

Growing Good Fruit – Growing up in God's Love Week 4

Luke 15:11–24 | 1 John 4:19

We can only love others because God first loved us. His love is the root of all the fruit.

Strength, kindness, and faith are all important—but none of them can flourish apart from God's love. Healthy fruit always begins with healthy roots.

1. God's Love Runs Toward Us

The Prodigal Son isn't ultimately about a rebellious son—it's about a loving Father.

When the son returned home:

- The father was already watching.
- The father ran to meet him.
- The father embraced him before he finished his apology.
- The father restored him immediately.

Luke 15:20 "While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran..."

God isn't waiting with crossed arms. He's watching the road. And He runs toward repentant sinners.

2. You Are Loved Before You Perform

Many of us live like God's love rises and falls based on our performance. The gospel says the opposite.

1 John 4:19 "We love because He first loved us."

God's love comes first. Our obedience is a response—not an audition.

Remember:

- We don't obey so God will love us.
 - We obey because we already are loved.
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3. Fruit Grows From the Root

Throughout this series we've talked about:

- Strength
- Kindness
- Faith

But none of those can last apart from love. Love is the root. Everything else is fruit.

Without God's love:

- Strength becomes pride.
- Kindness becomes people-pleasing.
- Faith becomes performance.

With God's love:

- Strength serves others.
- Kindness becomes genuine.

- Faith trusts God's heart.
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4. Grace Restores Relationships—Not Always Consequences

The father completely restored his son. The robe. The ring. The celebration. But the son still had consequences. His inheritance was gone. His reputation remained. Grace forgives completely. Grace doesn't always erase every earthly consequence.

God doesn't wait until the consequences disappear before He welcomes us home. He walks with us through them.

5. Two Sons Needed the Father

The younger son was lost in rebellion.

The older son was lost in self-righteousness.

One came from the pigpen.

The other came from the field.

Both needed the Father's love.

One tried to earn acceptance through rebellion.

The other tried to earn acceptance through performance.

Neither understood the Father's heart.

This Week's Challenge

Ask yourself:

- Am I trying to earn God's love, or resting in it?
- Is my obedience rooted in fear or gratitude?
- Who in my life needs someone to "run toward" them this week?

Then do one thing:

Find someone in a far country...

or

Find someone standing out in the field...

...and love them the way the Father has loved you—with grace, truth, compassion, and open arms.

Memory Verse

1 John 4:19

"We love because He first loved us."

Bottom Line

You are loved before you perform.

God's love is not the reward for good fruit.

God's love is the root from which all good fruit grows.