

Love Prays TMTPL #15 Handout

Galatians 5:22-23 that ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

In this we notice that the first fruit listed is love. If the love of God is not active in our soul, we will not produce any of the other fruits. And if we have the love of God working within us, we will love God and will obey His commands. Love seeks God's best for others. Therefore, love prays.

When we pray, we add our love for others to the love of God and this leads us to pray with fervor. Fervent prayer can be imagined as a passionate strength which engages in the battle, engaging all resistance with powerful combative strength from God according to our faith in Christ. Without love there is no power in prayer.

Prayer that moves mountains must first move our hearts.

Romans 12:9-21 NIV

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.^[a] Do not be conceited.

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay,"^[a] says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."^[a]

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

We can't just act like Christians, we must seek God till we have the heart of God within us. The love of God hates evil. Just as we must have the powerful passionate love of God burning

within us, we must also have a forceful rejection and abhorrence of that which is evil. What is evil? Evil is everything that opposes the love and will of God.

Devotion can be pictured as love gluing, knitting, or binding us to one another in brotherly love. God's love helps us see one another as family members but goes further than what we tend to see in the world. We go on to honor one another above ourselves. This can only be born of God. True devotion to God will lead us to pray, and true devotion to one another will motivate us to pray for each other.

If we are never lacking in zeal, which is a victory we must pray for daily, then we will also find that we have God's energy to be devoted to prayer.

It is precisely because we will face hardships that we are called to be joyful in hope. This is nothing less than celebrating the victory of God's grace over all that assails us, knowing that God's promises will be kept and that we are more than conquerors through Christ. Joy celebrates the reality that supersedes our immediate circumstances.

What does it mean in this context to practice hospitality? The Greek word *philoxenia* means a friend to strangers. We must show God's love to strangers.

The remainder of this passage teaches us how godly love will act in various circumstances.

We must pray blessing on others even though they harm us, not because they deserve the blessings, but because we are abhorring the evil that would come into our souls if we cursed them.

Living in harmony with others calls us to promote peace. Conflict is easy, peace is hard. Therefore, we must pray for the peace of God to guard our hearts and minds. Peace is a product of a life rightly aligned with God. Love at prayer will pray for peace, but will first pray for victory in oneself over pride.

To overcome evil with good, we must always pray. Prayer helps us bring the hurt of evil into the presence of God where we can let go of the harmful things we think and feel and then receive the peace and love of God so that we can choose to do good things in the face of evil. Only the godly love can overcome evil with good.

Love prays because we need God's power to love well. We practice love when we pray for others.