

Fruit of the Spirit Series

Discussion Notes

June 17, 2012

LOVE – Leanne McAlister



Notes:

- Some would argue that **love** is listed first amongst the Fruit because from it flow all other characteristics. God is love (1 John 4: 16).
- We have many meanings for the English word for love. Greek has four separate words.
 - *Eros* - erotic, physical feeling or expression.
 - *Phileo* – companionship, friendship.
 - *Storge* – deep affection, often familial or parental.
- All these love “run out” amongst humans.
- *Agape* is the word used in Galatians and other parts of the Scriptures for God’s love. It does not depend on the recipient, is not transactional, and does not run out. *Agape* flows relentlessly from God.
- Humans are after love. We posture and perform for it from each other. It leaves us wanting and broken, however.
- We starve for a love that comes from a God who loves “without need”.
- “Life may be a long journey of learning how to receive the love of God.”
- When we receive the love of God we are “lead by the Spirit” (Gal 5:25) and can leave a life of striving for love behind.
- When we overflow with Divine love, we are easily able to share it with others.
- Fruit (eg, LOVE) is not about effort. It’s about bearing the produce of what God has tenderly cultivated in us.
- Love produces love. Hurt people hurt people. Loved people love people.

Discussion Questions:

- Leanne asked, “Do you know (beyond the intellection, to the experiential) that you are loved?”
- In what ways do we “posture” or “perform” for love from others?
- Who have you felt most loved by? How similar is that love to God’s? Has it been a good example?
- What words would you use to describe God’s love? What moves you most deeply about the way he loves humanity and you specifically?
- Do you agree that *hurt people hurt people, and loved people love people*? Why or why not?
- Can we “fill up” on God’s love and it not overflow to others? Is that possible? What does parable of the unmerciful servant (Matt 18) teach us?
- What steps do you need to take this week in order to properly receive God’s love? What *correct* kind of posture do you need to take in order to experience it/ believe it?