

Discussion Questions

Cultivating Fruit-filled Lives

1 John 4:7-16: Love (Galatians 5:22)

As we seek to partner with the Spirit to make room for His fruit to grow, consider:

- What hinders you from loving others? Pray about the obstacles that limit your love, and consider what practical ways you can show the fruit of love to others.
- Whom do you need to forgive? Ask God to help you forgive as he has forgiven and trust in his justice, even if they've not received the justice you would like to see.
- What motivates you to love? Take some time to read 1 Corinthians 13:1-7, and consider where you need help to grow in love.

Additional Questions – choose 2-3 to further your thinking.

- What part of the sermon stood out as important to you this week? Why?
- Read 1 John 4:1-5:2. John says, “everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.” Is love the only mark of a Christian? Discuss.
- V16 says we can “know and rely on the love God has for us.” How does such assurance come about (see vv.13-15)?
- Jesus loved all manner of people. Because we are loved by him we are called to love like him. Consider *loving one another* in light of Colossians 3:13, Romans 12:10 and 15:7. How could you headline these three passages? Which do you find the hardest and need God's help to grow?
- The Greek word used for love is *agape*. This is the love that the Father had for the Son (John 17:24). It is also the love God has for humanity (John 3:16) and this is the same love Jesus commands us to have for one another (John 15:12). Consider Romans 5:8 and 1 John 4:10, how would you define *agape* love?
- 1 Corinthians 13 helps us understand how *agape* expresses itself. Jerry Bridges suggest it might be helpful to rephrased these virtues of love in terms of motivational statements, for example: *I am patient with you because I love you and want to forgive you ... I am not rude because I love you and care about your feelings.* Why not continue through the list creating your own ‘motivational statements.’
- One of the greatest challenges is to ‘love your enemies’ (Matthew 5:44). We sometimes use the expression, “Hate the sin, not the sinner.” What kind of behaviours do you demonstrate to let people know you love them? Discuss how you can show that you ‘hate the sin,’ but love the sinner in your everyday life.
- Imagine if someone you loved went to jail for a heinous crime, whether against you or someone else, how hard do you think it would be to love them despite their actions? Should you also condemn them?