

## Fruit Of The Spirit — Love

### Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

*Leader's Note: In this lesson we are asking you and your group to grapple with the concept of love in all of its forms: romantic love, familial love, love of ideas and things, and sacrificial love. The point of the lesson is to become aware of the different nuances to the word "love" and to become more intentional in both how we use the word "love" and how we allow the Spirit to produce love through us. The study flows from a very light look at the word in the icebreaker and through our culture in the "Looking at Life" section before digging into the Bible. By dividing up into groups in the "Looking at the Bible" section, this will allow everyone to participate and bring them into the study. We hope this blesses you and your group.*

### Icebreaker

Divide into two teams. Flip a coin to see which team goes first. Teams alternate shouting out the title of a song that has the word "love" in it. The first team to go five seconds without giving a title or the first team to repeat a title loses. Good luck.

*Leader's Note: Since we are talking about love this week, men against women might add an interesting dimension. Don't take this too seriously. Your group should be able to get a number of songs listed off. The point is not to test their knowledge, but to get them thinking about how our culture uses the term love.*

### Introduction

*Leader's Note: Please read or have someone read the introduction:*

Of all the words used in the Bible, love is one of the most easily misunderstood. The term is used to describe emotion, desire, intimacy, and commitment. If that were not enough to cause confusion, our perception of love is skewed as we experience it.

### Looking at Life



In what ways is the word "love" used today?



What connotations does it have in the various ways it is used?

*Possible Answers: Infatuation (puppy love), physical intimacy (sex), commitment to an idea or cause (love of country), familial love (the love of a parent for a child), and an exaggerated way to say one likes something (I just loooooove your dress!).*

? If your best friend were here and asked to describe the one person, thing, or idea that you love the most, what would they say?

? Why would they say you love it?

? What aspect or nuance of the word “love” does this describe?

*Leader’s Note: There is no right or wrong answer, this is just a way for your group to encounter the various ideas of love as they are exhibited in their lives.*

## Looking at the Bible

**Read to the Group:** In our study today we will divide up into groups of two or three to look at several passages of Scripture that deal with the idea of love. Each group will together answer the two questions below and then report back to the group.

- a. How is the word “love” used in this passage and what aspect(s) of love does it represent?
- b. How can keeping in step with the Spirit allow this aspect of love to develop in us?

### 1. Luke 6:27-36

<sup>27</sup> “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. <sup>29</sup> To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. <sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. <sup>31</sup> And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

<sup>32</sup> “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

*Leader’s Note: Love is used here to describe compassion and true care (often called “agape love” in Christian circles). It is only through the power of the Spirit in our lives that we can hope to exhibit this kind of love.*

### 2. Phil 1:9-11

<sup>9</sup> And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, <sup>10</sup> so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

*Leader's Note: Love is used here to describe inner goodness and godliness. The guidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives develops this kind of love in us.*

### **3. 1 Corinthians 13:1-13**

<sup>1</sup> If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant<sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

<sup>8</sup> Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup> but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. <sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. <sup>12</sup> For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

<sup>13</sup> So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

*Leader's Note: Love here describes caring that comes from a mature character. This character comes from our relationship with God.*

### **4. Micah 6:8**

He has told you, O man, what is good;  
and what does the Lord require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God?

*Leader's Note: This passage pairs justice with love of the idea of kindness and the need to be in relationship with God. What is important in this passage is to see the three in relationship with each other.*

### **5. 1 John 4:7-11**

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

*Leader's Note: Love in this passage describes sacrificially giving for the good of others. It can only come from a relationship with God and is empowered by the example of God's love as well as the rebirth that we as Christians experience.*

## Application

? What aspect or aspects of love do you need the Spirit's help in living out this week?

? How could walking with the Spirit lead to increased love in your life?

? What is our community application of this passage?

*Leader's Note: You may choose to create your own application question as a group based on your discussion, or highlight a question from this study.*