

**GROWING SPIRITUALLY**  
**JULY 17, 2016**

**EPH. 4:11-15**

**INTRODUCTION:** Paul states the purpose of the ministry gifts is to promote spiritual growth among believers. We are to grow up into Christ in all things and to do the work we've been called to do. This should be our highest goal in life.

**WHERE DO WE BEGIN?**

1. God is love. **1 JOHN 4:7-8**
  - A. Love is the very essence of God's being. His every thought, word, action and reaction is motivated by perfect love.
  - B. Growing in God is growing in love and being love motivated and love controlled.
    - Marriages would be strengthened and restored. Christian lives and homes would be restored, relationships would be healed and unity would be achieved among believers.
2. Love has an enemy – selfishness! **IS. 14:12-14**
  - A. Selfishness and pride perverted all things.
  - B. Satan's selfish nature passed upon all men.
  - C. Jesus overcame selfishness for us all.
3. Growing spiritually involves growing out of selfishness and growing in love. **COL. 3:8-14**
  - A. This requires humility and discipline.
  - B. Greek words for love.
    - Eros – Erotic, physical, sexual feelings and emotions.
    - Storge – Being compatible.
    - Phileo – Responsive, based on feelings, and emotions.
    - Agape – Divine, based on decision and principle, not feelings and emotions.
4. The command to love. **JOHN 13:34-35**
  - A. The O.T. gave us Ten Commandments that teach us how to love God and people.
  - B. The N.T. gives us one commandment that fulfills all the of the O.T. commandments.  
**ROM. 13:8-10**
  - C. Jesus raised love's bar: "As I have loved you!"
5. Empowered to love. **ROM. 5:5**
  - A. God would be unfair to command us to love as He loved us if He didn't give us the means to do so.
  - B. Agape proves our salvation. **1 JOHN 3:14-16**
6. God's love described.
  - A. Unspeakable. **2 COR. 9:15**
  - B. Unending. **JER. 31:3**
  - C. Unselfish. **1 COR. 13:6**
  - D. Unmerited. **1 JOHN 4:19**
  - E. Unconditional. **ROM. 5:6-8**

**CONCLUSION:** Love is the mark of spiritual maturity. Jesus was love personified. Jesus demonstrated love by becoming sin for us, dying for us, forgiving us, saving us, washing us from our sins and redeeming us. We are to follow His example and love "even as" He loved us.

**ZEPH. 3:17**