

THE FRUIT OF LOVE

Contributed by amadi

CENTRAL TRUTH: God does not love you because of your looks, or what you can do for Him, God loves you because God chooses to love you in spite of you!

MEMORY VERSE: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another (John 13:34) NKJV

TEXT: Galatians 5: 22-23; 1 Corinth 13: 4-8 **INTRODUCTION;** Love as a fruit of the Spirit is a verb. It's not a feeling, and much like faith, if only expressed in words it's essentially meaningless. The words "I love you" mean nothing if not accompanied by loving action. The fruit of love is the supreme virtue of Christian living (1 Cor. 13:13) and it can tell you a lot about how much God has control of you. The whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Gal. 5:14; cf. Rom. 13:10). For believers, love is not an option but a command. "Walk in love," just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma (Eph. 5:2. By this all men will know that you.., if you love one another (John 13:35) NIV

FORMS OF LOVE During Paul's day, Greek was the language of the day. In that language we find four predominate words for love and they had fairly distinct meanings. In English, we have one word for love and you must know the context in which it is used in order to know what it meant but in the original language of the New Testament, that is not true, you can identify the word and generally know what it meant by looking at the word. How will you respond to? How is your love life? What is the basis of your love for others? **1. LOVE BASED ON WHAT OTHERS DO FOR YOU ("EROS").** This type of love is totally selfish in nature; always looking out for number one! It is a love that is rooted in what another person can do for you. It is the lowest level of love. This type of love is not a part of the fruit of the Spirit. It is a passionate love that is often tainted by the lust for fleshly gratification. In the Greek the word used is "EROS" from which we get the word erotic. It always tries to use the object of love to fulfill its own hunger for excitement and emotional intoxication. It is easy to "love" someone because they can give us what we want (Matt. 5: 46-47). This type of love tend to use people and value things. If we have this type of love for others, we will not do what is best for them, we will use them for our own gratification. This type of love is not from God, it is of the world (1 John 2:17).

2. LOVE BASED ON THE ATTRACTIVE QUALITIES OF OTHERS ("PHILIA).

This type of love is a bit better than the first one, but it can still be a little bit selfish. It is, "I love you because..." Have you ever gone out to pick a puppy to take home? You pick one up and you decide it is a little too big, then you go to the next one and you do not like the color, and then the next one has a funny looking face. Finally, you find the one you want, it is perfect, it has all the qualities you want and then you say that you "love" this one. Philia was the broad love of both friendship and romance, it was the highest secular Greek word for love. This love was less selfish than mere carnal sexuality, and could be a rather noble attraction to someone or something that had lovable qualities. Philia is the warm love which we feel for our nearest and our dearest; it is a thing of the heart. This love typically was one you had because someone or something had attractive qualities. The question is how long before your perfect puppy is bigger or his fur the same color as the other one you did not like. Eros was flesh driven; Philia is more emotional in nature. Aristotle noted that "when the loved one's beauty fades, the philia sometimes fades too." Relationships built only on this will fail because the object of your love will change. God calls man his friend (phrōs) James 2:23. This love is better than the first one, but it lacks because when the object of your love changes, your love will change also.

3. LOVE BASED ON FOCUSING ON THE FAMILY. ("STOREGA"),

This type of love was a more narrow term (storega), reserved for family love that is confined to the family circle. This love resisted embracing outsiders. This is a love that says we will only love those in our family. If the church is not careful, we can become inward focused to the point that the only ones we love are those who are in our church family. We can tell if this has happened to us when we loose our passion to reach the lost.

4. LOVE BASED ON THE STANDARD THAT GOD HAS SET ("AGAPE"),

Matt. 5: 44- This is the love that we are to have for others; it is the love that will be evident when the Spirit is working within us. Agape, is a love that is chosen by the will of the lover, not the loveliness of the one loved (John 3: 16). It is a love that is freely given without counting the cost or calculating one's own profit. It goes deeper than mere emotion, lasts longer than mere attractiveness, and reaches wider than mere bloodline. Agape, means unconquerable benevolence. It means that no matter what a man may do to us by way of insult or injury or humiliation we will never seek anything else but his highest good. It describes the deliberate effort-which we can make only with the help of God-never to seek anything but the best even for those who seek the worst for us. God loves us because of who He is, not who we are and will always do what is best for us. In Matt. 5:44, Jesus tells us to love our enemies. He uses the word agape, not phileo. He did not use phileo because we are to never befriend people by adopting the system of the world, we must

connect them to God. Agape love is; SACRED (1Jn 4:7-8 16); SELFLESS (Php 2:1-3, Eph 3:18-19); SACRIFICIAL (Eph 5:25, Ro 5:8, Jn 15:13). Love always requires sacrifice, whether it be giving up our time, interests, or to the far extreme, our lives. If you say you love someone, but have never given up something for them, chances are its not real love. More likely they probably really love you. Loving people who are hard to love may be the biggest sacrifice. It's easy to love those who are attractive and likeable, who are on our side, but what about our enemies, the poor, the uneducated, the handicapped and mentally ill. SUPPORTIVE (2Co 8:1-8, Jas 2:15-16) It is always alert to the needs of others. GENTLE (1Co 4:21, 13:4). Love makes us feel safe and soothed rather than pressured to perform, or live up to some standard. It comforts us when we are struggling. We all need to ask ourselves, do the people I say I love feel calm by me? Can they completely let down their guard around me? Are they emotionally safe? SINCERE (1Pe 1:22; Rom 12:9). STUBBORN (1Co 13:7, Ps 118). This love is not dependent on other's behavior, it is unconditional for the person, but may not be accepting of sinful behavior. Unconditional love means you love the person, but still confront the behavior. That is why God's love sometimes looks harsh, but the motive is always our good. Why do couples split up? What does in love mean? When we fall out of love it means we're bored with the person. That's not love, real love cannot be shaken, you cannot stop loving if it is real agape love, the essential nature of this love is that it is endless. Basically love never gives up on anybody, no matter what they do, no matter what we feel. 1Co 13 1-3; Mt 22: 37-