

Love's Incredible Power and Source

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Read Colossians 2:1-5. What was Paul's two-fold intention for ministry to the Colossians? What did he hope the result of this ministry would be? Why was this important?

Read Colossians 3:14. What result of love is emphasized here? In your experience, how does love lead to this result?

If love is God's most powerful force for unifying His people, what attitude should you have towards giving and receiving love?

Read John 13:34-35. What result of love is emphasized here? In your experience, how does love lead to this result? What is the result in the world when Christians don't live lives of love towards each other? Given that the church is filled with sinners saved by grace, how difficult is it to love sincerely? How do we overcome a hesitancy to love?

Read and reflect on John 17:20-23. Meditate on all the phrases from Jesus' prayer that suggest Christians are to be united and loving toward each other. How does this convict and/or motivate you?

According to this passage, how is loving unity between Christians possible? What are the results of loving unity between Christians? What is the impact on unbelievers?

Can you think of a time/experience when witnessing the powerful love between believers helped to draw you close to God? What was it about that loving unity that made you want to turn to Him? Would you have turned to Him in that circumstance had you not witnessed that love?

If loving unity is God's most powerful magnet for drawing unbelievers to Him, what attitude should you have towards giving and receiving love?

Read and reflect on 1 John 3:16-20 and 1 John 4:16-18. What do these passages teach about love within the fellowship of believers? How is love described? What results of our love flow to us; to others? Have you seen/experienced those kinds of results first-hand?

In your experience, how have words of love blessed you? What about loving actions? Can you think of a situation where you received loving words but unloving actions; or vice versa? What was the effect on you? What is the difficulty when a person's words and actions are contradictory?

Read and reflect on James 2:14-17. What does this passage add to our consideration of the call to love in both word and deed? Is there a lesson here for you today? In what relationships can you apply it?

Read 1 John 3:21-24. What is promised to us here? How does love or lack of love affect one's prayer life? How do obedience and faith affect one's prayer life? Is there a lesson here for you today?

Read 1 John 4:7, 8, 16. How are we able to love, according to these verses? What do you think it means to be 'born of God'? How does love flow to us through this

re-birth? So, what is the ultimate source of love? Why is it important to remember this, especially when we struggle to love?

Read and reflect on Galatians 5:13-26. What instructions about love are offered here? What actions/attitudes are contrary to love, according to this passage? In your experience, how do these actions/attitudes inhibit the ability to love others? How are we to avoid these actions/attitudes in our own lives?

How would you summarize the struggle between the sinful nature and the spiritual nature? What solution does this passage offer? How do we tap into it? What does it mean to 'live by the Spirit' and how do you do it?

Reflect on the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. Love is listed first. Why do you think that is? How do the other fruit relate to the fruit of love?

Read and reflect on John 15:1-12. Consider all the phrases here that show the futility of trying to bear fruit (*think Galatians 5:22-23*) through human effort. What better approach is offered? Based on the metaphor used, what do you think it means to "abide" in Christ Jesus? What is promised as we abide? What happens if we fail to abide? What is our part in being fruitful? What is God's part in making us fruitful? How does this speak specifically to you today? What might you do in response?

As you reflect on love's incredible power and source, what specific things can you do this week to increase your love and its witness to the world?

