

# MESSAGE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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Bill Search, Senior Pastor

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This week, Executive Pastor of Education, Bill Search, kicked off our new series, *Fruit of the Spirit*—nine characteristics displaying spiritual maturity as highlighted in the book of Galatians.

“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!” Galatians 5:22-23

The first fruit is “love.” This kind of love is translated from the Greek word *agape*. This love is the kind of love God has for us, and it is borne in us when we abide in him. As Bill said in his message, one definition of love is the “willful, whole-hearted expression that honestly wants what is best for another”—engaging both your mind and your heart. God’s very nature is love.

## SCRIPTURE

### 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-7

If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn’t love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn’t love others, I would be nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing.

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. <sup>6</sup> It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. <sup>7</sup> Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

### 1 JOHN 4:7-12

<sup>7</sup> Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

<sup>9</sup> God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. <sup>10</sup> This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

### MATTHEW 5:43-45

“You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. <sup>44</sup> But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! <sup>45</sup> In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven..

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out from Bill’s message?
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2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-7. According to this passage, what is love?
3. Take each of the definitions of love and describe what it looks like in people's lives.
4. Read 1 John 4:7-12 and Matthew 5:43-45. How should love be lived out with our Christian brothers and sisters and with those outside the church?
5. As you read through the passages on love, what convicted you? Encouraged you?
6. How can we pray for you?

## **PRAYER**

Thank God for sending his Spirit to live in us and produce fruit that can only come from abiding in him. Praise God for his nature and expression of love, and ask him to continue to nourish and grow you in spiritual maturity, living out love to "your neighbor" and to "your enemies."