



# Oologah observer

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” Matthew 28:20

**Church of Christ • 13800 S. 4080 Road • P.O. Box 527 • Oologah, Oklahoma 74053**

## “LOVE”

*The First Characteristic of “the Fruit of the Spirit”*

Chuck Northrop

The fruit of the Spirit is the product of the Spirit produced by or through His Word. The singular fruit is contrasted with the multiple facets of “the works of the flesh.” Furthermore, it is characterized by: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:22-23). These are not separate fruits but are characteristics of the one “fruit of the Spirit.” A person may speak about a juicy red apple. As a result, a listener will recognize juicy and red are characteristics of the apple. These characteristics describe the fruit. The same is true with the fruit of the Spirit, and the first descriptive characteristic which Paul ascribed to this marvelous fruit is love.

As Paul described the fruit of the Spirit, he began with the most prevalent characteristic. It stands loftily above the others. Love stands in the heights because it directly stems from God. John wrote, “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” (1 John 4:16). Furthermore, love stands exalted because all the other traits of the beautiful fruit of the Spirit stem from the first attribute — love.

In Koiné Greek of the first century, there were four different words translated love. The word used in Galatians 5:22 is AGAPE (ἀγάπη). This love is sacrificial and seeks the highest good for its object. It is more than mere emotions and affections for it is projected from the intellect. While mere emotions and affections are extinguished because of hatred, sin, and wickedness, AGAPE love is willing to give of itself. “But God commendeth his love toward

us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Thus, it is a love not simply of words and tongue, but of deeds and truth (1 John 3:18). The best definition of this word is found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 which says, “Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth...”

When asked “which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:36-39). From these verses, there are three proper recipients of love.

**First and Foremost, Men Are to Love God.** “We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Earlier in the same chapter, John explained how God manifested His love towards us. John wrote, “God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him” (1 John 4:9). Certainly, this is not the only way God demonstrates His love. “He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25). Men are living beings because of Him. He also gave all men His word in order for people to know how to gain eternal life and how to live a happy and fulfilled life in this world. Because God gives humanity so much, and because all mankind is fully dependent upon Him, every person ought to love Him above all else. People are to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. “This is the first commandment” (Mark 12:29,30). In the context, the heart is the center of the emotions. Love is an emotion, and man’s love towards God should reflect our deepest emotion. The soul is a person’s spiritual nature, his inner being. Man’s love towards God should stem from his inner most being. The mind is the center of the intellect. Though love is an emotion, it is more than just an emotion. A person’s love toward God is actions based upon the knowledge of God and His will. Finally, the strength is a person’s physical being. Humanity use their bodies in our various expressions of love such as a gentle touch, a kind word, and a kiss. In expressing love to God, men should use “the fruit of our lips” to offer the sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13:15), our holy hands lifted up in prayer (1 Timothy 2:8), and our feet to take the gospel into all the world (Matthew 28:18,19; Romans 10:15). All in all, Jesus commanded all mankind to love God with their entire being.

**Second, Men Are to Love Their Neighbors.** One of the most obvious questions which arises is “Who is my neighbor?” To answer this question, Jesus related the story of the good Samaritan who helped a man who fell into the hands of thieves and was left half dead (Luke 10:29-37). While lying there, a priest and a Levite saw him but passed him by on the other side. Thankfully, a compassionate and benevolent Samaritan saw him, helped him, and provided for him. To answer the question, Jesus pointedly asked, “Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?” The answer provided

was, “He that shewed mercy on him.” In the end, men ought to understand a neighbor is a person who shows mercy. In application, Jesus said, “Go, and do thou likewise.” Thus, a neighbor would include our enemies (Matthew 5:44), our fellow man (Ephesians 5:1-2), and our brethren (1 John 4:20). In fact, love should be a distinctive mark of God’s people. Jesus taught, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). Good reader, this is a serious matter! John in his first epistle wrote, “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:8). In context, John wrote about man’s love one for another and made this application, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another” (1John 4:11)

**Finally, Men Are to Love Themselves.** Though some have placed far too much emphasis on self-love, the principle is still taught. Certainly, a person must be on guard not to love self more than he should and not to love self above others. Nevertheless, a person cannot love his neighbor as himself without loving himself. In Ephesians 5:29, Paul wrote, “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.” A general principle was clearly stated. Though there are exceptions, generally speaking a person does not hate his own flesh. Paul applied this general principle to marriage. Men ought to love their wives as their own bodies (Ephesians 5:28,33), and the man who neglects his wife, neglects himself. Instead of hating one’s own flesh, a person nourishes and cherishes it. Nourish in this verse means to nurture or bring it up. The the same word is translated “nurture” in Ephesians 6:4. Cherish means to warm or keep warm, to foster with tender care. Thus, people should love themselves by nourishing and cherishing themselves.

Love is the great motivator. Because of God’s love, He sent His Son into the world and to die for the sins of mankind. John wrote, “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein 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 4:9-10). First, His love should motivate men to love Him. “We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Second, His love should motivate men to obey Him. Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Furthermore, Paul wrote a working faith is to be motivated by love. “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love” (Galatians 5:6). In fact, anything a person does, if it is not motivated by love, it is empty and profitless to self (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

The greatest expression of love is for “a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). Each person ought to realize Jesus spoke about His own sacrifice for mankind. With such in mind, listen to the application, “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16). “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

## *Observations and Concerns*

May 8, 2024

**Welcome Visitors!** Thank you for coming our way!

**Praise in Psalm:** “Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth” (Psalm 108:5).

**Declaration of Appreciation:** We are thankful for the prayers offered up on behalf of those who are in poor health.

**Roy Goddard** will be our guest speaker Sunday morning. He is from the Bible Institute of Missouri.

There will be **no potluck** this Sunday.

This coming Lord’s Day is the second Sunday of the month, and our **evening worship service** will be at 2:00 PM.

**VBS** – June 9-12, 2024. This year’s theme is “**Jesus: Eternal God.**”

This year’s Summer Series theme is “**Beatitudes of the Old Testament.**”

There is a **thank you note** from Sherry Carmona on the bulletin board in the foyer.

There are several sign up sheets on the bulletin board with opportunities to serve.

**Remember in Prayer:**

- ▶ **Jim Allison** has a tumor on his neck. A biopsy will follow the removal of the tumor.
- ▶ **Andy Hudson** is suffering with gout and not able to be with us this past Lord’s Day.
- ▶ **Pat Taylor** is scheduled to have surgery on her carotid artery on May 14<sup>th</sup>.
- ▶ **Glen Beaman**, brother of Dicie Jackson, is scheduled for surgery on May 13<sup>th</sup> for prostate cancer.
- ▶ **Patricia Harris**, friend of Pat Taylor, is suffering with cancer and is on hospice.
- ▶ **Karen & John Hughs**, friends of the Hudsons, are having medical issues and other struggles.
- ▶ **Steve Shaffer**, friend of the Dilks, is preparing for back surgery.

Schedule of Services	Assignments		
	Wednesday, May 8	Sunday, May 12 AM	Sunday, May 12 PM
Sundays			
Bible Classes . . . . . 9:30 AM	Chuck Northrop	Chris Nelson	Doyle Jackson
Worship . . . . . 10:30 AM	Chuck Northrop	Chris Nelson	Doyle Jackson
Worship . . . . . 5:00 PM (except 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday – 2 PM)	Doyle Jackson	Ross Swearingen	Bill Dilks
Wednesdays			
Bible Classes . . . . . 7:00 PM	Chuck Northrop	Chuck Northrop	Chris Nelson
Website: oologahcofc.org	Doyle Jackson	Doyle Jackson	Doyle Jackson
	Lesson	Bill Dilks	Roy Goddard
	Prayer	Ross Swearingen	Chris Nelson
	Prayer	Bill Dilks	Ross Swearingen
	Door Attendant	Ross Swearingen	Chris Nelson
	Door Attendant	Chris Nelson	Ross Swearingen