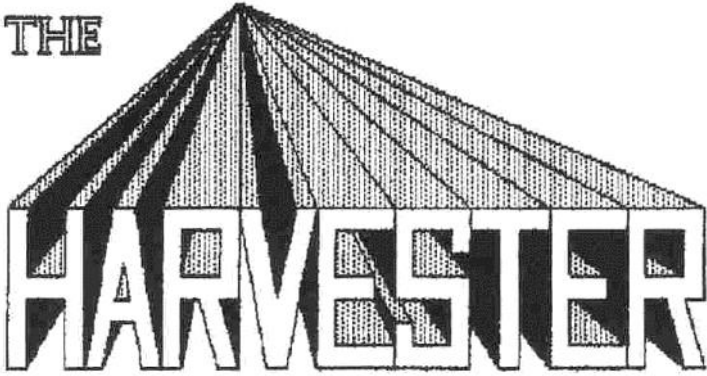


THE



*“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)*

---

April 2016

No. 364

---

## FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT: LOVE

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Gal. 5:22-23)*

The first fruit of the Spirit is love.

Before we begin, consider this: many times we are able to determine the meaning of a word based on its context in the surrounding scripture. That doesn't apply in this case, as all of the words are in a list. All that we are left with are definitions and logic.

---

THE HARVESTER

141 County Road 474

Woodland, AL 36280

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



The Greek word used for love is *agape*, which means charity and brotherly love and good will. It has to do with our mind and our principles, and is not simply an emotion which rises unbidden in our hearts. It is a type of love that seeks the highest good for others.

While the Fruits of the Spirit passage does not give context, there are many verses that do. Here are two that are very powerful:

- *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8)*
- *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:35-39)*

How do we put this kind of love into action? Words won't do. And some actions won't either.

*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matt. 7:21-23)*

*And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. (1 Pet. 4:8)*

*Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one con-*

*vert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. (Jas. 5:19-20)*

So, what does it look like?

I've seen this type of love in many places:

- The person who cares for an aging family member with Alzheimer's Disease
- A wife who supports her husband with his long struggle with depression
- A person who cares for his neighbor's injured dog, even though they are at odds with one another
- A teacher who refuses to allow a top student any privileges
- A coach who benches a top player who has a bad attitude
- A church member who works at relationships with people who don't reciprocate
- Forgiving, not forgetting, but still giving space for a person who expresses repentance to prove themselves with their actions

All of these examples are of *agape* love being shown from one person to another. How do we have this type of love toward God? Fortunately, we have some help.

Jesus said the greatest commandment of all is to love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind (Matt. 22:37-38). The word He used for love is *agape*. How do we have *agape* love for God?

Loving God with our heart is the easiest of the three concepts for us to grasp. This means having heartfelt emotions toward God. These can involve gratitude, thankfulness, friendship, and trust. Just as the heart is at the center of the body, loving God with our heart implies that God is at the center of our lives.

Loving God with our mind is also easy to understand, but it is harder to perform. This is our thoughts and our understanding. What do we do when we are committed to something in life? We spend time on it. We spend money on it. If loving God with our mind is being committed with our thoughts, then we should spend time thinking about God.

Let's use a little logic here. Loving God with our soul can't be the same as loving God with our mind, or with our heart.

The word "soul" is a little tricky. The way we use it today, as the eternal part of our being that will go to Heaven, that's really what the word "spirit" means (Eccl. 12:7). We have a hard time even understanding what the spirit is, much less how to love God with it. Fortunately, "soul" is a little easier to understand, though it can be the most challenging to master.

Our soul is the story of our life, what we do with our time, our talents, our love, our forgiveness, our thoughts, our money. Our soul is who we are. Over the course of our lives we can accomplish many things, from charitable works to writing books to reading through the Bible dozens of times to raising a family to influencing people at work to coaching little league. We can also accomplish something else: nothing. We can be producers, or we can be consumers. We can prepare the next generation of teachers, or we can be lazy and teach the next generation nothing at all. In all of this, our life's story—what we often call our reputation—is our soul.

Going back to the greatest commandment:

Loving God with our soul is to choose what we do with our time, talents, and resources over our lifetime so that the story of our life is about God, living righteously, encouraging fellow believers, and/or preparing the next generation of teachers.

As you can see, this first fruit of the spirit is a big one, and it's at the front of the list for a reason!

Before we close, consider this agape love prayer: “*And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you.*” (1 Thess. 3:12, NKJV)



CHAD PRINCE  
Oxford, AL

<http://www.chadprince.com>

---

## APOLOGIA

QUESTION: Are Paul and James at odds with each other concerning works?

ANSWER: In Ephesians 2:8-9 the inspired Paul wrote: “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*” Also, by inspiration, James expounds: “*What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?*” (James 2:14). If we only read these three verses without reading the rest of the New Testament it would seem that Paul and James are at odds concerning works. But, are they?

Paul further taught in Ephesians 2:10, “*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*” We now learn that Paul is saying that we are created to walk in “good works”. Reading further from James 2:21-24,

*Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is*

*justified, and not by faith only.”*

James tells us very plainly that our faith is mature or made complete by works and that Abraham was justified by works.

If we left our study without any further import and consideration of other verses someone would quickly point out Paul’s inspired teaching in Romans. From Romans 4:2 we learn, “*For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.*” Can we “glory” with our works? The obvious answer is no. At this point do we scratch our heads and give up in despair and pick our favorite verses and teach from there? No. All the verses we’ve read are inspired of God. The Bible has not crossed itself. It should be very plain at this point that Paul and James are talking about two completely different “works”. As one takes a very close look at the context of Romans 4:2 one readily concludes from chapters 3 and 4 that the “works” Paul is talking of are works of the law: the law of Moses.

What are the works that James is talking about? James is NOT talking about our own works. He is talking about works of obedience!

*Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (James 2:25-26)*

Can a “dead” faith save? We are to “do” (work) the things

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God’s harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, address changes and all correspondence to:

The Harvester

141 County Road 474 \* Woodland, AL 36280

Phone: (256) 449-9221\* Email: raymcmamus@hotmail.com

Web Page: [www.churches-of-christ.org](http://www.churches-of-christ.org)

that the Lord commands us to do via the New Testament. We are to add works of obedience to our faith to make our faith alive. A living faith is a saving faith.

Faith is a commanded requirement. In 1 John 3:23-24 we read:

*And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

Jesus said that faith is a work!

*Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. (John 6:28-29)*

How do we get this saving faith that Jesus has commanded us to do? Paul very plainly tells us how to get a saving faith: “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” (Rom. 10:17)

The faith that saves is the faith that obeys the word of God. Paul and James are NOT at odds with each other on the teaching of works. They are talking about two different kinds of work. Our faith is a work that is to have “works” based on “doing” what God has asked us to do via the New Testament.

*And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whore-*

# GOSPEL MEETINGS

---

<b>DATES</b>	<b>PLACE</b>	<b>SPEAKER</b>
April 8 - 10	New Bethel Cullman, AL	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
April 15 - 17	Oak Grove Eubank, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
April 22 - 24	Valley Valley, AL	Danny Abercrombie (Gay, GA)
April 29 - May 1	Van Lear Van Lear, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

---

*(cont. from page 7)*

*mongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. (Rev 22:12-15)*

TIM ELDRIDGE  
Woodland, AL

---

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Remember last month's questions?

1. How old was Methuselah when he died? 969 (Genesis 5:27)
2. What kind of animal did the Lord cause to speak to Balaam? A DONKEY (Numbers 22:28)
3. Who was David's first wife? MICHAL WAS THE FIRST MENTIONED (1 Samuel 18:27)
4. With what did Jesus feed the 4000? SEVEN LOAVES AND A FEW SMALL FISHES (Mark 8:6-9)
5. According to 1 Peter, the devil walks about as what kind of animal? A ROARING LION (1 Peter 5:8)