

Fruit of the Spirit: Love

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[0 : 00] Tonight we'll look deeper into the fruit of the Spirit, studying the first of the nine characteristics The Holy Spirit within believers battles our worldly desires and enables us to become more and more like Christ.

For our studies in this section so far, we've read all of the verses each time. Tonight let's just read the verses referencing the fruit of the Spirit. So these are Galatians 5, 22 and 23.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Against such things there is no law. Even though we will just be looking at one characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit tonight, we must remember that the fruit is singular.

The fruit Paul mentions in Galatians 5 consists of all nine characteristics rather than just a subset of those nine. To remind us of the context, here's a quick review of what we've seen in verses 16 through 23 of Galatians 5.

[1 : 33] Verses 16 through 18 included Paul's command. The command is to walk by the Spirit. Paul's talking about a daily pattern or lifestyle.

Verse 17 explained why walking by the Spirit can be difficult for the believer. Here is Galatians 5, 17. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh.

For these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. The sinful nature of still residing in each true believer fights against the Spirit every day.

We become more like Christ when we do more of the fruit of the Spirit and less works of the flesh. True believers will yield to the Spirit within us as we become more and more sanctified.

We can never, though, achieve perfection in this life. The key is direction. In Galatians 5, 19 through 23, we have Paul's contrast, and these are the verses that we're still working through.

[2 : 39] By giving us several examples of each, Paul contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. We saw last week that the fruit of the Spirit listed here in Galatians is just part of the fruit mentioned in the Bible.

We looked at other Old and New Testament passages to see what the Bible says about fruit, including other examples of fruit. When we look at the biblical examples of fruit, we can categorize them into two types of fruit, attitude fruit and action fruit.

In the New Testament, such things as praise to the Lord, winning converts to Christ and godly work in general are spoken of as spiritual fruit that's produced through believers.

That's some of the action fruit, but the action fruit must come from attitude fruit. And attitude fruit is the kind of fruit that Paul focuses on in Galatians 5, 22 and 23.

If these attitudes are characteristic of a believer's life, the fruit of active good works will follow from those attitudes. As we look at the examples of attitude fruit in verses 22 and 23 of Galatians 5, we have to remember that attitude fruit is foundational to action fruit.

[4 : 00] Only fruit produced by having the proper attitude is acceptable to God. So here's that Galatians list of attitude fruit again. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Against such things there is no law. One of our first reactions likely is that living out all nine characteristics of the attitude fruit is difficult.

And it is difficult. In fact, it's impossible for us to do on our own. The only way that we can come close to demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit is to walk by the Spirit.

If you look at various commentaries on Galatians, you'll see considerable discussion about whether Paul purposefully listed the nine characteristics in a particular order or whether Paul grouped them

in a certain way.

John Stott believes that Paul intentionally ordered the list into related groups of three. Other commentators disagree with that view, but nearly every commentator agrees that Paul intentionally mentioned love first.

[5 : 16] We saw last week that love is the motivating principle of the other eight because love is the form that faith takes. Love gives rise to all the others. Before verse 22, Paul already had mentioned love a few times in Galatians 5.

Remember Galatians 5 verse 6. He said there, Then a few verses later, here's what he said in Galatians 5, 13 and 14.

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Because love is foundational to the Christian life, we'll spend all our time tonight on love.

And as we look at each characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit, we're going to look at it from four different angles. So the first thing we'll see tonight is the definition of love.

[6 : 28] Definition of love. We learned last week that the type of love that Paul listed here is agape love. Agape love is the form of love that most reflects personal choice, referring not simply to pleasant emotions or good feelings, but to willing, self-giving service.

Agape love is an attitude more than an emotion, and so that is why Paul listed love as part of the attitude fruit here. Paul gives us a longer definition of love in 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

We're going to read all of 1 Corinthians 13, so you may want to go ahead and turn there. Most of us are familiar with 1 Corinthians 13 from the context of Christian weddings.

Rarely do we go to a Christian wedding where nobody references this chapter. We do know that spouses should show this type of love to each other, but God expects all Christians to show this type of love to everyone.

It's not unique to spouses. So here is 1 Corinthians 13. Paul said, If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

[7 : 51] And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind.

Love does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful.

It does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away. As for tongues, they will cease. As for knowledge, it will pass away.

[8 : 51] For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child.

I thought like a child. I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.

Now I know in part, then I shall fully know. Even as I have been fully known. So now faith, hope, and love abide. These three, the greatest of these, is love.

So 1 Corinthians 13 defines love with a very high standard, and it shows the importance of love. Notice verse 2 again.

He said, And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

[9 : 56] So we see that prophetic powers, knowledge, and faith are meaningless without love. But if you look one chapter down in 1 Corinthians 14, Paul speaks of prophecy as the greatest of the spiritual gifts, because the prophet proclaims God's truth to people, so that they can know and understand God's truth.

We know that Paul himself was a prophet, and he had the highest regard both for the office and the gift of prophecy. Paul says that even the gift of prophecy, though, must be ministered in love.

The power behind what we say and do is our motive. If our motive is self-interest, praise, promotion, or personal advantage of any sort, our influence for the Lord will be undermined to that extent, no

matter how orthodox, persuasive, and relevant our words are, or how helpful our service seems to be.

Without the motivation of love in God's sight, we are only causing a lot of commotion. Similarly, even if we have all knowledge and complete faith, but apply either of those things without love, we fail to meet God's standard.

Jonah was an example of faith without love. Jonah had some of the strongest faith in the Old Testament. He first resisted the call to go to Nineveh because he hated the Ninevites.

[11 : 22] He knew that if he went to Nineveh, God would save people that Jonah hated. So listen to Jonah chapter 3, verse 4, all the way to Jonah 4, verse 3.

You'll hear what happened after Jonah finally arrived in Nineveh. You will also hear Jonah's reaction to what happened. So starting with Jonah 3, verse 4, it says, Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey.

And he called out, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them to the least of them.

The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, by the decree of the king and his nobles, let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything.

Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.

[12 : 42] Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger so that we may not perish. When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to the Lord and said, O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country?

That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish, for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and relenting from disaster.

Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live. Jonah was so lacking in love for others that he would rather have died than to have seen the Ninevites saved.

So you can see he had faith. He knew that God was going to save people, but he lacked love. So look back at 1 Corinthians 13 again. We can summarize 13.3 by saying that no matter what we do, our actions mean nothing if we do them without love.

[14 : 00] Then in verses 4-7, Paul says what love is and what love is not. You've probably heard that one way to test whether or not you love like you should love is to insert your own name into the places in verses 4-7 where love is mentioned.

I'm going to read the verses again doing that with my own name. As you listen to the verses silently insert your name where I say mine.

I also will be taking notes on who laughs when I say these things too. But here we go. Lee is patient and kind. Lee does not envy or boast.

Lee is not arrogant or rude. Lee does not insist on his own way. Lee is not irritable or resentful. Lee does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.

Lee bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. So how did you do on that test with your own name?

[15 : 09] If we're honest with ourselves, we all would have to admit that we failed to live up to any of those descriptions of love mentioned in those verses.

We may be good at hiding some of the negative aspects of our character to people, but we all at a minimum have had envious, boastful, arrogant, and rude thoughts.

At times, we've all insisted on our own way and have been irritable and resentful. And unfortunately, sometimes wrongdoing has made us happy. Even if other people never know that, God knows that. Those bad thoughts and attitudes point us back to the conflicts within us. And the bad thoughts and attitudes demonstrate the conflict between the flesh and the spirit.

Some of you know that several years ago I was one of the scout masters for a Boy Scout troop of mentally disabled men. Their chronological ages ranged from 20 to 60 years old, but mentally they

tested in the typical 12 to 17 year old range.

[16:20] And those scouts transferred to our troop when they wanted to continue in scouting, but they were too old to be in a traditional troop. At summer camp one year, one of the scouts tried to break our troop rule by trying to go back for a third helping of lunch.

And when I stopped him, he started yelling at me in the dining hall and all the other troops in the dining hall stopped to watch at what was going on. But after the other scout master and I told him about his punishment for disobeying and yelling, that scout spent the entire day and night trying to avoid his punishment.

And that punishment was only that we were going to tell his parents that he had disobeyed because he was convinced that his parents never knew that he ever broke any rules. So that night he asked me if he could say his prayers in front of me and it was the first and only time that he'd made such a request to do that.

But his prayer was a typical childlike prayer of God bless my parents and God bless my friends and he listed nearly everyone he knew by name. And then at the end he said, and God bless Lee and please forgive me for yelling at him even though he provoked me into it.

And reading the passage in 1 Corinthians it made me think of that night because we all have the tendency to blame others for provoking bad behavior in us. But when we are honest with ourselves we have to admit that our bad behavior comes from inside of us instead.

[17:56] The end of the 1 Corinthians passage reminds us of the priority of love and then it tells us that love will be what will endure. So now that we've seen the definition of love and now that we've been humbled by comparing ourselves to the 1 Corinthians 13 definition of love let's look at the demand for love.

The demand for love is your second blank. The Bible demands that we love God with self-sacrificial love and the Bible demands that we love other people.

with self-sacrificial love. Here are just a couple of familiar Old Testament passages. We've cited some of them as cross-references during our earlier Galatian studies.

And the first is Deuteronomy chapter 6 verses 4 through 6. So here are Deuteronomy 6 4 through 6. Hear O Israel the Lord our God the Lord is one.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might and these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

[19:07] So you notice that is a command there. Then the next is Leviticus chapter 19 verses 17 and 18. So here are Leviticus 19 17 and 18.

You shall not hate your brother in your heart but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor lest you incur sin because of him and you shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people but you shall love your neighbor as yourself I am the Lord.

The Jews tried to get around this passage by narrowly defining who the word neighbor referred to. And Jesus exposed the sin in that by using the parable of the Good Samaritan.

So let's go back to the New Testament and look at Luke chapter 10. We're going to read Luke 10 25 through 37. So starting with Luke 10 25 it says And behold a lawyer stood up to put him talking about Jesus to the test saying Teacher what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

He said to him what is written in the law how do you read it? And he answered you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself.

[20:34] And he said to him you have answered correctly do this and you will live. that he desiring to justify himself said to Jesus and who is my neighbor?

Let's pause there for a minute. A lawyer in biblical times was someone who knew Jewish law. This lawyer obviously understood his job description.

He fulfilled the knowledge part of that job description very well. He summarized the entire Jewish law in one sentence and that sentence was so good that Jesus approved of that summary.

But even with all of his knowledge the lawyer had the sense that something was missing for him to get eternal life. Look at verse 29 again. He said but he desiring to justify himself said to Jesus and who is my neighbor?

We know from our studies in Galatians that justification only comes from grace alone by faith alone in Christ alone. But this lawyer was like the false teaching Judaizers who were bothering the Galatians.

[21 : 40] This lawyer in Luke 10 thought he needed to do something to earn his justification. So let's read on in Luke 10. We'll restart in verse 30 and see how Jesus answered the question.

Jesus replied, a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and he fell among robbers who stripped him and beat him and departed leaving him half dead.

Now by chance a priest was going down that road and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite when he came to the place and saw him passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan as he journeyed came to where he was and when he saw him he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds pouring on oil and wine.

Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper saying, Take care of him and whatever more you need I will repay you when I come back.

[22 : 46] Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers? He said, the one who showed him mercy and Jesus said to him, you go and do likewise.

We could spend the remainder of the evening analyzing this parable alone, but suffice it to say that the Jews hated Samaritans perhaps even more than Jonah hated the Ninevites.

To a Jew the idea that a Samaritan would help a Jew after other Jews failed to help would be repulsive and the idea would be repulsive even though the good Samaritan was a fictional person in a parable.

The lawyer should have replied that loving someone like that was impossible for him to do on his own. We have no record of what the lawyer said after verse 37 nor do we know if the lawyer said anything at all.

What we know is that Jesus used the type of love demonstrated in the parable as the type of love that is characteristic of someone who has eternal life. Remember the lawyer's first question.

[23 : 52] Luke 10 25 is where he said teacher what shall I do to inherit eternal life? We also can look at other places in scripture to see the demand for sacrificial love.

So here are just a few more. Ephesians 5 1 says therefore be imitators of God as beloved children and then in verse 2 it says walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

So now let's go to Colossians chapter 3 verses 12 through 14. So here are Colossians 3 12 through 14. Put on then as God's chosen ones holy and beloved compassionate hearts kindness humility meekness and patience bearing with one another and if one has a complaint against another forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you so you also must forgive and above all these put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

then we're all familiar with 1st John 4 7 through 12 listen to what John said in 1st John 4 7 through 12 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

[25 : 38] In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us. A little further down in 1 John 4, listen to 1 John 4, 19-21.

We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, I love God and hates his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

And this commandment we have from him, whoever loves God must also love his brother. Notice the wording of 1 John 4, 21.

And this commandment we have from him, whoever loves God must also love his brother. The verses that we just read overlap with the next section of the lesson.

[26 : 48] So now that we've refreshed our memories about the definition of love, and have looked at some of the demands of love, let's look at some demonstrations of love.

Demonstrations of love is what we'll look at next. Jesus gave the commandment to love on Maundy Thursday, something that we just celebrated last week.

It's interesting that we've arrived at these verses so close to the commemoration of when he gave that command. We'll see that command in a minute, but the first thing I want to do is read some

verses out of Luke 22.

Luke 22 gives us background about what had been happening in the days leading up to Maundy Thursday and the Last Supper. Here are Luke chapter 22, verses 1 and 2.

Now the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover. And the chief priest and the scribes were seeking how to put him, that of course is talking about Jesus, to death, for they feared the people.

[27 : 55] Jump down though to verses 24 through 27 of Luke chapter 22 to see what had been going on among the disciples. Luke 22, 24 through 27 say, A dispute arose among them as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.

And he, talking about Jesus again, said to them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors, but not so with you.

Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For who is the greater, one who reclines at the table, or one who serves?

Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves. So, remember the scene here. Jesus was on his way to be crucified.

He knew that, and he told the disciples that. But the disciples were too busy arguing about who would be the greatest to really let Jesus' words sink in. And think now about the Last Supper.

[29 : 09] Because feet in those days were dirty from walking everywhere on dirt roads, the lowliest servant washed people's feet before a meal. The problem was that no servants were present with Jesus and the disciples at the Last Supper.

And after arguing about who would be the greatest, none of the disciples was willing to wash feet. And that sets the context for John chapter 13.

So listen now to John chapter 13, verses 1 through 5. Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper.

He laid aside his outer garments and, taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

[30 : 26] Jesus washed the feet of every disciple there, including the feet of Judas, the person who Jesus knew was going to betray him.

In fact, Judas had already betrayed him. It just hadn't been fully set into motion yet. Skip down now to John chapter 13, verses 34 and 35.

Jesus said these words in 13, 34 and 35 after Judas had left the room. That's where Jesus said, A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another.

Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

We know, of course, though, that Jesus demonstrated his love for his disciples and for us by doing an even greater act than washing their feet. Jesus demonstrated his love for us by willingly paying the penalty for our sins.

[31 : 30] And Jesus paid that penalty by dying on the cross. Later, that same Maundy Thursday night, Jesus repeated the command to love one another. This time he added another detail.

Listen to John chapter 15, verses 12 and 13. Jesus said in John 15, 12 and 13, This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. Just a few short hours later, Jesus proved his love for us.

The same level of love that we see from Jesus is the level of love we see in Scripture from God the Father as well. Consider a few verses that talk about God the Father's love for us.

We're all familiar with John 3, 16. Think about the level of love it would take to give up an imperfect human son.

[32 : 41] Yet God demonstrated his love for us by giving up his perfect son and giving us eternal life in exchange for our faith in him. We also can look at Romans chapter 5, verses 6 through 9 to see the Father's love demonstrated.

Here are Romans 5, 6 through 9. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die.

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

Remember the lawyer from Luke chapter 10, verse 29? Luke 10, 29 says, But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, Who is my neighbor?

The lawyer could never justify himself, and the parable of the Good Samaritan told us that.

However, God showed his love for us doing what we could never do on our own, and that is the message of Romans 5, 8 and 9.

[34 : 00] So listen to the words of Romans 5, 8 and 9, and listen to those words sink in as we read them again. But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. So you see how the Father demonstrated love for us as well.

Some people characterize Jesus as a poor victim of God the Father. But Philippians 2, 4 through 8 tell us that Jesus willingly died for our sins.

Jesus wanted to obey his Father, and he did obey his Father out of love for his Father. But Jesus also obeyed his Father out of love for his people. Listen to Philippians 2, 4 through 8.

Nobody forced Jesus to go to the cross for us.

[35 : 34] Jesus emptied himself. Jesus humbled himself. Jesus willingly demonstrated the supreme love. He also demonstrated what he had earlier told the disciples.

He was in complete control of the crucifixion proceedings. Listen to what Jesus told the disciples in John 10, verses 17 and 18.

Here are John 10, 17 and 18. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father. So far we've talked about the definition of love, the demand for love, and the demonstration of love.

Let's look briefly at the driver for love. The driver for love is your last blink. The only way we can come close to demonstrating sacrificial love for others is to have the Holy Spirit within us.

[36 : 48] And the Holy Spirit is the driver for love. Some of the verses near the passages we already have read show us that God has equipped true believers with the driver for love.

Back in Romans chapter 5, let's look at Romans 5, 5. Romans 5, 5 says, Think about that.

God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. We have the love of God within us. Our task is to let that love out, to let the fruit of the Spirit prevail over the works of the flesh.

And here's more proof of that, and this time we'll go back to 1 John chapter 4. Listen to 1 John 4, 13 through 17. By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

And we have seen and testified that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in Him and He in God.

[38 : 06] So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in Him.

By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment. Because as He is, so also are we in this world.

Scripture also says that the Colossians demonstrated proper self-sacrificial love. Listen to

Colossians chapter 1, verses 3 through 8. Paul wrote these words in Colossians 1, 3 through 8.

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

Of this you have heard before in the word of truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing, as it also does among you since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant.

[39 : 22] He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, and has made known to us your love in the Spirit. So notice it's not just love, it's love in the Spirit.

The Colossians demonstrated proper love because of their faith, and we've seen that the source of that love was the Spirit within them. But here's something even better than the passages in Romans, 1 John, and Colossians.

On the night of his arrest, the same night that Jesus gave the command for believers to love as he loves us, Jesus prayed for God to give believers the same type of love that God and Jesus have. In the last verse of what we know as Jesus' high priestly prayer, Jesus prayed the words of John 17, 26. So here is John 17, 26, and Jesus is praying to the Father here.

He said, I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

[40 : 33] So how do we know that Jesus prayed those words for us? Well, earlier in the prayer is the only time that you and I and all other true believers are mentioned in the Bible.

Listen to what Jesus said in John 17, 20. Here's what he said in 17, 20, and he's speaking first about the disciples. He prayed, I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word.

We are some of those who believe in Jesus through the word of the apostles. So Jesus prayed for us that night. So we have the love of God within us as well.

So we can see that Jesus never gives us a command without giving us the ability to carry it out. The command to love like Jesus loved, to love others with a self-sacrificial love, is a tall order.

We never will be perfect at it in this life, but we should get better at it because of the spirit within us continuing to make us more like Christ. Remember what Paul told us in Galatians 5, 16.

[41 : 43] But I say, walk by the spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the reminder of how you demonstrated your love for us.

Let the demonstration of that love compel us to obey your command to love others like you have loved us. Help us to continue to yield more and more to the Holy Spirit within us.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Thank you.