

## The Evidence of Spiritual Life, Part 9 | Love

**I. The Importance of a Correct Understanding of Love**

- As a child of God, your definition of love needs to be God's definition.
- If the best love you have has more in common with the world than it does the Bible, that may very well be an evidence of the fact that you don't have spiritual life.
- If you do have genuine biblical love in your life, it must be ever-maturing—moving further and further away from the fleshly version to the God-love the Lord pours into our lives.
- Faith is how we enter into a relationship with God, and love is the warp and woof of that relationship. The two greatest commands are to love the Lord and love your neighbor because all the other commands of Scripture hang off these two. Faith is the root, and love is the necessary fruit.

**II. The Source of True Love**

- **True love finds its existence in God.** I John 4:8
- **Humans can experience true love only as they access it in God.** I John 4:19
- **A godly life is the evidence of true love.** I John 2:5; II John 1:6; Matthew 22:37-40; John 5:39-43; I John 4:20-21
- The source of love is God Himself. Therefore, it's impossible to imagine that we will love the way He loves if we don't have new life in Christ and the power of the the Holy Spirit evidenced in the fact that we're living the life of God.

**III. The Necessity of True Love**

- I Corinthians 13:1-3
- **According to verse 1, your communication will not work if the love of God is not alive in your life.**
- **According to verse 2, your religious expressions will not work if the love of God is not alive in your life.**
- **According to verse 3, your relationships will not work if the love of God is not alive in your life.**
- The big three—your communication, your faith, and your relationships—will all fail if you do not have true biblical love. If you don't learn anything else today study, learn this: Life doesn't work without True Love.

**IV. The Character of True Love**

- I Corinthians 13
- **Love is patient.** Verses 4 & 7 teach that love is patient and endures all things.
- **Love is kind.** Verse 4 teaches that love is kind.
- **Love is humble.** Verse 4 teaches that "*love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude.*"
- **Love is selfless.** Verse 5 teaches that love "*does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.*"
- **Love is holy.** Verse 5 teaches that love "*does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.*"
- **Love is strong.** Verse 7 teaches that, "*Love bears all things, [and] endures all things.*"
- **Love is optimistic.** Verse 7 also teaches that, "*Love . . . believes all things, [and] hopes all things.*"
- **Love is eternal.** Verse 7 goes on to teach that, "*Love . . . endures all things,*" and verse 8 reveals that, "*Love never ends.*"

## V. The Recipients of True Love

- God commands us to love Him, our neighbors (those who love us), and our enemies (those who don't love us). There is no one you're allowed to not love!
- Luke 10:25-37 and Matthew 5:43-48
- If you are truly born again, you're not going to love perfectly, but you absolutely need to be growing in your love for *everyone* in your life.

## VI. Your Spiritual Maturity from Spiritual Life to Physical Death

- II Peter 1:1-15 is a gloriously concise explanation of how a Christian is to grow in his or her maturity.
- Though none of us are apostles, it's important that to understand that if Peter were a bond-servant of Christ, we are too.
- Spiritual growth cannot occur if there isn't first spiritual life, and spiritual life comes as a result of the gift of faith that comes from our righteous God.
- After we have been born again into a relationship with God, we are recipients of the multiplied grace and peace that is ours in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.
- Praise the Lord that He gives us access to everything we need for life and godliness! And praise God that He tells us exactly where to find everything we need—we discover it in the knowledge of God. Only as we learn, understand, and live in the knowledge of God can we access faith, peace, and grace, and grow in godliness.
- We *obviously* must be growing, but it's not something that's just going to "happen to us." We must apply all diligence to the process.
- Diligence is an earnest, urgent effort. It carries the idea of something being done in haste; not sloppily or partially, but *passionately* in order to be sure the action happens in a timely manner.
- To all of you listening to my voice today who are—without a doubt—servants of Jesus who have been given faith by our righteous God, know that grace and peace are being poured on you in the knowledge of Christ our Lord since God designs to use that knowledge to provide everything you need for life and godliness.
- In order to grow in your excellence, you will need to study God's Word in order to learn what is righteous, what is wicked, what needs to be pursued, and what needs to be put off.
- Then as you learn how God would have you live, you need to exercise Spirit-filled self-control to only do those things that please Him and reject those things that steal His glory.
- As you consistently participate in your sanctification by trusting God's Word to the degree that you deny your flesh and submit to the spirit and thereby grow in your moral excellence, you will persevere steadfastly in greater and greater consistency.
- The more consistently you choose God's will for your life and reject your own, you will become more and more godly.
- This transformation into the character and behavior of the Lord Jesus Christ will drive you to build redemptive, discipleship relationships with other believers.
- Because of your conformity to Christ you will continue to multiply in the greatest of all divine attributes—true, Christ-honoring love. You will want and work toward God's best for everyone in your life (God, friends, enemies, strangers) whether they want you to or not.
- Regardless of the character traits in which you struggle the most, you aren't flourishing in them because—in one way or another—you are not seeing God, the resources He provides you, His plan, and/or the life for which He's saved you.