

The Goal Is Love – 02 The Characteristics Of Love

Introduction

Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:5 that the goal of his instruction was love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. We are looking at this goal of love. Last week we looked at six reasons for the goal of love. We saw that love had a surpassing value to the greater gifts of the Spirit, and even our faith. This week we are looking at the second message in this series, the characteristics of love.

When I went to Texas Christian University, I became a business major. In my degree, we were required to take at least two different science classes. I took Physics and Geology. I had Chemistry, Biology, and Physics in high school. I did not like the smells of chemicals. I did not like the smells of formaldehyde in biology. I certainly did not like dissecting frogs, crickets, and sharks. I stayed away from this in college and took Physics and Geology. Geology was by far my favorite science course that I took. I enjoyed learning about erosion and the weathering process. I enjoyed learning about volcanos, mountains, etc. However, the professor had something against athletes. I made straight A's in the class and in the lab tests, and I made an A on the final. Unfortunately, I got a C in the class because I had missed so many classes while on golf trips. Usually, I missed 25 days of classes per year, ten in the fall and fifteen in the spring. He had counted me down because of my attendance, even though they were excused absences while representing TCU in tournaments. I was not very happy about the grade.

Our science classes were four credit hours, because of the lab that went with it. 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. We learned to identify the rocks by learning about the characteristics of each rock.

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.

This morning we are going to look at the characteristics of love. I can't hold up love for you and show you. But, I can give you the characteristics of love so that each of us can identify and know love. I am going to give you a number of characteristics of love that we find in the Scriptures to help us identify love. Specifically we are going to look at the following six characteristics:

Characteristics of Love

1. We can possess love.
2. We can know love.
3. We can measure love.
4. We can grow in love.
5. We can abide in love.
6. We can put on love.

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1. **We can possess love.** If you can possess it, it also means that it is possible not to possess it. Last week, we looked at the surpassing value of love. 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.

(1 Cor 13:1-3) "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love (agape), 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 (agape), 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 (agape), it profits me nothing."

The love that Paul writes about is agape love. There are several Greek words that are all translated as love. There is philos, which is a familial love. The city of Philadelphia means the city of brotherly love. This is a love that family members naturally have for one another. We can all have this love. Eros is another Greek word for love. This is a sexual love. The English word erotic comes from this sexual love. Many people in the world think in terms of sexual love. This is not the love that Paul is speaking about in 1 Corinthians. He is talking about agape love.

Agape love is a perfect love. It is the type of love that God has and demonstrates to us. The book of 1 John is about how to know if you are a Christian. The Apostle John wrote that if we do not love, we do not know God, for God is love. John is talking about this agape love. He adds, if we do love, then 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 agape love. We agape love because He first agape loved us. The key to all this is that we need to possess love.

(1 John 4:7-8) "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."

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

2. **We can know love.** In the book of Ephesians, Paul 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."

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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."

Karen and I do several things to let each other know that we love one another. Every morning and every night, I tell her that I love her. That is the first thing she hears in the morning. Words are not enough. We serve one another. We lay our lives down for one another. We go out of our way to serve one another. Why? Because it communicates love. We also know of each other's love through our service to one another.

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. When you worship the Lord with all your heart, you know that you love God. When you honor your mother or father, you know that you love God. When you present your tithes and offerings to the Lord, you are loving God. When you confess your faults and pray for one another, you know that you are loving 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. When you observe the commandments of God, you are loving God.

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(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."

We know 1 Corinthians 13 as the chapter of love. The first three verses are about the surpassing value of love. The last few verses are about the duration of love. In the middle section, verses four through seven, Paul gives us the characteristics of love. These characteristics of love help us identify and know if we have love. God wants us to know what love is so that we can demonstrate love to one another.

I mentioned to you that Karen and I had done some marriage counseling with a couple that had stated that they loved each other, but they could not live with one another. As I went through verses four through seven with them, item by item, they discovered that they had not been loving one another. Let's look at these fifteen characteristics.

(1 Corinthians 13:4-7) "Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, {5} does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, {6} does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; {7} bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

Love is patient. We know our love for others by our patience with them. We know their love to us or lack of love towards us by their patience or impatience.

Love is kind. We can show love to someone by being kind to them. They will know our love by our kindness. Paul wrote that it is the kindness of God that leads us to repentance. We try to show God's kindness to people, because it is that kindness that leads to repentance. We pray for people's eyes to be open so that they can see His kindness.

(Romans 2:4) "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"

Love is not jealous. You know if you are envious or jealous of people, you are not walking in love. Ask God for more love for that person. Envy and jealousy will damage relationships. Again, jealousy is just a characteristic to let us know if we have love.

Love does not brag. If I brag, I am not walking in love. If someone is always bragging to you, that person is not walking in love. Love does not boast.

Love is not arrogant. Arrogant people do many things that reveal arrogance. Probably one of the most obvious signs of arrogance is a critical spirit. Arrogant people are always finding fault with others. Nothing anyone else does measures up in their eyes. They see what people are doing wrong. They are above others, and so they must look down at others. They act as judges. We must learn to encourage others, not judge them. Arrogant people expect others to serve them. We must learn to serve others, not expect them to serve us. We must learn to look out for the interest of others, not just our own interests. If we are arrogant, we are not walking in love. Arrogance is just a characteristic in our science lab to let us know if this is love or something else.

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Love does not act unbecoming. Do my actions make me more becoming and attractive or less becoming? Do your actions make others want to be around you, or to avoid you? People like to be around people full of joy. People like to be around encouragers. People like to be around kind people. People like to be around gentle and humble people. Again, the characteristic of becoming or unbecoming is to help us identify love.

Love does not seek its own. I think that this is one of the biggest hindrances in relationships. Selfishness destroys relationships. We must learn to consider others more important than ourselves. We must learn to look out for the interests of others, not merely our own interests. For others to identify us as being people who love one another, we must be a people that do not seek our own. We must be an unselfish people. Others will know our love when they see us acting unselfishly.

Love is not provoked. One time I was having a discussion with a pastor in Atlanta, and I became very provoked. The man was misusing Scripture. He was saying some very harsh and unkind things. He was making some very wrong judgments and I became provoked. I did not do anything outwardly to show my provocation, but I was internally provoked. The Lord convicted me of my lack of love for this man. I apologized to the man for being provoked. I said that I was not walking in love. I asked him to forgive me. I said nothing of all the wrongs that this man was doing. I repented for my wrong attitude. I was not walking in love. Love is not provoked. We know if we have love by this characteristic.

Love does not take into account a wrong suffered. If you have forgiven someone, you should not take into account a wrong suffered. If you are taking into account a wrong, ask God to help you. You will know if you have love by whether you take into accounts a wrong suffered.

Love covers a multitude of sins. Peter tells us to keep fervent in our love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. A fervent love does not take into account a wrong suffered, but keeps covering sins. Again, this is a way for us to know love.

(1 Peter 4:8) "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins."

Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness. Love rejoices in righteousness. Do you rejoice in doing things that are unrighteousness. We know love by this, that we rejoice in righteous things, not unrighteousness.

Love rejoices with truth. The couple that said that they loved one another, but could not live together, constantly accused the other person of lying. Both of them lied to one another. Neither one rejoiced in truth. Love rejoices in truth, even if it requires us to humble ourselves and admit our wrongdoings. We know love by our commitment to truth.

Love bears all things. Love does not bear a few things, but all things. We can know if we have love for someone by whether we are willing to bear all things with the person.

Love believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. If we believe, hope, and endure all things, it shows our love. Does someone believe in you? Does someone hope all things for you? If not, they do not love you. You can know love by whether they believe and hope all things for you.

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All fifteen of these characteristics of love are given to help us identify and know if we have love or if someone else has love. God wants us to know His love. God wants us to know if we are walking in that love for one another. Therefore, we have the love lab to help us identify these characteristics of the love rock. We want to know that this is a love rock.

- 3. We can measure our 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 and 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 God's 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 3:14-19) "For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father...{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."

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!" They did not quantitatively measure Jesus' love, but they measured His love. 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.

(John 11:32-36) "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!""

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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[^] to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said[^] to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said[^] to him, "Tend My lambs." {16} He said[^] to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said[^] to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said[^] to him, "Shepherd My sheep." {17} He said[^] 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[^] to him, "Tend My sheep."

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

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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. 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. We can grow in our love. Love is not static. It is something that can grow or diminish. It can increase and it can decrease. In Paul's prayer to the Thessalonians, he says that their love was growing toward one another. May the same be said of our church, that we are growing in our love towards one another.

(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;"

In Revelations, the Lord reproved the church at Ephesus for leaving their first love. He said 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 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. He wants His government to increase. Isaiah tells us there is no end to the increase of the government of God.

(Isaiah 9:7a) "There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace."

In Matthew 13, we find that the mustard seed increased until it became a haven for the birds. We find

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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.

“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. Father I ask You to help us grow in our love for You. May this coming year be a year that we greatly grow in our measure of love for You and for one another. Amen.”

5. We can abide in love. Love is not just something that we can possess, know, measure and grow in; it is something that we can abide and dwell in it. 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 in His love.

(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. We abide in His love when we keep His 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 worshiping 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."

B. We abide in His love when we love our 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.

(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."

Later, John clarifies what loving our brother is. He says that loving our brother is not just with word or tongue, but in deed and by giving up worldly possessions to meet those needs. If we have worldly goods and see a brother in need and close our hands, we are not abiding in God’s love.

(1 John 3:17) "But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes

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his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?"

John goes on to say that as we love one another, God's love is perfected in us. Our love matures and becomes complete when we love one another.

(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."

C. **We abide in His love when we confess 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."

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.

D. **We abide in His love when we walk in the Spirit.** Because God wants us to confirm to us when we are abiding in Him, He has given us His Spirit. John says that 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 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."

In the next chapter John repeats this thought. He says, "by this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us His Spirit." The Holy Spirit's activity in our lives shows that we are abiding in Him and in His love.

(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."

There should be evidence in our lives of the work of the Holy Spirit. His Spirit bears 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. There should be evidence in our lives of the fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

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(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 love 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."

When I won the Tallahassee Open in 1995, Nike gave me a beautiful NIKE jacket. I have it in my possession. I own it. The President of NIKE gave it to me. I know that I have it. I know its value. I can show you the jacket. I can measure it. It has already been measured and sized. It is a large. 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 knew 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.

- 7. We can overpower through love.** Love is stronger and more powerful than anything else. In the oil business, they use diamond impregnated bits to drill with. Diamonds are a harder material than almost any other rock formation, and will cut through those formations without being damaged. In 1970 a diamond bit costs about \$100,000.00, but it was worth that to oil companies because of the effectiveness of the bit.

Love is like a diamond bit. It is harder than fear. John tells us that there is no fear in love because perfect love casts out fear. The one who fears has not been perfected in love. Love is harder than fear. It cuts right through fear. It overcomes and casts out fear, because it is harder and more powerful.

(1 John 4:18) "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love."

We can know if we have been perfected in love by the amount of fear in our lives. If we live fearfully, we still have need to be perfected in love. If this powerful and hard element called love has done its work in our lives, fear will have been cast out of our lives.

Conclusion

Today, maybe the Lord has been speaking to you and helping you identify the characteristics of love. You may realize that you do not possess love. You have never come into a personal relationship with God. You do not have this perfect, agape-type, love. In 1993 my family was with me at the Canadian Open, which was held just outside of Toronto. In one of the family devotions that I did that week, I taught on love. The message I gave on love touched my daughter Laura. She realized that she did

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not have this love. She wanted to possess this agape love. She made a decision that evening to receive Christ into her life. If you have never received Christ into your life, you have never received His love. I encourage you this morning to receive Christ in your life by praying a prayer like this.

Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God. I believe that You came and died for my sins. I ask You to come into my life. I now confess You as Lord of my life. Thank You Jesus. Amen.

It is that simple. Salvation is not something that you have to worry about. It is not by good works. We receive Christ by faith. Paul says that by grace we have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. If you prayed that prayer in faith, You now have Christ inside of you. You have now received His love in Your life. You now possess love, and you can now give to others this same love you have just received.

(Ephesians 2:8-9) "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; {9} not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

This morning, you may have been able to identify and know love in new ways. If you have need to confess your lack of love to someone in your life, go to that person and ask them for forgiveness. You may be like me and see that you have been provoked, or have counted a wrongdoing against a person. Go and be reconciled to that person. Don't wait for them to repent for their wrongdoing. We must repent for our lack of love. Sense you can identify and know love, make a commitment to walk in love.

Some of you may see that your measure of love is not what it should be. Ask God to help you increase and grow in your love for Him and for others.

Others may realize that you have not been abiding in His love. Ask God for strength and help in abiding in His love. As a church, we want to abide and live in His love. We want people to see that this is an abode or place of love.

Others of you may want to make a commitment to hang love up in your closet so that the first thing you do every morning is to put it on. We need to put love on every day. We want to be clothed in love. We want people to be able to identify this love in us and know that it is available for them to have. They can put on this love, just like we put it on.

Let's pray.

INTRODUCTION (1 Tim 1:5)

1. We can _____ love. (1 Cor 13:1-3, 1 John 4:7-8, 4:19)

2. We can _____ love. (Eph 3:14-19, 1 John 3:16-18, 2 Cor 2:4, 1 John 5:1-3, 1 Cor 13:4-7, Rom 2:4, 1 Pet 4:8)

3. We can _____ our love. (Eph 3:14-21, John 15:13, 11:32-36, Prov 27:5, Rom 5:8, John 21:15-17, Luke 7:36-50)

4. We can _____ in our love. (2 Th 1:3)

5. We can _____ in love. (1 John 2:6)

A. We abide in His love when we _____ His commandments. (John 15:10)

B. We abide in His love when we _____ our brother. (1 John 2:10-11, 3:17, 4:12)

C. We abide in His love when we _____ Jesus is the Son of God. (1 John 4:15-16)

D. We abide in His love when we walk in the _____. (1 John 3:24, 4:13, Gal 5:22-23)

6. We can _____ _____. (Col 3:14)

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