

The Fruit of the Spirit

Introduction

What are some of your favorite fruits? Does anyone like unusual fruit such as mangoes or kiwis? What do you know about how fruit grows?

Fruit grows on trees or on vines that are found in orchards, vineyards, and yards. In order to have a good crop of fruit, a gardener must take care of the plants. What are some ways to take care of fruit trees or vines? (*Students may answer proper watering, sunlight, fertilizer, weeding, pruning...*) If plants are given proper care, they will grow well and produce a crop of delicious fruit. If plants aren't given proper care, they won't produce fruit.

In the Bible a missionary named Paul wrote a letter to some people who lived in the city of Galatia. These people had recently become believers in Jesus. They were used to living the same way as other people in the world who weren't believers in Jesus, having attitudes and actions that were jealous, hateful, envious, selfish, or inappropriately wild. Paul taught that a believer in Jesus will have the Holy Spirit's help to live and act in ways that show the characteristics of God instead of the characteristics of people in the world. These characteristics of God are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Paul called these characteristics the fruit of the Spirit.

Why would Paul compare these attitudes and actions to fruit? Remember, fruit trees and vines need to be cared for in order to produce fruit. If the Holy Spirit lives in you to help you grow in showing God's characteristics, then you can care for that growing by reading the Bible, learning about God from other Christians, and talking to God through prayer. As you begin to spend more time with God, you will begin to have godly actions and attitudes such as love, kindness, and gentleness. These actions are like the delicious fruit that a healthy plant produces.

Can you remember all the characteristics of God Paul said were the fruit of the Spirit? There are nine of them! Take a look at Galatians 5:22-23 to remember:

- *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."*

In our upcoming devotions we will talk about each fruit and how that characteristic of God can grow in us. Right now, let's "water our plants" by praying to God.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for giving us lessons in the Bible about how you want us to live and act. Sometimes it is really easy to behave in ways that are jealous and envious, or hateful and selfish. We know these are attitudes and actions that we shouldn't do. Thank you for sending your Holy Spirit to live in us and to help us grow to be more like you. Please guide us as we learn about the fruit of the Spirit. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

The Fruit of the Spirit is LOVE

There are different kinds of love and many ways for us to show love to people. You probably show love to your mom or dad differently than you show love to your friends at school. What are some ways you show love to others? *(Pause for student answers.)*

One of God's characteristics is that he is loving. What are some ways God shows his love to us? *(Pause for student answers.)*

Listen to these verses from the Bible and identify how God shows he loves us:

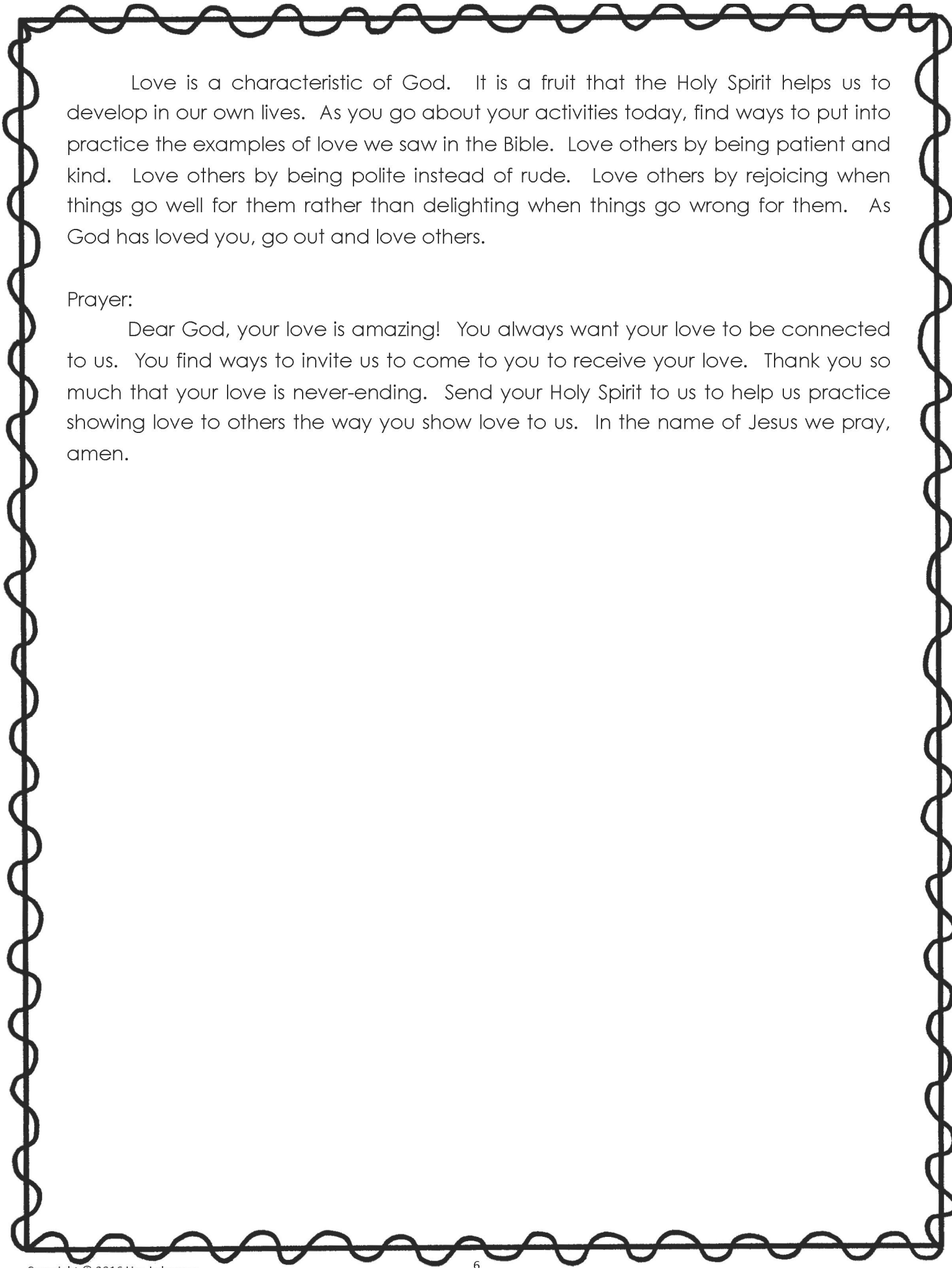
- *Jeremiah 31:3b – "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness." (God draws us to him.)*
- *Romans 8:38-39 – "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (God won't let anything separate us from his love.)*
- *John 3:16 – "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (He sent Jesus to the world to forgive our sins and give us life with God forever after we die.)*

Jesus said we should love others. Listen to his words:

- *John 13:34-35 – "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

The missionary Paul wrote to some believers in the city of Corinth to explain to them how to show love to others. Here's what he wrote:

- *1 Corinthians 13:4-7 – "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."*



Love is a characteristic of God. It is a fruit that the Holy Spirit helps us to develop in our own lives. As you go about your activities today, find ways to put into practice the examples of love we saw in the Bible. Love others by being patient and kind. Love others by being polite instead of rude. Love others by rejoicing when things go well for them rather than delighting when things go wrong for them. As God has loved you, go out and love others.

Prayer:

Dear God, your love is amazing! You always want your love to be connected to us. You find ways to invite us to come to you to receive your love. Thank you so much that your love is never-ending. Send your Holy Spirit to us to help us practice showing love to others the way you show love to us. In the name of Jesus we pray, amen.