUITFUL unless you remain in Me."* (John 15:4)
  - *"God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love."* (Romans 5:5)
  - **Human love wears out, so the real secret to loving others is experiencing God's love and then letting His love flow through us.**
- **We develop and demonstrate "agape love" as we connect and grow together with other Christians in small groups (Life Group) and ministries.**
  - *"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together . .. but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near."* (Hebrews 10:24)
- **To really love others we will have to overcome difficulties, disagreements, differences, disappointments, doubt, distance, debt, demands, etc.**
- *"Show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins."* (1 Peter 4:8)
- **When we realize how much the Lord loves us and what He's done for us, we will be able and willing to love others in the same sacrificial ways.**
- *"If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing . . . If I speak God's Word with power . . ., and if I have faith . . ., but I don't love, I'm nothing. If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, <u>no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love</u>.* (1 Corinthians 13:1-3 Msg)