



Fruit of the Spirit: Love

God's Holy Spirit fills each person who has faith in Jesus. God's beautiful characteristics, called fruit, begin to show in the life of the person. The first of these is love.



Day #1: Mad Love

Have you ever played the game **Mad Libs**? A Mad Lib is a story that has many words removed, with blanks in their places. Below each blank is the "type" of word that should fill the space, such as noun, verb, or adjective. To play the game, one person asks another person for words to fill in the blanks. The story ends up very funny after the words are filled in. Try this example:

Last month, I planted _____ seeds in my _____
(number)
_____. Today, I woke up and found a garden
(noun/thing)
full of _____ that I will cook for dinner.
(plural noun/things)

It's fun to play with words like this. The **type** of word makes all the difference!

Let's look at the **type** of word that is used in this verse that Jesus spoke to His disciples:

† *Here is My command. **Love** each other, just as I have **loved** you.* - John 15:12

If the word LOVE was pulled from this verse, it would be called a verb, or an action word. In the original language, the word is **agapao**. Agapao love is not a feeling that we have; it is a kind action that is done for someone.

***** *Here is My command. _____ each other, just as I have _____ you.* - John 15:12

What are some loving action words that you could put in the blanks? (Help, hug, encourage, cheer for, give to, teach) As you learn more about the wonderful things Jesus does for you, do those wonderful things for others! It is Jesus' command for us to do these things just as He has done them for us. Jesus doesn't love us half-way or sort of. He loves us completely and selflessly!

Day #2: The Sum of All Things

God laid out many rules in the Bible. Can you name any of them? (Hint: the Ten Commandments) In addition to the Ten Commandments, there are over 600 other rules in the Old Testament!

One day, one of the teachers of the law wanted to test Jesus, so he asked Jesus a question.

† *"Teacher," he asked, "which is the most important commandment in the Law?"*

Jesus replied, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love Him with all your mind.' This is the first and most important commandment." And the second is like it. 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' Everything that is written in the Law and the Prophets is based on these two commandments." - Matthew 22:36-40

Jesus makes it super simple for us. He gives us **two** rules that sum up all the other rules. **Love God** and **love others**. It is that simple.

If you love God, you will never have another god, or worship anything else (which are the first two commandments). If you love Him, you will never speak badly of His name (which is the third commandment).

If you love others, you won't steal from them (which is the seventh commandment). If you love others, you won't want to do anything harmful to them. You'll honor them and be thankful when good things happen to them.

We should not be surprised that our good God is so full of LOVE that **all** of His rules are based on love!

***** If you like to draw, make a poster that says: **Love God and Love Others** to hang in your room. Ask God to help your love for Him and for others to grow and grow.

Day #3: Love Source

What do you need to do in order to light up a dark room at night? You turn on the light. Is there a switch on your wall to turn **off** the darkness? No! There is only a light switch, which turns on the light. This is

Day #3 continued:

because darkness just exists (it just **is**) - until the light source comes in and changes it.

In a similar way, there is a darkness that exists in our hearts. It is selfishness. Selfishness means thinking always of what is best for ME: I want the biggest slice of cake, I want to be first in line, I want to choose the movie that my family watches. Selfishness exists (it just **is**) wherever there is no source of love to come in and change it.

The Bible tells us what the one and only source of love is:



*Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for **love comes from God**.* - 1 John 4:7

God is love. Apart from God, people cannot show love, anymore that a dark room could become bright without turning a light on.

There is no way for us to turn off our own self-centeredness. The only solution is God's loving Spirit entering into our heart. When the source of love floods into us, then we can love others; we can put others needs before our own (Matthew 7:12).

Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. - 1 John 4:7-8



Have you plugged into the source of love? If you struggle with putting others first, and yourself last, spend more time in God's word. Here is a great place to start: Philippians 4:1-11.

Day #4: Love Your Enemies

Whom do you show the most kindness to? Do you give hugs to your mom and dad? Do you draw pictures for your grandparents? Do you share your candy with your best friend? It's very natural for us to show love to the people who love us.



Jesus said: *But here is what I tell you. Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you.* - Matthew 5:44

People in the kingdom of God are able to do things that are beyond what is natural. In the kingdom, we are kind to people who are strangers, kind to people who are not like us, and we're even kind to people who are mean to us.

When you are kind like this, you will be acting just like Jesus! He died on the cross for the very people who nailed Him there (Luke 23:34). Jesus died for all of us before we cared anything about Him.

Day #4 continued:

Once we were God's enemies. But we have been brought back to Him because His Son has died for us. - Romans 5:10a



Do you have a classmate or a teammate who is mean to you? Do you have a brother or sister who tries to make you angry? Take time right now to pray for that person. Ask God to bless him or her.

When someone is mean to you, they expect you to be mean back to them. Ask God for the power and self-control you need to do the unexpected! The same Spirit that gave Jesus the ability to lay down His life for His enemies is living inside of every believer!

Day #5: Good, Better, Best

Having one m&m's candy would be good. What would be better? What would be best? Getting a "B" on a math test would be good. What would be better? What would be best?

All forms of showing love are good. But Jesus tells us what form is the very best:



No one has greater love than the one who gives his life for his friends. - John 15:13

Of all the things that Jesus did to show His love for others, such as helping, healing, teaching, and encouraging, the greatest by far was giving up His life for us (Hebrews 12:24). He didn't do this because we had done anything to deserve it (Titus 3:5). We had not done anything good for Him. No, He did this to show His Father's love for us.

God showed how much He loved us by sending His one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through Him. This is real love - not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. - 1 John 4:9-10 NLT

God did not stop at good, or even at better, when He showed His love for us. He did what was best; He gave His Son for us.



With this in mind, is there any limit to how much we should love others? When we show kindness to the people who God puts in our life, we are giving them a glimpse of how much God loves them. Our love will draw them towards God's kingdom.

If you love one another, everyone will know you are My disciples. - John 13:35