

Colossians - Chapter 3
“The Key to Dressing for Success”
Colossians 3:14

Verse 14

1. How do we know if believers have grown spiritually in their walk with Christ? Is it because they read their Bibles through in a year? They keep all the standards and rules of the church? They attend church faithfully? They look and talk a certain way?
 - No! This can all be mimicked, faked, or done out of guilt or ritual.
2. The heart attitudes that we just studied in verses 12-13 are the true test of spiritual maturity. What is the crowning virtue that holds all of these other godly fruits together, and binds them and keeps them in our hearts and lives? Charity, or love.
3. Paul said that love is the bond (uniting principle, glue) of perfectness.
 - The word “*perfectness*” doesn’t mean sinlessness, but carries the idea of completeness and maturity.
 - People who exercise love have grown in their understanding of their completeness in Christ, and it is demonstrated in their relationships with others.
4. Why would Paul say, “*Above all these things put on charity...*”? Is it because love is more important than forgiveness or kindness? Of course not. It is because love is the spring from which flows all the other wonderful fruits of verses 12-13.
 - Why would people be kind, patient, and forgiving with others who have done them wrong? It is because their hearts are permeated with the love of Christ. They have grown in His love. They have “put on” love.
 - A hateful person won’t forgive, or be kind, or be patient, but a loving person will.
5. In Galatians 5:22-23, there is a similar list of Christian graces. Notice that this list is called the “*fruit of the Spirit*,” not “fruits.”
 - It’s not the idea that the Holy Spirit may bear the fruit of love in one person, but the fruit of peace in another.
 - Rather than viewing these as nine separate fruits, we need to view them as a whole. They are all tied together, and they can all be manifested at the same time as we yield to the Holy Spirit and allow Christ to live through us.
 - Again, what is at the top of the list? Love! Why is this? It is because all the other fruit flows forth from the fruit of love (love is the crowning virtue in the Christian walk and ties everything else together).
Galatians 5:14; 1 Corinthians 13:13
6. Love is not a mushy feeling. Love is correct biblical thinking, which leads to correct actions. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
7. What about the person who says, “I can’t love him. I can’t love her.” This is a lie from Satan. There is no truth in that statement at all.

- We are able to love because God has lavishly bestowed His love upon us (Romans 5:5 - “*shed abroad*” means “to pour forth; gush”).
Ephesians 2:4, 3:17-19, 4:2, 5:2; John 13:34; 1 John 4:10-11
- God has given us a spirit of love. 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:9
- It's the idea of “Now that I **know** love, I can **give** love.”
- When a person says, “I can't love,” they are in essence saying, “I don't know God, I've never experienced God's love, and I do not possess God's Spirit.”
- Just as fruit grows, we can grow and mature in the fruit of love.
1 Thessalonians 3:12, 4:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:3