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## **Love your Neighbour as Yourself. And The Fruits of the Spirit. (2014)**

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises  
But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Love your Neighbour as Yourself and the Fruits of the Spirit.

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### Topics.

- Love your neighbour as yourself.
- Love and the Ten Commandments.
- The fruits of the Spirit love, joy and peace.
- Patience and longsuffering, kindness and gentleness.
- Goodness, faithfulness and faith and gentleness and meekness.
- Self-control and temperance.
- Against the fruits of the Spirit there is no law.

**INTRODUCTION:** this study is divided into two sections, firstly it looks at Jesus command to all his disciples, Love your neighbor as yourself and what it means and secondly it looks at the fruits of the Spirit.

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### Section One

In Leviticus chapter nineteen the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:-

- You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall *love your neighbour as yourself*. I am the LORD. (Lev. 19:18).

In this context the word neighbour comes from the Hebrew word (rea) and means a close associate, a brother, companion, fellow, friend, husband, lover. It carries the idea of associating or keeping company with a friend or companion. The focus of this chapter is God's people Israel which means that the words, "love your neighbour as yourself," in this verse only apply to the people of Israel. But Jesus changed all this by saying: -

- You have heard that it was said, "*You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.*"  
<sup>44</sup>But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matt 5:43-45).

The word neighbour in this verse comes from the Greek word (plesion) and means a near neighbour, a fellow man, countryman or a Christian or friend. In the book of Luke Jesus said: -

- I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you (Luke 6:27)

Jesus has not only lifted off any limitations that the words love your neighbour as yourself may have had under the Old Covenant law, but also applies the command to love your neighbour as yourself to all people (Christian and secular). When Jesus was asked, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" He answered: -

- The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>30</sup>And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' <sup>31</sup>The second is this: '*You shall love your neighbour as yourself.*' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:28-31).

James in the following verse refers to Jesus commandment, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" as the royal law in the following verse: -

- If you really fulfil the *royal law* according to the Scripture, "*You shall love your neighbour as yourself*," you are doing well. (James 2:8).

Jesus said: -

- On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets. (Matt. 22:40).

Since other than loving God with all our heart, mind and strength the most important commandment of all commandments throughout the entire Bible that Jesus Christ commands us to obey is to "love your neighbour as yourself" it is clearly enormously important to understand what it actually means.

The expression, "love your neighbour as yourself," means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself.

The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, mentally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do good to others. It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land.

Our neighbour is every other person this means that Jesus command "love your neighbour as yourself," means showing justice (i.e., fairness) to all people. Even though we have a particular responsibility to care for our families and those who belong to Christ we must render honour and justice to all people wherever due. This is how Christian men and women should live amongst the Christian and secular community and as faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ? God holds all who belong to Christ's global family accountable to only two laws, love God and love our neighbour.

Paul said: -

- The whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Gal 5:14).
- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah in the following verses clearly show that the law is about doing-good to others and protecting them from harm and hurt.

- Micah wrote: "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God" (Micah 6:5-10).
- Isaiah says: "The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing" (Isaiah 61:8).
- Jeremiah said: "Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights" (Jer. 9:24).

This is why the command to love God with all our heart, mind and strength and love our neighbour as ourselves are the only two commandments concerning behaviour that anyone needs to know. If a person loves God and their neighbour as themselves they will never hurt or harm another human in anyway therefore no other commandment would ever be broken.

**Love and the Ten Commandment:** even the spirit underpinning the Ten Commandments is love because each of the six laws concerning mankind respects others and protects the innocent from harm.

- 1 Honour your father and mother shows respect.
- 2 Do not murder, protects the innocent.

- 3 Do not commit adultery protects marriages and families.
- 4 Do not steal protects the things good people have worked for.
- 5 Do not bear false witness protects men and women from being cheated out of justice and what is rightfully theirs.
- 6 You shall not covet anything that is your neighbour's: not only protects from jealousy which can lead to anger, hatred, violence and even murder, but also protects from envy, greed, bitterness and resentment. (these laws are in Exodus 20:3-17)

The six commandments regarding mankind should be applied to everyone and we must abide by them ourselves. To love in the biblical sense is not an emotional attitude, but the keeping of these laws in relation to our neighbour. This is the general law of justice. Love your neighbour means respecting a person's:-

- Right of life (thou shalt not kill)
- Home and family (thou shalt not commit adultery)
- Property and possessions (thou shalt not steal)
- Reputation (thou shalt not bear false witness)
- Life, home and family, property and possessions and reputation in thought (thou shalt not covet)

In its simplest form the expression, "Love your neighbour as yourself" means show justice to all people (i.e., fairness for all people).

### **Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount.**

The constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus calls Christians to treat all people (Christian and secular) fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. This means living a life that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ is about doing all we can do to protect people from harm and being dominated by the thought, "What action can I take or do that will help and encourage this person." Love your neighbour as yourself, is all about doing right to others.

This is the reason the message Jesus spoke on the mountain is referred to as, "The Famous Sermon" because the principals if followed not only by Christians but all humanity are the only way humanity can live in harmony with each other and the only way to peace. Based on the commandment, love your neighbour as yourself and the law it could be said that a wicked and evil person is one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and deliberately does harm to other humans.

For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see: -

- Matthew 5 in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

### **Paul told those in the family of Christ to: -**

- Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. (Col. 1:10).

Those who belong to Christ's global Kingdom do not aim to keep the law to get saved, but because they are saved and as a family member of Christ they from love desire to be counted a worthy and pleasing child of God. They understand that righteousness is a free gift of God that comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot be earned by self-effort. The faithful endeavour to keep the law because it pleases and honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.

Loving God is about our attitude toward God and loving others as we love ourselves is about how we treat other humans. Obeying Jesus command to love our neighbour as we love ourselves is about showing others patience, and kindness it is about not envying or boasting or being arrogant and rude to others. It is about not insisting on our own way and being tolerant with others and not irritable or resentful. It means we show compassion, kindness, mercy, grace and forgiveness to all people and not just our family and Christian brothers and sisters.

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## Section Two

### The Fruits of the Spirit.

Paul wrote: -

Galatians 5:22-23 ----- <sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (English Standard Bible).

- The King James Bible says: <sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, <sup>23</sup>Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

To understand these words of Paul it helps to have an understanding of human nature. The Bible speaks of mankind being flesh and spirit, the flesh refers to the lower nature of man (anger, greed, lust, jealousy hatred etc.) while the spirit refers to the higher nature (love, compassion, kindness, mercy, grace, forgiveness and such like things). All humans are counted as sinners when they stand before the Holiness of God, but not all sinners are evil and wicked people. Many unbelievers give their lives to acts of charity and helping others and doing-good. Christians do not own the copyright to love, kindness and goodness all humans (Christian or secular) have the potential to be evil or good. So the spirit in focus is the higher nature of mankind in contrast to the lower nature. It could be said that the lower nature is that part of us that is made from the dirt of the earth while the higher nature is that part of us which was given life by the breath of God.

Those who understand God's love displayed on the bloodstained cross of Calvary and accept Christ as their King and Saviour are filled with the love of God and from this love they desire to crucify the lower nature (the flesh) and live a lifestyle that flows from the higher nature (the Spirit). Since Jesus lived a lifestyle that perfectly manifested the fruits of the Spirit (the higher nature) it is right and proper to say that a brother or sister in Christ who is walking in the fruits of the Spirit is walking in the Spirit of Christ and are in Christ.

It should be mentioned that not one of us no matter how devoted or how faithful will perfectly attain to the sinless life Christ did, if we could he died for no reason, nevertheless the fruits of the Spirit should be the ruling monarchy over our minds, hearts and behaviour they are so excellent that they have never been forbidden by any human law, nor has there ever been a nation that did not acknowledge their excellence amongst their populations and communities. The individual fruits are not isolated virtues that stand alone, but are all connected to one root and from this root they grow as a seed that arises from the earth grows and produces fruit that nourishes the life of all who eat it. The root of the fruits of the Spirit is of course love it is from love all other fruits grow. This should not surprise us since John in his writings tells us: -

- Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8).
- God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:16)

The spiritual person aims to glorify God and the Lord Jesus Christ by adding the fruits of the Spirit to their faith and they do this not from fear, but from the love they have for their King and Saviour. Those who live this way are Christ pleasant fruits and will make up his treasured possession.

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From the English Standard Bible and the King James Bible we see that the following fruits of the Spirit are linked with each other. This is because the meaning of each easily slide into each other and carry the same idea.

- Patience and longsuffering.
- Kindness and gentleness.
- Faithfulness and faith.
- Gentleness and meekness.
- Self-control and temperance.

The remainder of this study focuses on the meanings of each of the fruits of the Spirit and their importance to healthy spiritual Christian life. They are divided into three groups the first group describes the unseen life of the Spirit, the second group describes the same life in its outward manifestations to mankind and the third group describes life in relationship to the difficulties of the world and of ourselves. The first of these three groups includes love, joy, and peace these cannot be called duties or virtues since they flow from communion with God and the source of all three lie in the Christians relationship to Christ.

These three will dwell within those who make Christ the King of their heart and mind and not the things of this world. Love, of course, heads the list and is naturally the foundation of all the rest. It could be likened to the sap of a tree which rises from the roots through the trunk to give life to all the branches and the fruit they bear.

Galatians 5:22 ----- <sup>22</sup>the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy and peace.

1. **Love:** is at the head of the list of virtues this is because true Christianity takes love as its foundation, love is the leader of the band of godly virtues, love to God and love to our neighbours is the calling of the Christian faith and the fulfilling of all God's law.
2. **Joy:** comes next, we have all enjoyed the good things of the world and Christian fellowship and for many the joy of serving the Lord, but these joys are often fleeting they come and they go. The joy in focus here is an emotion poured from God into the lives of the faithful, because love toward Him dwells in their hearts. This joy is not dependent on circumstances or works since it comes from God. When God is the gladness of our heart and our greatest delight is knowing His love in Christ our joy will never pass, because God who is the only source of permanent joy is able to fill all the corners and crannies of the heart that flows with love toward Him.

Christian joy has a much deeper root than mere natural cheerfulness of mood and emotion, it is not joy in the things of this world, but the unfailing brightness and gracefulness which flows from the Spirit of God into the heart and mind of the faithful and is manifested outwardly in calm peacefulness and contentment. It is joy in the love of God and in forgiveness of sin and communion with the Saviour and the hope of the eternal glory to come. The focus of this joy is Christ and the truth that those who belong to his Kingdom are clothed with the robe of his righteousness and his love. This joy is generated from the excitement of eternal adoption and eternal glory and joy in the new world to come.

3. **Peace:** with God and peace with our conscience as the result of reconciliation with God being made possible by the blood of Christ and the grace of God. When our hearts are ever turning to God and we are in constant internal and spiritual communion of love between Him and us there will be peace. This does not mean that we will be free of hardships and sorrow, true peace does not come not from the absence of trouble, but from the presence of God and it comes according to the exact measure of the love and grace of God we embrace and live in.

For those who have Christ as the King of their heart and mind and not the things of this world this peace is deep and passes all natural understanding. Added to this peace whoever is abiding in the fruits of the Spirit will also have peace with all others who are influenced and led by the Spirit among the body of Christ and desire to live peaceably with all men.

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## The Second Group

The second group describes long-suffering, kindness and goodness all these three obviously refer to the spiritual life in its manifestations toward others.

Galatians 5:22 ----- <sup>22</sup>patience (longsuffering in KJV), kindness (gentleness in KJV) and goodness.

- 1 **Patience and longsuffering:** are not so much about patiently waiting for good things to come, but a patient bearing and enduring of present hardships, troubles and sorrows. It describes the attitude of patient endurance towards those who injure us physically or emotionally and towards enemies, if we are treated with a cold gust of indifference or with an icy wind of hate. The reality of our happy communion and the depth of our love will be tested by the patience of our long-suffering.

Love suffers long, is not easily provoked is not soon angry. If we have not gone beyond the stage of repaying hate with hate, and scorn with scorn we have little reason to suppose that the love of God is shed abroad in our heart, or that the Spirit of God is bringing forth fruit within us. Any fool can answer a fool according to their folly, but it takes a wise and a good person to overcome evil with good, and to love those that hate.

- 2 **Kindness and gentleness:** these are interchangeable with each other since they both carry the idea of helping others and treating people with tenderness, sensitivity, sympathy, compassion and thoughtfulness.
- 3 **Goodness:** in the sense that a Christian must be a good person it carries the idea of being generous, charitable and big-hearted toward others and doing all the good that one is able.

These three virtues embrace all that Paul presents as Christian duty to our neighbour. The influence of the Spirit is to take us beyond ourselves and to influence our whole conduct. We are not to live solely for ourselves, but for God and for others. The foundation of all service of men and women in the global Kingdom of Christ is love and fellowship with God and the Lord Jesus Christ and to serve and to treat all people (Christian and secular) with decency and respect.

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## The Third Group

The third group is faithfulness, meekness and temperance which all seem to point to the world in which the Christian life is to be lived as in a land of temptations, difficulties and oppositions.

Galatians 5:22-23 ----- <sup>22</sup>faithfulness (faith in KJV) <sup>23</sup>gentleness (meekness in KJV), self-control (temperance in KJV).

- 1 **Faithfulness and faith:** faithfulness toward God and man, faithfulness embraces loyalty, reliability, trustworthiness, dependability and commitment. It implies that the Christian will not only be faithful to their word and promises and a person that can be trusted and confided in, but are also faithful in word and actions to the Gospel, the ministry and all their dealings with people. True religion makes a person faithful to their marriage, family and work and to their neighbour and friend. They are faithful in all their contracts and faithful to their promises. Those who are not faithful and claim to be filled with the Spirit are deceiving themselves.

Though faithfulness in the context of the fruits of the Spirit and not faith is meant, faith in Christ should not to be excluded (as it is by some interpreters) because faith in Christ does not come by the works of the flesh, but by the Spirit of God and by the influence of His word and the Holy Spirit therefore faith in Christ has its rightful and proper place amongst the fruits of the Spirit.

- 2 **Gentleness and meekness:** points to submissiveness of spirit which does not lift itself up against oppositions, but bends like a reed before the storm. It is something more than mildness and timidity of spirit since these generally bow down to others out of fear or simply to be accepted by the group. Whereas humbleness is a gentle submissiveness to the God and His will and chooses not to respond to man's arrogance and pride (especially when it would be foolish to do so). It carries the idea of being slow to anger and having a firm control over the hasty passions of the flesh and of being humble and lowly of mind of which Christ is our perfect example and pattern in walking humbly with God and humble before mankind.
- 3 **Self-control and temperance:** modern society today simply apply the word temperance to the habitual drinking of intoxicating drinks, but it is not limited to drinking only, but carries the idea of self-control over the natural inclinations and desires of all kinds of passions that dwell within. It refers to the rule of self which a person has over the passions of the flesh (i.e., anger, jealousy, lust, resentment and such like things) and over the inclinations of their nature.

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### **Against the Fruits of the Spirit there is no Law.**

These Christian virtues are not only above the law, but also approved of by the law as the following verse shows.

Galatians 5:23 ----- <sup>23</sup>against such things there is no law.

Notice the focus is against "such things" and not as it is understood by some, against "such men." This is because not one of us can attain to perfection of the law or the perfection of the fruits of the Spirit, if we could attain to such perfection we would be without sin and if it was possible for us to attain such a glorious state of sinlessness Christ died for no reason. This is why Paul deliberately says, "against such things," and not "against such people."

Against such there is no law means, against such fruits of the Spirit there is no law they are excellent in perfection and in perfect agreement with the law of God, which is holy, just and good that there is no law against them. Even more than this the law rather than forbidding and condemning these highly esteems and approves of them as the following verse shows.

- For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself. (Galatians 5:14).

Not only is love the fulfilling of the law, but the Bible tells us that God is love and whoever shows love to others will make up Christ's treasured possession.

Some think the best way to please God is to strictly adhere to ceremonial rites and holy days and to keep religious customs and traditions, but this is a deception, the way to bring the sweet fragrance of joy before God's throne in heaven and to the Lord Jesus Christ is to add as many fruits of the Spirit to our faith as is possible.

Whoever is filled with the fruits of the Spirit will be led by the Spirit. True Christian faith as taught by Christ and the apostles makes no one crabby, morose and sour or arrogant, prideful and violent, but in contrast to these it not only sweetens the temper and corrects an irritable disposition, but also makes the heart kind and encourages those filled with the Spirit to make all around them as happy as possible.

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End.