of glory" (Colossians 2:2). "Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and in purpose" (Philippians 2:2).

Love drives out fear. "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out

fear" (1 John 4:18). "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit

of power, of love and of self-discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7). Note the relationship between love and self-control.

**6. Love expresses itself in action.** 1 John 3:18 declares. "Let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth." Vine says, "Love can be known only from the actions it prompts."

Self-sacrifice. "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers" (1 John 3:16).

Obedience to God's commands. One of the essential aspects of *agape* love is obedience to God. Jesus said, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching" (John 14:23, see also v. 15). I John 5:2 says, "this is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands." In 1 John 2:5 we read, "If anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him."

Thankfulness. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2 KJV). "Give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Not only does our thankfulness express our love for God, but as we decide to be thankful and recognize the blessings he has given us, we realize more fully how much he loves us, and our love for him increases. Similarly, thankfulness to others increases our love for them.

Compassion. At one point, Jesus withdrew to a solitary place, but when a large crowd followed him "he had compassion on them and healed their sick" (Matthew 14:14). Then he fed them. John says, "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?" (1 John 3:17; see also James 2:15-16).

**B. JOY.**

Joy, from the Greek word *chara,* is also a command. "Be joyful always" (1 Thessalonians 5:16). "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice" (Philippians 4:4). We must decide to rejoice regardless of the circumstances, and regardless of whether we feel like it. Our joy does not depend on the circumstances. It rests on our relationship with the Father. We can have joy, no matter what the circumstances, because we are the adopted sons and daughters of our Father in Heaven and we know that He loves us and desires our companionship. It is because He has given us "new birth unto a living hope" (1 Peter 1:3) that we can be joyful (1 Peter 1:8-9).

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**Conclusion**

God "works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will" (Ephesians 1:11). God's purpose for us is that we shall become like Him in character so that we will live by the Spirit and produce the fruit of the Spirit. God has given us the means to carry out that purpose. He has assured us that it can be carried out. Paul writes, "May your whole **spirit, soul,** and **body** be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24).

The ultimate result of producing the fruit of the Spirit is the evangelization of the world for Christ. The purpose of the Great Commission of Jesus Christ is to plant the Word of God in the hearts of men and women. If the soil is properly prepared to receive the word, and if the seed is properly watered and cultivated, God will give the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). God will do His part; the rest is up to us.

When most people look at an apple seed, they might imagine the possibility of one apple tree. God looks at an apple seed, a grape seed, and a teak seed and sees an orchard, a vineyard, and a forest. When God looks at a dedicated Christian, He sees the potential for many more children in the family of God. It is God’s wish that all of His children walk in the Spirit and bear the Fruit of the Spirit so that as many souls as possible will live with Him forever.

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