

# The Fruit of the Spirit

## Week 2: Love

### Introduction:

This week we looked at the spiritual fruit of 'Love'. This characteristic of the Christian life is referenced in the New Testament more than any other. The essence of the Christian life is not how much we *know*, it's not how many religious works we *do*, but it's how much we *love*. Love is at the heart of the Old Covenant for Israel: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself. It's also at the heart of the New Covenant: Jesus said, "A new command I give to you is to love one another as I have loved you." Love is the first fruit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23. It's the most important fruit, it's the most flavorful fruit, and it's the fruit to which all the others flow out of.

In this message we looked at the role of love in the Christian life. Here is a brief summary of our main points:

1. **Love is the Anchor of the Christian Life:** Love is the foundation of the Christian life and the central characteristic that defines us as followers of Christ. We are known by our love for others. We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Above all other virtues, love binds everything together and is the greatest commandment (Colossians 3:14, 1 Corinthians 13:13). Our love is anchored in God's love for us.
2. **Love is the Attitude of the Christian Life:** Love shapes our attitudes and the way we treat others. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul describes love as patient, kind, humble, forgiving, and more. This is what love looks like when it is expressed in our lives—it's a mindset that chooses to act with grace, even when it's difficult. Love is more than a feeling, it's a choice.
3. **Love is the Action of the Christian Life:** Love isn't just talk—it's action. It's something we do. Jesus set the ultimate example by laying down His life for us, and we are called to love others in the same sacrificial way. Love moves us to serve, give, and even love our enemies. It's love in action that reflects the Gospel.

### Discussion Questions:

1. In the message, love is described as the 'anchor' of our Christian lives... and our lives in general. Go around the room and share with everyone a time that you felt loved, or someone did something for you that expressed love.
2. Read 1 John 4:19. How does this verse impact your view of love as something that flows from God's love rather than something you generate on your own? Do you think that it's important to receive God's love for ourselves before we try to give God's love to others?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and take some time to list and discuss each description of love. Which aspect of love is the most challenging for you to live out, and why? How can you grow in that area?
4. How can love be more than just an attitude but something that actively impacts your relationships and interactions? Give an example where you've seen love in action.
5. Read John 13:35. How do you think the world sees love (or a lack of love) in the church today? How can we better reflect Christ's love in our communities? (*Bonus:* Write down some ideas that we, Connect Church, can specifically do as a church to share God's love with the Wilson community.)
6. Jesus calls us to love not just our friends but also our enemies (Matthew 5:44). What does that look like practically? How can we take steps to love those who are difficult to love? How can we love those who we disagree with?