

◆ **READ:** Matthew 7:15-20 and John 13:34-35

1. Have you ever known a good person who did a bad thing or a bad person who did a good thing? So that must not be exactly what Jesus means here. What do you think He means?
2. What is the likely outcome of people seeing true love in action? Conversely, if non-Christians see Christians treating each other harshly and not showing love in their actions toward one another what is the likely outcome for those observing this kind of behavior?



◆ **MESSAGE NOTES**

GOOD FRUIT: Week 1 - Love

... Grapes are not gathered from thorns or figs from thistles, are they? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree is not able to bear bad fruit, nor a bad tree to bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will recognize them by their fruit. ~ Matthew 7:16b-20

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision carries any weight—the only thing that matters is faith working through love. ~ Galatians 5:6

I wish those agitators would go so far as to castrate themselves! ~ Galatians 5:12

What shall we say then? Are we to remain in sin so that grace may increase Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ~ Romans 6:1-2

For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity to indulge your flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law can be summed up in a single commandment, namely, “You must love your neighbor as yourself.” However, if you continually bite and devour one another, beware that you are not consumed by one another. But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. Galatians 5:13-16

“Everything is lawful,” but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is lawful,” but not everything builds others up. Do not seek your own good, but the good of the other person. - 1 Corinthians 10:23-24

Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, envying, murder drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God! ~ Galatians 5:19-21

Jesus says we know what’s really on the inside of someone’s heart and mind based on the kind of spiritual fruit their life’s actions bear.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, being jealous of one another. ~ Galatians 5:22-26

The longer we walk with Christ, the more our lives should be characterized by this kind of fruit.

Some people wrongly believe that they can completely compartmentalize their pursuit of the things of the flesh from their spiritual life as a Christian without consequence.

Do not be deceived. God will not be made a fool. For a person will reap what he sows, because the person who sows to his own flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit.
~ Galatians 6:7-8

The first and primary evidence that you are led by the Spirit is that you live a life that is characterized by love.

No one has greater love than this—that one lays down his life[for his friends.
~ John 15:13

Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort provided by love, any fellowship in the Spirit, any affection or mercy, complete my joy and be of the same mind, by having the same love, being united in spirit, and having one purpose. Instead of being motivated by selfish ambition or vanity, each of you should, in humility, be moved to treat one another as more important than yourself. Each of you should be concerned not only about your own interests, but about the interests of others as well. ~ Philippians 2:1-4

The person who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ~ 1 John 4:8

Treat others in the same way that you would want them to treat you. ~ Luke 6:31

Brothers and sisters, if a person is discovered in some sin, you who are spiritual restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness. Pay close attention to yourselves, so that you are not tempted too. Carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ~ Galatians 6:1-2

You can choose to be right, or you can choose to stay in relationship, but not always both at the same time.

I give you a new commandment—to love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. Everyone will know by this that you are My disciples—if you have love for one another.” ~ John 13:34-35

Jesus made it clear though that we can love people without also affirming and supporting their sinful behaviors. It's still okay to call a sin a sin, even in our post-modern, moral relativistic culture.

... “Whoever among you is guiltless may be the first to throw a stone at her.” ~ John 7b

Jesus stood up straight and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?” She replied, “No one, Lord.” ... ~ John 8:10-11a

And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you either. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore.” ~ John 8:11b

Love doesn't condemn but love also doesn't call evil good. We don't need to justify someone's sin in order to love them. We can still call a sin a sin.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but I do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I can remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I give over my body in order to boast, but do not have love, I receive no benefit. Love is patient, love is kind, it is not envious. Love does not brag, it is not puffed up. It is not rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily angered or resentful. It is not glad about injustice, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. ... And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love. ~ 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a, 13

But the fruit of the spirit is love:

❖ **DIVE IN! ~ Discussion Questions**

1. What was one thing Pastor G said this week that spoke directly to you?
2. Are you inspired by that to make a decision, make a change, or take some action in your life?

◆ **READ:** 1 Corinthians 10:23-24

1. If we are no longer under the Law and we are covered by the Blood and the Grace of Jesus, are we still expected to do right things and avoid wrong things according to the Law of God?
2. What are some sins Christians sometimes rubber stamp as “permissible” even though they are not helpful?

◆ **READ:** Galatians 5:19-21 and Ephesians 2:8-9

1. Paul says in Galatians that those who practice these acts of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God but in Ephesians, he says we have been saved because of grace and that our works cannot save us. Remember, Paul is writing to Christians in these passages. Why do these particular acts of the flesh keep us out of heaven? Why are our works still important?

◆ **READ:** Galatians 5:22-26

1. How have you crucified your flesh?
2. Who are some people you know who obviously bear a lot of this kind of fruit?

◆ **READ:** Galatians 6:7-8

1. In this context that Paul is referring to, what are some ways that people try to “mock” God?
2. Paul says if we sow to please the Spirit we will reap eternal life. Is this statement at odds with Paul's assertion that it is through grace alone that we are saved and not as a result of our works? Why or why not?