

Fruit of the Spirit (Bible Study) - Love Ground

Last week we looked at the fruits being the Characteristics of God, and how He loves us so much that He gave us the **Fruit Inspection Test** to know if people are safe. This week we're going to talk about how love is the groundwork for all the good fruit, tie in what Jesus said about it, how Paul built on that ground, and even go back to Ezekiel. Jesus taught us the secret and we're going to dig in...

But first, homework! Did everyone think about the Fruit of the Spirit this week and do **Fruit Inspections**? Don't forget, "*Little fruit, big problems. Big fruit, little problems.*"

Let's quickly review **Galatians 5:22-23** and the **picture** of the offshoots.

²²**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,** ²³**gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.**

The Fruit of the Spirit is the Breath of God on your life. When you walk in the spirit, these characteristics don't just stay inside you. They emanate from God, through your spirit, and out for others to partake. This fruit is to share with others, not just something you grow for yourself. Have you ever been around someone or listened to someone speak and you just feel uplifted, encouraged, strengthened, or ready to conquer your mountain? That's **the Breath of God's Life feeding your spirit through that person**, the Fruit of the Spirit, the secret to why it's referred to as a food! It's spiritual food that you produce, because these characteristics can feed other people! It grows inside you and then emanates out of you. The fruit isn't imaginary strawberries, bananas, or an orange watermelon to make you think and reflect; **these are real traits of The Father that He Breathes in us.** We're to be so full of fruit that it flows out to minister for others to take. Does this make sense to everyone? I know this is a little bit of a new thought.

Love is the first fruit, but it's also your ground in which all fruit grow. Let's look at one of the most important scriptures concerning God's Character.

1 John 4:8 NKJV

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

That's a very powerful scripture. Christians love quoting, "*God is love*," but forget the first part is a very difficult saying. "*He who does not love does not know God.*" We're not going to camp on the issue of love, but meditate on this scripture this week making sure you love everyone so you can know God.

Let's take a look at judgement in **Matthew 7:23** NKJV

And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Lawlessness, the King James says, "*ye that work iniquity*," which means "*grossly unfair or grossly injustice*." That is the complete opposite of love. In the Greek, the word know is personally know or intimate knowledge. Write down what these scriptures are saying to us: **if you do not love, you don't personally know God and He doesn't personally know you!** This is why we talked about being Fruit Inspectors so much last week. We don't want to be found giving *lawless* ministers our support or a place in our lives. If they're non-ministers, we want to make sure our help is pleasing to the Lord.

God is love. God and His Word are one (John 1:1). We can read God in any scripture adding the meaning of love. Let's use the well-known



John 3:16 NKJV

For Love so loved the world that Love gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Love's Son, should not perish but have everlasting life.

Do you believe in Love (God) that begot Love (Jesus)? We were reborn by Love, now carrying the Spirit of Love in our spirit that thrives on love. We should remind ourselves that love is the very nature of God, and one step out of His love is one step away from Him. I know that sounds harsh, and hard to live by, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can do it. **But we must not TRY to love people, because it will never work.** Let's look at what the Word says.

Romans 5:5 NKJV

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

He *already poured* His love out in each Christian. It's not that you're going to get it one day, you already have it. Going back to last week, Paul told us to just do it in **Galatians 5** and called it *walking in the spirit*, because your spirit is reborn by Love into a Love Covenant (new commandment-love). That's exactly how we do it, choose it. **Choose Love, it's choosing God.** The more you choose God's Love, the greater He can Breathe His Breath into your life. Let's take a couple quick looks at some scripture, because this is a new thought and it might feel too far out for you.

Romans 6:23 NKJV

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let's read it this way, "*For the payment of sin is death, but The Gift of Love is eternal life in The Anointed One, Love's Son, Our Loving Lord.*" **Love is life, sin is death.** We won't go there, but Jesus gave us a new commandment to love (**John 13:34**). Write this down: **When we choose not to love, we're asking for a payment of death;** reaping a bad harvest. Deuteronomy 27 and 28, we don't have time to go over it, talks about cursing and blessing. If you're not familiar with the curse and the blessing, take a note to go over it later. The Lord lays it out to Israel, and to us, very clearly that obeying His Law, or better translated Teachings, brings blessing. Long life is one of God's blessings. Let's go to one of the scriptures really quick, in the **91st Psalm**, a really great Psalm to memorize.

Psalms 91:14-16 NKJV

¹⁴"Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. ¹⁵He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. ¹⁶With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation."

When we choose His Love, His Nature, we're asking for Him to Breathe that eternal life in our ground and mortal bodies. There's always a reward here on Earth and in Heaven for choosing love; when you don't want to and especially when you're innocent and wrong has been done to you. I want to encourage you to take in the healing gift of love as opposed to repaying sin for sin and losing that stronger Breath of Life from the Heavenly Father.

This study on love can go on and on, but for time's sake, let's jump over to see what Jesus had to say about our dirt. He started to teach us, and Paul later expounded on Jesus' teaching which we'll look at next. You can go back when you have time and read The Parable of the Sower in **Matthew 13:1-9**. We're going straight to Jesus' explanation to the disciples.

Matthew 13:18-23 Original Hebrew

¹⁸Therefore you must hear (meaning hear and understand) the parable of him who sows. ¹⁹He who sows is the preacher. And the seed is the word of YHWH (Yahweh, Jehovah, The Father). He who hears the word of YHWH but does not understand it – Ha-Satan (the devil) comes and uproots it from his heart. And this is the seed that fell close to the road. ²⁰And that which fell between the stones is he who hears the word of YHWH and receives it with joy, ²¹however, he does not have a root and dries up quickly, for



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through indignant (cursing) speech they are immediately confused. ²²That which fell between the thorns, is he who hears the word of YHWH, but he has sighings (worries) about this world – to gather, and it strangles some of the word of YHWH which was sown in his heart, and it does not produce fruit. ²³But that which fell in the good ground, is he who understands the word of YHWH, and obeys it, and produces fruit and good works, one has a hundred, and one fifty, and one thirty.”

I really like the Original Hebrew writing, because we can see exactly what Jesus is teaching. There are so many good points in this passage, but for our purposes we want to focus just on the GROUND. I want you to note in these verses that **Jesus called the ground the heart**, because it's all connected. This is what Paul later built on with the fruit.

♥**The first ground** had the seed fall by the road. The road here represents various people coming and going, traffic, different messages/opinions which can cause confusion or the preacher, himself, being confused. This allows the enemy to come along, steal the message of the Word, and make sure it doesn't produce fruit. **We must make sure when we're listening to messages from various ministers, we don't take in everything everyone of them says without checking in with the Bible and Holy Spirit, not our thinking.**

Back in Jesus' day, the religious leaders read scripture to the people and then they promptly taught contrary to it. They had their own traffic! Many of those Jewish religious teachings are still being practiced today. One common made-up Jewish rule that you'll see almost every Jew follow is that **the name of God is too holy to say or write**. That is not Biblical! They made the rule up not long after Jesus was seated at the right hand of the Father, and taught Christians to follow their rule. That is why our Bibles translate basic generic names like Lord God for Jehovah (Yahweh, Yehovah, whatever way you like). We all know God is a very generic word. Lord is a title used by the English to mean *master of the house, ruler, or superior*, all titles for men. The word lord comes from an Old English word that meant loaf of bread, but was used in the sense of bread winner. But the truth is that Rome told the Jews to stop saying His name, because they wanted Jehovah to be just another god. Rome started killing the Jews for saying Jehovah, and that was their response to appease Rome and stop being killed. According to a Jewish scholar, they figured the Messiah would come and sort the situation out later. **This made-up rule affects our Bibles today and many Christians don't know God, The Father, has a Name.** Can you see some ancient traffic on our own road and how important it is to put a Road Closed sign on contradictions?

Today, our problem is worse! A quick Google search reveals that there are 4,500 denominations of Christians globally. Can we agree that's a lot of traffic coming and going by the road? Even if that's only half true, that's still an astounding number. I think we can agree that not all 4,499 denominations are accurate. Again, we don't need to yell false teaching at 4,499 of them, just check the scriptures and check in with the Holy Spirit.

Paul explains another secret to this ground later, when the Jews became Holy Spirit filled Christians and could better understand.

Ephesians 3:17-19 NKJV

¹⁷that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— ¹⁹to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

If you're rooted and grounded in the love of Christ, you'll be able to understand, NOT LOSE YOUR WORD SEED, with the other Christians the deep love of God which will intern give you knowledge and the ability to be filled to the top with God's Character, His Anointing, His Ability, His Gifts, and so on. LOVE keeps the seed from being stolen. **If I lost you, let me put this more simply: Choosing love stops the works of the flesh and confusion. Choosing to listen to a love preacher stops your ground from being sifted through by an enemy. Recognizing love on the seed sower, and only listening to love sowers prevents confusion. LOVE understands LOVE. Love doesn't confuse. God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33).**

Back up to Jesus speaking...

♥**The second ground is stoney ground.** These people have stones in their ground from cursing, so the Word doesn't produce fruit. He's talking about cursing, not cussing. **What's cursing your own ground?** Speaking contrary to scripture, the Word of God. John revealed to us that Jesus is the Word and Paul revealed to us that Jesus is the Head of the Church. We ought not speak against Him! **You may not be able to believe something written in the Bible, but don't curse it.** Christians curse their own dirt and other people's dirt all the time!

Merriam-Webster defines **curse** as, "**a prayer or invocation for harm or injury to come upon one.**" That's exactly what speaking against love is all about, cursing yourself, others, and God. In the spiritual realm, **it's either of God or of the enemy**. There is no grey area; idle words aren't ok (**Matthew 12:36**). We were all guilty of this at some point. But those curses made stones in our love ground and choked the Word out. We probably didn't even realize it or remember what we said.

Many times, through the years, a Christian gets a bad report from the doctor and comes to church for prayer. Inevitably, another Christian will pipe up and start spouting off how their aunt/cousin/father had that and died. Sometimes they even add how they prayed and the person died anyway, oh you're so doomed. *After they curse you, they want to pray, and with the most passion too!!* The Bible doesn't say her cousin's uncle's former roommate that had it died and you have to die too. **When people spew a curse, they open themselves up to judgement.** Curses kill people. We don't have time to go over it here, but carefully read Numbers 22-24. God *had* to save Israel from a curse. There's confusion about not being able to curse what God has blessed, that's in Numbers. After reading the entire story, I don't see that. First, God *did* have to deliver Israel from a curse. Secondly, we are born again and have the Holy Spirit, so **it works differently for us**. When someone speaks a curse over you, if you fear it or have any belief that it could happen, you can put stones in your ground that choke the Word. Having the Holy Spirit in us, we have to give the curse place to produce. We just read how Jesus said you can't produce good fruit in a cursed ground. **How do you deal with sister curses-a-lot?** Same way Jesus did the devil, swing the sword, use the Word. Don't let people cursing you linger around in your heart, deal with it immediately.

Psalm 118:17 NKJV

I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.

What are some other ways Christians curse their own ground? (Take answers if you can)

- God's keeping me poor. *We don't have a scripture for that!*
- God primarily heals through doctors. *We don't have a scripture for that!*
- My marriage isn't working out because we started wrong. *We don't have scripture God won't forgive that!*
- God is teaching me a lesson through sickness/car accident/suffering. *We don't have a scripture for that!*
- Sometimes God says yes, sometimes no, and sometimes wait. *We don't have a scripture for that!*

All of these curses are based on life experiences and not scripture. Also, be mindful of what Christian shows you watch. Christian TV can wreck your ground worse than an R-rated comedy. How? A TV-Jesus character said the line, "*I only heal new converts.*" **We don't have a scripture for that!** How many people watched that and believe it? How many people lost hope? How many people cursed their own ground by believing a TV-Jesus as opposed to the Word? An R-rated comedy *isn't* teaching the gospel but probably a good example of the days of Noah.

(If someone says, "**JOB**," Job happened to Job because he was afraid. He said his fears came upon him, which is why we don't let curses people speak over us and fear to linger.)

Write this down: We can **NEVER out believe God.** Your faith can never exceed God's willingness and ability to perform. If the Word says it, we need to believe it, and stop going by experiences. We accidentally do this all the time, and it's very difficult to stop doing, I know. We're accidentally cursing our own ground, and **this ground is poisoned love**.

♥**The third ground** is described as worry, a form of fear, that grows thorns very well. You may have heard it said, “*a little fear is good.*” **No!** Fear is having faith in something bad happening; a little faith in “*steal, kill, and destroy*” is not ok.

2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

All these words in this scripture are connected. Fear causes weakness, works of the flesh, and a mind that has no peace and quiet. We're given a love ground to grow good things, instead of fear that produces thorns to the point you can't receive the Word.

(Share a story about unrealistic fear gripping someone. If you need a story, my true one is below.)

This is a real story about someone who overcame fear:

I used to be so full of fear over loose dogs that I could feel my heart not beating properly. Yes, I had some dog biting incidents as a child, but I was completely gripped by fear as an adult that I froze and couldn't even breathe. In my mind, every dog wanted to bite me and kill me. I couldn't see a happy playful dog or puppy. All I could see was a murdering beast running at me teeth first, sometimes with cute fur as a weapon of distraction. You could have quoted scripture to me, you could have preached to me, prayed for me, drew pictures, told testimonies, tried to make me pet *your* dog, but I couldn't see anything different and refused to even listen! My fear *altered reality*. I've been set free from fear. Now, as I share what God has done for me, I am petting a very cute doggy that's trying to nap after his smoked turkey and bulgur wheat breakfast. Yes, he's a very spoiled family member.

Really quick, let's talk about how to over come fear and uproot any thorns you may have.

Write this scripture reference down to mediate on this coming week, **Hebrews 3:14-15** NKJV

¹⁴Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Fear of death creates a bondage. **Write this down: all fear is rooted in the fear of death.** The more you meditate on this, you'll see it's true. Fear of being sick and sickness, even the “*common cold*” is a form of death. While you may not die, it weakens the body which is how death takes hold. Fear of dogs, fear of pain and being bit, which is another form of death. Yes, I understand, your head wants to say no, it's not death at all. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you this revelation, because it's the key to your freedom. Because some fears, like being alone, are a form of death you don't think of because death is separation from life. **Your fears can't control any situation or improve any situation.** No one has ever said, “*I'm so glad I had that second massive panic attack.*” No, people take medication to stop panic attacks, because they're tormenting. If you think this is way too wild, John makes all these points completely clear.

1 John 4:18 NKJV

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

Write this scripture reference down, for meditating (just means to think about) this week, **1 John 4:18**. It's a very important scripture and worth memorizing, not just for yourself but your loved ones and those that you will minister to in the future.

Again, **fear is poisoned love**. Fear has torment. Perfect love is the antidote for fear. Back up to what the writer of the Book of Hebrew said, “**through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.**”

The quick answer how to get set free, unless the Lord leads us to camp out on this point, is in these scriptures we read. Jesus destroyed the power of death. He gave us the authority over death (**Luke 10:19**), so it's our job to enforce this in our own lives. Dealing with fear of death is twofold, there are parts. First part is to deal with the root and the second part is to resist it. Don't rub elbows with it, don't commune with it, don't give it a place to squat, don't talk about it, don't write poems, don't paint pictures (some people do), don't find special names

for it, don't find a support group, or give it some crackers and a warm blanket to settle in for the long haul. Stand your ground in faith! Fear must go! *"No, that will not happen to me! The Word says...."*

Let's break this down into a real example. Recognize where and how the fear is rooted. If you don't deal with the root of the thorn, it's like cutting the weed off from what's sticking out of the ground and saying, *"all gone!"* We all know it's not dead, and it's coming back. Right? For example, we'll use dogs. The fear isn't exactly the dog itself, it's based on losing chunks of flesh, pain, and great blood loss. That's death! The dog is just what was going to carry out the action. Once you see where the fear is rooted, mediate on God's love. **God either loves you or He doesn't.** Mediate on these thoughts, *"God loves me enough to warn me if there is any harm, redirect me, and keep me safe. He's given His angels charge over me."* Psalm 91 is great Psalm to read every day while you're strengthening your spirit. **Often times, we have to build up faith in God's love to push these thorns out. Don't just keep praying asking God to do it!! It's our job.** He's already defeated death. Don't ask Him to do it again. The Bible says in...

1 Corinthians 15:26 NKJV

The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

Revelation 20:14 NKJV

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

We all know Jesus defeated death, but death is still here obviously. It's our job not to allow death in our lives to meddle or to rule over us. Back to our dog, fear doesn't keep you safe from dogs. Matter of fact fear will make it worse, because they can smell the hormonal change in your body. Someone might come up to you and say, *"Well, I know someone that was attacked by a dog and had to have 5 surgeries."* I don't care who they know! If you're walking in love, scripture is in your heart, and you're putting fear out, it's impossible to fail. Only God knows what was in their heart, the direction they missed, and who they did and didn't forgive. We can't go by a friend's neighbor's little girl, whose parent's didn't teach her, tried to pet a dog with a sticky hand going right at the dog's eye; their mean aunt who looked like a porkchop and her husband was happy it bit her in the butt; their cousin's son who was smoking marijuana and thought the dog was *totally chill*; and their co-workers' stories of people that *may or may not* even exist!! The fact that the fear monger feels completely comfortable speaking fear over you is an indicator their love walk isn't where it should be, and whomever they deem *"a good Christian"* should be ignored. Yes, that's harsh, but fear can kill you and they are on death's side!! **Fear weakens your immune system and causes many other health problems, even to a young healthy person.** You don't have to be mean to the fear monger, but you can quote a personalized part of **Psalm 91**, *"a thousand may fall at my side, and ten thousand at my right hand; but it shall not come near me."*

That already started into our second part of breaking free from fear of death, *resist it*. Don't let it plant itself into your life, use what God gave you. He defeated the devil, don't let anything come back stomping around. Swing your sword, *"No! I will not be attacked by the neighbor's dog. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7). I'm pleasing to the Lord, so I have favor with the neighbor's dog, he likes me (Proverbs 16:7)!"* It may sound silly, but you need to swing your sword like Jesus did to defeat the devil. The power of death is of the devil, and the power of death and life is in your tongue (Proverbs 18:21). Speak out loud against whatever fear has tried to come against you.

We ALL deal with fear, unless we dealt with fear. No one escapes it. **Fear hijacks your ground and uses it to produce thorns to poison your ground. Fear is a squatter!** No squatters allowed.

♥**The fourth and final ground** is the love ground. Let's go back to...

Ephesians 3:17-19 NKJV

¹⁷that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— ¹⁹to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Love will give you the ability to understand the Word, produce fruit, AND good works 100 times, 50 times, and 30 times. Again, order is important. What Jesus is saying is if you have a ground of love, and hear a message about the Word it's easy to produce 100 times fruit with good works. The key here is the love ground, understanding the Word, and obeying the Word that will determine your production. Good ground with the planted Word will always produce something good!

Let's jump back to the Old Testament to see this *love ground* has been a plan of God's all along, and then we'll end for the week.

Remember earlier we read that Jesus in **Matthew 13** was referring to the heart as ground,

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV

²⁶I will give- you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

The word **flesh** in Hebrew is **basar** and also means person or body. The heart of stone Jesus talked about was cursing; anti-love, or speaking against the Word. That's exactly what Israel kept doing to sin against God, speaking against God and Moses in the dessert, going after idols (demons), and even defiling the temple (2 Chronicles 33). The Lord reveals to Ezekiel that He will put the Holy Spirit within us, which gives us the ability to walk in the spirit. When we received our new heart, born again, we received His Love being poured out in our heart by The Holy Spirit (**Romans 5:5**). Of course you can still put stones in your heart, but you won't have a **heart of stone** or **complete ground of stone** like the Old Testament Israelites did. The love ground was God's plan all along. It's what Breathes Life into everything.

We will close for this week. I really wanted to spend some time showing you that the ground is your heart, which is actually love and the fruit. Love will grow the other fruit, or better said Characteristics, and other seeds that you plant. **Galatians 5:6**, says that faith works by love, because it's planting your faith mustard seed into your love ground so your faith will grow (**Matthew 17:20**). It's all connected.

I want to close with this last scripture, which we all know, so we'll look in the Amplified.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 AMP

⁴Love endures with patience and serenity, love is kind and thoughtful, and is not jealous or envious; love does not brag and is not proud or arrogant. ⁵It is not rude; it is not self-seeking, it is not provoked [nor overly sensitive and easily angered]; it does not take into account a wrong endured. ⁶It does not rejoice at injustice, but rejoices with the truth [when right and truth prevail]. ⁷Love bears all things [regardless of what comes], believes all things [looking for the best in each one], hopes all things [remaining steadfast during difficult times], endures all things [without weakening].

Write this down: Love is joyfully choosing to take the best action to promote the welfare of others.

That's a simple way to memorize and do a self-check if you're choosing love or not. When you think about love and the fruit this week, you'll start to see that **Fruit of the Spirit is mature love**.

Next week, we will continue on to the next characteristic of God, joy, and how to produce it. That will be a fun week with some fun homework!

Homework

- Meditate on **1 John 4:8** - He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
- Ask the Holy Spirit, your Helper, if you have poisoned your love ground and how to clean it
- Deal with confusion, cursing, and fear this week
- Meditate on **Hebrews 3:14-15**, fear of death causes bondage; and **1 John 4:18**, perfect love casts out fear
- Read the easy definition of love and remind yourself to choose love, because it's choosing God (Joyfully choosing to take the best action to promote the welfare of others)

Prayer Points:

- Father, we ask in the name of Jesus, that You show us how to clean up our grounds. If we have any bad seeds, bad roots, weeds, or rocks in our ground, please show us how to remove them immediately.
 - Father, we ask that You forgive us for any step outside of love that we have taken. We forgive everyone, even those we claimed we wouldn't ever forgive.
 - Please forgive us for the cursings that we remember and even the ones that we don't. Cancel any bad harvest that we might have been growing. Wash us in the blood of Jesus.
 - Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Fire, we ask that you burn up everything bad in our ground, even any bad agreements we have made, so that we can produce fruit 100 times with good works.
 - Thank You Father for loving us, giving us Jesus, and The Holy Spirit. Thank You for continuing to show us how to be the 100 times fruit producers.
- In Jesus Name, Amen.