

**The Goal Is Love # 3**

**What Are The Characteristics Of Love?**

A few weeks ago when I began this series on 1 Timothy 1:5 on love, I shared with you about a man named Howard Hill. Howard was probably one of the greatest if not the greatest archer who ever lived. He literally split his arrows in the bulls eye. He hunted down all kinds of dangerous animals with his bow. I also shared how you and I can outshoot Howard Hill on his best day if we make just one condition—he be blindfolded. In order to hit the target, we must be able to identify and see the target.

Last fall I went deer hunting with Walt Heck and Albury Gardner. I know that many of you can't picture me shooting Bambi, but I went deer hunting and my goal was to bring back some healthy meat for my family. Walt and I sighted in the 30/30 rifle that I was using. I got where I could hit the target pretty well. On the last day that we went, I departed on my own. I had not seen any deer where we had been hunting, so I went out looking.

I came upon two deer. I hurt them making noises in the brush. I quietly slipped around where I could see them to get a shot at them. Unfortunately, I only saw them from behind. I was not in position to get a good shot at them. I needed a side shot where I could zero in on my targets vital area. I did not want to shoot the deer in the rear leg and have him run off injured. The deer were hopping up and down and were going away from me. I went back around the thicket to get a side shot, but when I went around, I had lost them. I COULD NOT HIT A TARGET THAT I COULD NOT SEE. Our goal is love and we must be able to identify and sight in love in order to hit the mark. Today, I want to help us zero in on the target of love so that we can find the mark.

When I went to Texas Christian University, we were required to take at least two different science classes. I took Physics and then I took Geology. Geology was by far my favorite science course that I took. No, let me clarify; geology was the only science course that I took that I liked. I enjoyed learning about erosion and the weathering process. I enjoyed learning about volcanos, mountains, etc. The professor hated athletes. I made straight A's in the class and made an A on the final and got a C in the class because I had missed so many classes while on golf trips. I was not a happy camper to say the least.

Our science classes were 4 credit hours because there was a lab that we also took which accounted for the extra credit hour. In the lab, we learned all about rocks. We learned about hundreds of different rocks and minerals. They would pass around these rocks with their individual characteristics and we would have to learn to identify them. These rocks had characteristics weight—how heavy they were, color—what color or colors they had, hardness—how hard they were and there were ways to test the hardness, and smoothness.

Today, we are going to learn about the characteristics of love so that we can identify love. We want to know all the different characteristics. We want to know the weight, the color, the hardness, and the smoothness of love. We don't want counterfeit love; the world is full of counterfeit love. The world does not know what real love is. They are looking for love. They are looking in all the wrong places. The world desperately wants love, but they don't know how to find it. We have something they desperately want.

In the world of marketing, if you have a good PRODUCT that the people want, you are well on your way to success. The PLACE is easy. We are in one of the top three cities in the world to live. A couple of years ago the Wall Street Journal rated Atlanta as one of the top three cities in the world to live in. There were all kinds of considerations that they looked at. Another P is the PROMOTION. We need to let our good works shine before men that they glorify our Father who is in heaven. Our love needs to be on a hill. Our love should not be hid under a bushel. It needs to be out in the open for the world to see. We need to be transparent, real and full of good deeds so the world can see the love of God in our lives. The last P in marketing is PRICE and that is costly. We have to lay our lives down to give them the love they are looking for. As Christ loved the church is how we are to lay our lives down for the brethren. It will cost us everything to show the world the love of God. The real question for the church today is whether or not we are going to lay our lives down for the Lord or whether we are going to pursue selfish pursuits. The world is looking for love and we have the product.

If someone was going to describe the wind to you, it would be difficult. You would tell them that you can't see it, but you can feel it when it is moving. The more it moves, the more you feel it. Though you can't see the wind, you can see the effects of the wind. You can see the flags blowing and the leaves shaking. Though you can't see it, you can sometimes hear the wind. You can even use the wind and harness it. You can turn a windmill or sail in a boat with it. We describe characteristics of wind and what it can do to help us in our understanding of wind.

That is what we are going to do today. I can't hold up love for you and show you. I am going to give you the characteristics of love that we find in the Scriptures to help us identify love. The Lord wants us to know and understand love. We have to know love before we can give love to others. Let's look at some of these characteristics.

**1. You Can Possess It.** If you can possess it, it also means that it is possible not to possess it. In our message a couple of weeks ago, we discussed the surpassing value of love out of 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

(1 Cor 13:1-3) "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. {2} And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. {3} And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing."

Notice in verse one that if we speak with the tongues of men and angels but do not have love, if we do not possess love, we have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If we have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love or do not possess love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love or possess love, it profits me nothing."

Love is something that we not only can possess, but we need to possess or we have nothing. How many of you want to be part of a church that is a noisy gong? How many of you want to be part of a church that when the Lord gives His assessment, there is a zero balance. We have nothing. How many of you want to pour your heart out into a church only to find out years later that there was no profit in it. There is nothing stored up in your heavenly bank account or your earthly bank account. There was no profit in it.

How many of you want to be part of a marriage that is just a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. How many of you want an unprofitable marriage? How many of you want to get nothing out of your marriage? I want a profitable marriage. I want a marriage where I get something out of it. I want enjoyment with my wife. I want companionship with my wife. I want friendship with my wife. I want love and encouragement from my wife. I want someone to share my heart with. I want someone to listen to me when I need to talk. I want someone to pray for me when I need prayer. I want someone to hug and to hold. If during my whole life time, it came to nothing, what a shame on me. What a shame to pour into something only to find that there was nothing, it was unprofitable.

The key to all this is that we need to possess love. How do you possess love? The book of 1 John is about how to know if you are a Christian. In it the Apostle John wrote that if we do not love, we do not know God, for God is love. If we love, we are born of God and know God. How do you possess love? You must possess God. You must receive Christ Jesus into your heart. God sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we could live and receive His love. We love because He first loved us.

(1 John 4:7-10) "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. {8} The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. {9} By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. {10} In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

(1 John 4:19) "We love, because He first loved us."

(John 5:37-43) ""And the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. {38} "And you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent. {39} "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; {40} and you are unwilling to come to Me,

that you may have life. {41} "I do not receive glory from men; {42} but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. {43} "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another shall come in his own name, you will receive him.

**2. You Can Know Love.** In the book of Ephesians, which we are studying in our Home Group meetings, Paul writes to us in chapter three and says that he bows his knees before the Father that we might comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth of love and that we might know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge.

(Eph 3:14-19) "For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, {15} from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, {16} that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; {17} so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, {18} may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, {19} and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God."

(1 John 4:16) "And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."

The word for know is ginosko, which means to be aware of, feel, perceive, be resolved, can speak, be sure or to understand. The Lord wants us to fully understand and to fully be aware of His love. He wants us to have full knowledge of His love.

G1097. ginosko, ghin-oc'e'-ko; a prol. form of a prim. verb; to "know" (absol.), in a great variety of applications and with many impl. (as follow, with others not thus clearly expressed):--allow, be aware (of), feel, (have) known (-ledge), perceive, be resolved, can speak, be sure, understand.

If we can know Him, how do we get to know love? How do we get to know His love. The Lord gives a number of ways that we can identify whether we know love or not. One of the first ways we will know love is by the sacrifice. We know God's love because He laid His life down for us. We know someone else's love for us by the way they lay their life down for us. John goes on to give us an example of what laying our life down for someone is. If a brother is in need and we have the world's goods, we should give it to him. The material possessions that we have worked hard and accumulated represent part of who we are. When we give them up, we are giving of ourselves.

(1 John 3:16-18) "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. {17} But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? {18} Little children, let us not love with word or

with tongue, but in deed and truth."

Paul gives us another way that to know love. He wrote the Corinthians a letter with many tears so that they might know the love which he had especially for them. Sometimes, a willingness to share hard words with someone speaks of the love they have for you. When someone shares a hard word with you and their goal is not to tear you down, but to help you to grow and mature in the Lord, it is a sign of their love and commitment to you.

(2 Cor 2:4) "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not that you should be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you."

In the book of 1 John, we find another way of knowing whether we love God. We know that we love God when we observe and keep His commandments. In other words, when you confess your faults and pray for one another, we know that you love God. When you render unto Caesar the things that are Caesars and do not fudge on your taxes, you know that you love God. When you render unto God the things that are God's, you know that you love God. When you go and make disciples of all nations, you know that you love God. When you spend time meditating on His word and doing all that is in it, you know that you love God.

(1 John 5:1-3) "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. {2} By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. {3} For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome."

**3. You Can Measure Your Love.** Not only can you possess it and know it, but you can measure how much of it you have and know. Love is measurable, but not in terms of an exact measure. If we are making bread and it calls for one a half cups of milk, we would measure exactly 1 ½ cups of milk. We cannot measure love in those terms, but it is measurable. Let's take a look at some passages.

When Paul begins to pray for the church at Ephesus in chapter 3, he prays that they would know the breadth and the width and the depth and the height of God's love. When our children are doing math problems, they have to find the area and volume of shapes. These are measurable items. But Paul goes on to say that His love surpasses knowledge. He wants us to know and comprehend, yet it is beyond knowledge. His measurements are too infinitely large for us to comprehend. They are immeasurable by human terms. But he gives these terms of breadth, depth, width and height to give us some comprehensible ways of measuring His love.

(Eph 3:14-21) "For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, {15} from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, {16} that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power

through His Spirit in the inner man; {17} so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, {18} may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, {19} and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God. {20} Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, {21} to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."

Jesus said in John 15:13 that no greater love has anyone than this than to lay his life down for his friends. When you compare this person's love with another, you have to have some kind of measure. 1 John 3:16-18 says that we know love by this, that we lay our lives down for the brethren. Love can be measured by the amount of our life that we lay down for our brothers and sisters in Christ. It can be measured by the measuring tape of our life. How much of our lives are being measured out to others? How much are we laying down for others. We can measure our love in this manner.

(John 15:13) ""Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

In John 11:30-36, we have the account of Lazarus dying. Jesus loved Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus. When Jesus finally gets there and Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days and he is talking with the sisters, he is deeply moved and begins to weep. This causes the Jews around Him to comment, "Behold, how He loved him!"

(John 11:30-36) "Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him. {31} The Jews then who were with her in the house, and consoling her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. {32} Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." {33} When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her, also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit, and was troubled, {34} and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said^ to Him, "Lord, come and see." {35} Jesus wept. {36} And so the Jews were saying, "Behold how He loved him!"

They may not have been able to tell you that he had 1 ½ cups of love, but they could see how much He loved. It was a measurable amount. A question we have to ask is can people see how much we love one another by the way we express our love to one another. Does the love we have inside of us move us deeply like it did Jesus? Jesus wept because the love inside of Him deeply moved Him with compassion. Are we free enough to express our love to others, whether it is by weeping or in hugging or in just expressing the words, "I love you." In our worship, does the Lord see a full container of love being expressed or does he see us without emotions and passion? Men, forget the macho stuff. Realize, as real men, we will cry, weep, dance, shout and clap when we are full of love.

The book of Proverbs says that better is open rebuke than love that is concealed. Jesus did not conceal His love. He expressed and revealed His love through His emotions. We need to be free enough to express our love. The world needs to see expressed agape love.

(Prov 27:5) "Better is open rebuke Than love that is concealed."

Another Scripture that speaks about this is Romans 5:8 which says that while we were yet sinners, God demonstrated His love to us. God did not conceal, but He demonstrated His love to us. The measure of His love was that it was complete. Christ died for us to demonstrate His love. If He had stayed in heaven, He would have still loved us, for God is love. But, we would not know the full expression of His love without the demonstration of love that He gave. As Christ loved the church, so we need to love one another. We need to demonstrate to one another that we love them by laying our lives down for one another.

(Rom 5:8) "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

In John 21:15-17, Jesus asked Peter a question, "Peter, do you love Me more than these?" Some people think it may be the other disciples. Some think it was the fish. I believe that Jesus was asking a fisherman if he loved Jesus more than his business of fishing. Men sometimes get so pre-occupied in their businesses that their faith can take a back seat. God wants to be pre-eminent in our lives. Peter had to make an assessment or measurement of his love of the Lord. "Yes, Lord, I love you more than these." Then the Lord tells Peter to feed His sheep.

(John 21:15-17) "So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said<sup>^</sup> to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said<sup>^</sup> to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said<sup>^</sup> to him, "Tend My lambs." {16} He said<sup>^</sup> to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said<sup>^</sup> to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said<sup>^</sup> to him, "Shepherd My sheep." {17} He said<sup>^</sup> to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said<sup>^</sup> to him, "Tend My sheep."

The Lord asked me the same question one day as I was running. He asked me if I loved Him three times and three times He asked me to feed the sheep. He was confirming me in my role as shepherd of this church and my responsibility to feed you every week. My time in study and preparation is an act of love to the Lord. We have to get a tape measure out at times and ask ourselves how much do we love the Lord.

Finally, in Luke 7:36-50, we find Jesus eating at the house of a Pharisee. There was a woman, with a not so good reputation, that upon learning that Jesus was there, came and brought some perfume and anointed His feet and wiped them with her hair. This bothered

the Pharisees greatly, but Jesus takes time to teach about love. He gives us another way of measuring our love.

(Luke 7:36-50) "Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him. And He entered the Pharisee's house, and reclined at the table. {37} And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, {38} and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet, and anointing them with the perfume. {39} Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner." {40} And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher." {41} "A certain moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. {42} "When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him more?" {43} Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly." {44} And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. {45} "You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. {46} "You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. {47} "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." {48} And He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." {49} And those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" {50} And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace.""

We can measure the amount of love that we have by the amount of forgiveness that we have received. We need a greater revelation of how much love and forgiveness the Lord has extended to us. In our family devotions on Friday, we were looking at Isaiah 6 and the vision that Isaiah had in the year of King Uzziah's death. When he saw the Lord, he realized that he was a man of unclean lips and lived among a people of unclean lips. James says that we all stumble in many ways and if someone does not stumble in what they say, they are a perfect man, able to bridle the entire body as well. I stumble in what I say. We all stumble in what we say. We need a greater revelation of His holiness and the ugliness of our sin. When we come to the place that Paul did and say that we are the foremost of sinners, we will have a greater capacity to love. We can measure how much love we have by the amount of forgiveness that we have received.

**4. You Can Grow In Your Love.** Love is not static. It is something that can grow or diminish. It can increase and it can decrease. We looked a couple of weeks ago at the church at Ephesus and how they left their first love. The Lord told them to repent and return to the deeds they did at first. We can leave or lose our first love or we can grow



and increase in our love.

God is a God of increase. He wants us to increase. He wants His kingdom to increase. He told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. He made the animals and plant life to increase and multiply. Isaiah 9:6 says that there is no end to the increase of the government of God. In Matthew 13, we find that the mustard seed increased until it became a haven for the birds. We find that the kingdom of God is like leaven which the woman hid in the meal and caused it all to be leavened. In the parable of the talents, God expected to see an increase. Throughout Scripture, we find that there is to be an increase in the kingdom. In the area of love, it is no different. We are to be ever increasing in our love for the Lord and for one another.

(Mat 13:31-33) "He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; {32} and this is smaller than all other seeds; but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants, and becomes a tree, so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR come and NEST IN ITS BRANCHES." {33} He spoke another parable to them, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened.""

In Paul's prayer to the Thessalonians, he says that their love was growing toward one another. I would love for an apostle to come in here and take a comparative measurement of our love and make the assessment that our love was growing towards one another. Lord, I ask You to cause us to grow in our love for one another. Lord, I ask You to help us grow in our expression of love for one another. Lord, I ask You to confirm the work of our hands through a word of encouragement from one of the apostles that comes into this body. Amen.

(2 Th 1:3) "We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater;"

Yes, one of the characteristics of love is that it can grow. Many of you may recall the message I did earlier this year on Woodstove Christianity. It is how we can become red hot for the Lord. It is how to grow in our passion and zeal for the Lord. I would encourage you to review your notes from that message.

In general, think of love in terms of a relationship with a person. You have to cultivate love. You have to sow love. You have to spend quality time with someone to show them love. You have to express your love to someone you love. If you never told someone that you loved them, how would they know. We cannot conceal our love; we must reveal and demonstrate our love to one another. You will make sacrifices for others to show them love. You will serve them. You will lay your life down for them. We will grow in our love through nurturing and cultivating the relationship.

**5. We Can Abide and Walk In Love.** Love is not just something that we can possess, know, demonstrate and grow in; it is something that we can live and walk in. We can walk in love in our every day life. We can abide in God's love. What does it mean to abide in His love? 1 John 2:6 tells us about abiding and walking.

(1 John 2:6) "the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked."

The Apostle John writes more about abiding in God than anyone else in the Scriptures. In the Gospel of John and the letter of 1 John we find most of our instruction about abiding in God. What are these principles that John gives us?

**A. Is In Covenant and Fellowship With God.** Jesus said that he who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Him. This is talking about partaking of the Lord's supper which was a covenant meal. We must have received Christ into our life. The second thing the flesh and blood represent is fellowship. When you break bread together, you are fellowshiping. If we want to abide in Christ, we must be in fellowship with Him.

(John 6:56-58) ""He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. {57} "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me. {58} "This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this bread shall live forever.""

**B. Keeps God's Commandments.** John 15:10 says that if we keep His commandments we will abide in His love. Jesus said that He kept His Father's commandments and abode in His love. If we are going to abide and walk in love, we must keep His commandments. His command is that we go and make disciples of all nations. Are we making disciples? His command is that teach and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Are we teaching and baptizing people? His command is that we worship the Lord with all our heart, soul, body and strength. Are we worshipping the Lord with everything we have? His command is that encourage one another and build up one another. Are we encouraging one another and building up one another?

(John 15:10) ""If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love."

(1 John 3:24) "And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us."

**C. Loves His Brother.** John tells us that if we hate our brother, we do not abide in His love, but if we love our brother, we abide in the light. He goes on to clarify that loving our brother is not just with word or tongue, but in deed and by giving up worldly possessions to meet those needs.

(1 John 2:10-11) "The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. {11} But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes."

(1 John 3:17) "But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?"

(1 John 4:12) "No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us."

**D. Does Not Practice Sin.** John tells us that no one who abides in Him sins. This is not talking about an individual act of sin. John clarifies that in chapter one. He says that if anyone says that he does not sin, he is a liar and the truth is not in him. He tells us how to deal with sin. We need to confess our sins and receive the Father's forgiveness and cleansing. But here, John is talking about practicing sin, a lifestyle of sin. He is not going to habitually practicing sin. If we want to abide in Him, we need to practice righteousness, not sin.

(1 John 3:6-9) "No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. {7} Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; {8} the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. {9} No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

**E. Confesses That Jesus Is The Son Of God.** This Scripture talks about confessing Jesus. It speaks of coming to know and believing the love which God has for us. If we come into a relationship with Christ, which is by believing and confessing, then we will abide in God and He in us. But I believe that confessing Jesus is a lifestyle. We have been charged to preach the gospel. When people came to Christ, He told them to go and tell their friends what great things God has done for them. In other words, we need to keep confessing Jesus.

(1 John 4:15-16) "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. {16} And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."

(Rom 10:9-10) "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; {10} for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

We have been called to bear witness of Christ. It is not the role of the evangelist to witness. It is the evangelist's job to equip the rest of us for the work of evangelism. It is our job to bear witness. We are the ones that need to be confessing Jesus wherever we are. We need to confess Jesus at the grocery store to the check out lady. We need to be confessing Jesus at the bowling alley. We need to be confessing Jesus at Home Depot. We need to be confessing Jesus to our neighbor (and not just with our mouths). If we want to abide in Him, we must confess Jesus.

**F. The Reassurance Of Our Abiding: The Holy Spirit.** Because God wants us to confirm to us when we are abiding in Him, He has given us His Spirit. When He says that He has given us His Spirit, there needs to be evidence of His Spirit. We need to see His Spirit in operation in our lives. His Spirit is going to bear witness of sin, righteousness and judgment. His Spirit is going to lead and guide us in truth. His Spirit is going to comfort and encourage us. His Spirit is going to reveal things to us. His Spirit is going to give us power and boldness to witness. We will see the evidence of His Spirit in us as we minister in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We will see evidence of the Holy Spirit in the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives, which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

(1 John 3:24) "And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us."

(1 John 4:13) "By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit."

(Gal 5:22-23) "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, {23} gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

**6. We Can Put It On.** Love is like an article of clothing, a garment that we can put on. Some of you are old enough to remember the Superman movies. Clark Kent would scramble to a phone booth when there was an emergency. The newspaper reporter became superman when he changed his clothes. He put on the Superman clothes and soared into the air to go rescue someone.

We need to be just like Superman and put on the garment of love. When we put that garment of love on everyday, we change into a world changer. We soar into the heavenlies and rescue people who are lost and in trouble. We will go to the aid of our brothers and sisters who are hurting. We lay our world down and focus on the needs of the other person, laying our life down and demonstrating love to one another.

(Col 3:14) "And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity."

We are going to close with this account in Luke 8. Jesus and His disciples had gone to the country of the Gerasenes. He was met by a demoniac, the man with the legion. Notice, that the man had not put on any clothing. He was not clothed in Christ. He was not abiding in a house. He was not abiding in God, but in the tombs. He was in the darkness and with the dead. Jesus came that we might have life. He did not know Jesus. He did not possess Jesus. He possessed other spirits, but not the Spirit that is from God.

(Luke 8:26-39) "And they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. {27} And when He had come out onto the land, He was met by a certain man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs. {28} And seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, "What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me." {29} For He had been commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard; and yet he would burst his fetters and be driven by the demon into the desert. {30} And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. {31} And they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss. {32} Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons entreated Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission. {33} And the demons came out from the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake, and were drowned. {34} And when the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported it in the city and out in the country. {35} And the people went out to see what had happened; and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they became frightened. {36} And those who had seen it reported to them how the man who was demon-possessed had been made well. {37} And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to depart from them; for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat, and returned. {38} But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying, {39} "Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him."

As Jesus ministers to the man, he delivers him from the Legion of demons and they enter the herd of swine and destroy them. But the man was suddenly clothed and in his right mind. When you receive Christ into your life, when you put on the Lord Jesus Christ, you will receive the mind of Christ. He has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind. Next, we find the man fellowshiping with the Lord. He is wanting to accompany Jesus and the disciples. However, Jesus tells the man to return to his home town and proclaim what great things the Lord has done. To abide in Christ, we need to confess that Jesus is the Son of God.

The Scriptures say that when Jesus returned to the land, the multitudes welcomed him. They sent Jesus away in the previous account, but now they welcomed him and many turned to the Lord. Why? Because this man who had been released of a lot, loved a lot. He who had been forgiven of much loved much. He had been confessing the things that Jesus had done. The kingdom of God had increased.

Love is just like this NIKE jacket that I have. I have it in my possession. I own it. I received this jacket as a result of winning the Tallahassee Open. The President of NIKE gave it to me. I know that I have it. I know its value. I can demonstrate the jacket to you. I can measure it. It has already been measured and sized. It is a large. I can grow to like this purple. It is the color of royalty. We have been called to royalty. I can walk around in this jacket and abide or remain in it. But, none of this is possible unless I do one thing. I have to put it on. We must put on the jacket of love. Paul wrote this to the Christians in Colossae, not to unbelievers. He must have known that we still need to put on and wear the garment of love. It does not automatically put itself on us. We must put on love.

Today, maybe the Lord has been speaking to you and helping you identify the characteristics of love. Perhaps He has helped you see the target or goal of love. He has helped you sight in your rifle to the bullseye of love. He has given you some revelation about the characteristics of love so that you can walk in it. Maybe you have come tonight and you have never received Christ into your life. You have never confessed Jesus is the Son of God. You can't walk in agape love, because you don't know God. You have not received Christ. Let me encourage you to receive Christ tonight. Let me exhort you to not harden your heart by hearing the word tonight and leaving. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Put on the jacket of love. Wear it and abide in it this week and every week. Let's pray.

**Mountain Of The Lord Church & Ministries**  
**The Goal Is Love # 3**  
**What Are The Characteristics Of Love?**

March 11, 2000

**INTRODUCTION**



**1. You Can \_\_\_\_\_ Love.** 1 Cor 13:1-3, 1 John 4:7-10, 1 John 4:19, John 5:37-43

**2. You Can \_\_\_\_\_ Love.** Eph 3:14-19, 1 John 4:16, 1 John 3:16-18, 2 Cor 2:4, 1 John 5:1-3

- Ginosko (G1097) means to be aware of, feel, perceive, be resolved, can speak, be sure or to understand.

**3. You Can \_\_\_\_\_ Your Love.** Eph 3:14-21, John 15:13, John 11:30-36, Prov 27:5, Rom 5:8, John 21:15-17, Luke 7:36-50

**4. You Can \_\_\_\_\_ In Your Love.** Mat 13:31-33, 2 Th 1:3

**5. We Can \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ In Love.** 1 John 2:6

**A. Is In \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ With God.** John 6:56-58

**B. Keeps God's \_\_\_\_\_.** John 15:10, 1 John 3:24

**C. Loves His \_\_\_\_\_.** 1 John 2:10-11, 1 John 3:17, 1 John 4:12

**D. Does Not \_\_\_\_\_.** 1 John 3:6-9

**E. \_\_\_\_\_ That Jesus Is The Son Of God.** 1 John 4:15-16, Rom 10:9-10

**F. Reassurance Of Our Abiding: the \_\_\_\_\_.** 1 John 3:24, 1 John 4:13, Gal 5:22-23

**6. We Can \_\_\_\_\_.** Col 3:14, Luke 8:26-39

I can apply this word for my life by doing the following things:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.