

Love

In last week's *NEWSLETTER*, we started looking at what Paul told the Galatians about the change that must take place in the life of a baptized believer. Certain “acts of the sinful nature” have to be done away with and replaced by the Spirit's fruit—the kinds of characteristics that should be shared by God's children. Briefly, this is what Paul says in **Galatians 5:22-26**:

“...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control...”

Today, we'll look at the first “fruit” – LOVE. John, it is said in Scripture, is the “apostle whom Jesus loved.” No one is more qualified to describe God's love for us as manifested in Jesus Christ. In fact, the word “love” is found more in the writings of John than in any of the authors of Scripture. According to John, God's love:

Is sacrificial (John 3:16, 1 John 3:16)

Is light (John 3:19)

Is compassionate (John 11:36)

Is to be shared (John 13:34, 1 John 4:11, 20-21)

Identifies us (John 13:35, 1 John 3:10)

Is obedient (John 14:15-24, 2 John 1:6)

Is returned in kind (John 14:21, 15:9-10)

Is commanded (John 15:12, 1 John 3:11, 3:23, 2 John 1:5)

Is “other worldly” (1 John 2:15)

Is not in short supply (1 John 3:1)

Gives life (1 John 3:14)

IS God 1 (John 4:7-8, 16)

Gives confidence (1 John 4:17)

Fears nothing (1 John 4:18)

Paul describes God's love in 1 Corinthians 13 as:

Is essential (13:1-4)

Is patient (13:4)

Is kind (13:4)

Is not envious or boastful (13:4)

Is humble (13:4)

Is not selfish (13:5)

Is not easily angered (13:5)

Keeps no record of wrongs (13:5)

Hates evil, rejoices in the truth (13:6)

Protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres (13:7)

Is eternal (13:8)

IS THE GREATEST GIFT GOD HAS GIVEN US (13:13)

When we love with the love God has shown us in His Son, we go a long way toward being the Spirit-filled child He intends us to be.

--Johnny Stephens