

Spirit Fruit: Love

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

Chester's First Day of School

Eager faces watched intently as the clock above the blackboard slowly ticked its way to half-past three. Not a moment too soon, a melody played on the school's PA system announcing the end of the school day. The sixth graders burst out of the classrooms, eager to get home. They jostled down the hall and yelled happy goodbyes to classmates and friends.

Chester made his way slowly down the school corridor. He had sprained his ankle a few days earlier, and had to walk with a crutch. Today was his first day of school, and a long day it had been. He hobbled slowly forward with a large stack of textbooks clutched under one arm. And then it happened. *Baam!*



Someone rushed by, pushing past Chester, and Chester lost his balance—his books sliding to the floor with a dull thud.

Chester heard giggles and exclamations. Traffic continued down the school hallway, and people rushed around and past Chester's little pile of books like water in a riverbed. He saw the latest in sports footwear walk confidently by. He saw clogs and stylish knee socks drift past. Chester felt invisible.



And then what seemed like the thousandth pair of shoes stopped by Chester. The shoes belonged to a smiling boy, no older than himself. “Let me help you,” the boy said as he began stacking Chester’s textbooks. In no time he had Chester back on his crutch and was walking with him to the school entrance. Chester didn’t feel so alone anymore.

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Perhaps you've heard the story of the Good Samaritan in the Bible. (Read Luke 10:30–

37.) A scholar had asked Jesus what the most important law was, and Jesus had replied that the first was to love God, but the second, which was almost as important, was to love one's neighbor. The scholar asked Jesus who his neighbor was. Jesus then told a story of a man who is robbed and left for dead on a dusty path between two cities. A religious man sees the wounded man lying by the side of the road, but does nothing to help him. Another pious man walks by. Finally, a Samaritan sees the hurting man and bandages his wounds, puts him on his donkey, and takes him to an inn.

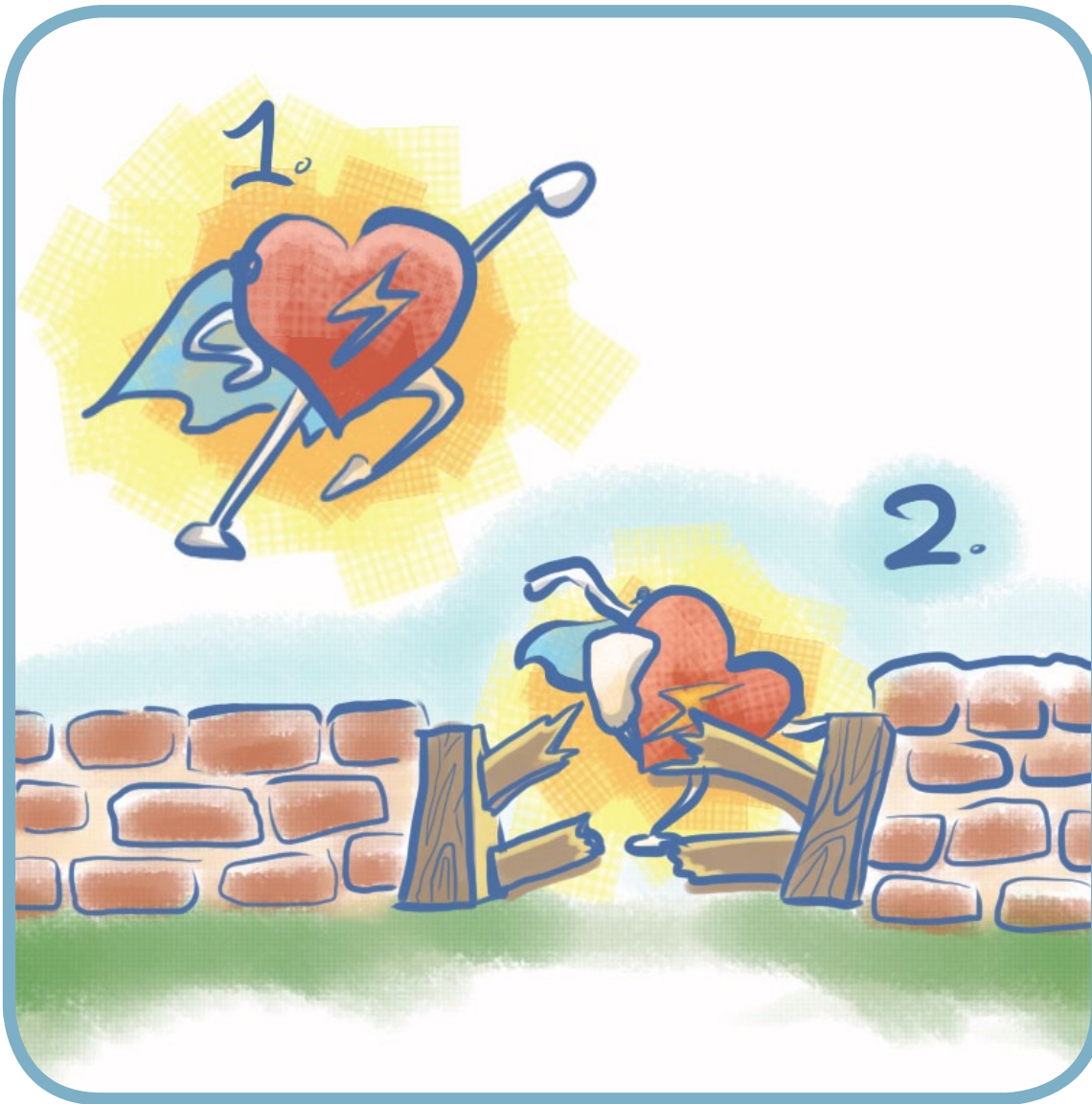
At the end of the story, Jesus asked the scholar which of the three men who passed the wounded man was the man's neighbor, and the scholar replied "the one who had mercy on him" (Luke 10:37).



When you feel an inner nudge to help **someone**, be a listening ear, be a friend, or to show love in some other way, this is God's Spirit in your life, and it is that love fruit which is mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23.

If you notice yourself lacking in love for others, go to the source: Jesus. Ask Him to fill you with His love and help you to be obedient to what His Spirit shows you to do.





Here are two important points we can learn from the parable of the Good Samaritan and the story “Chester’s First Day of School”:

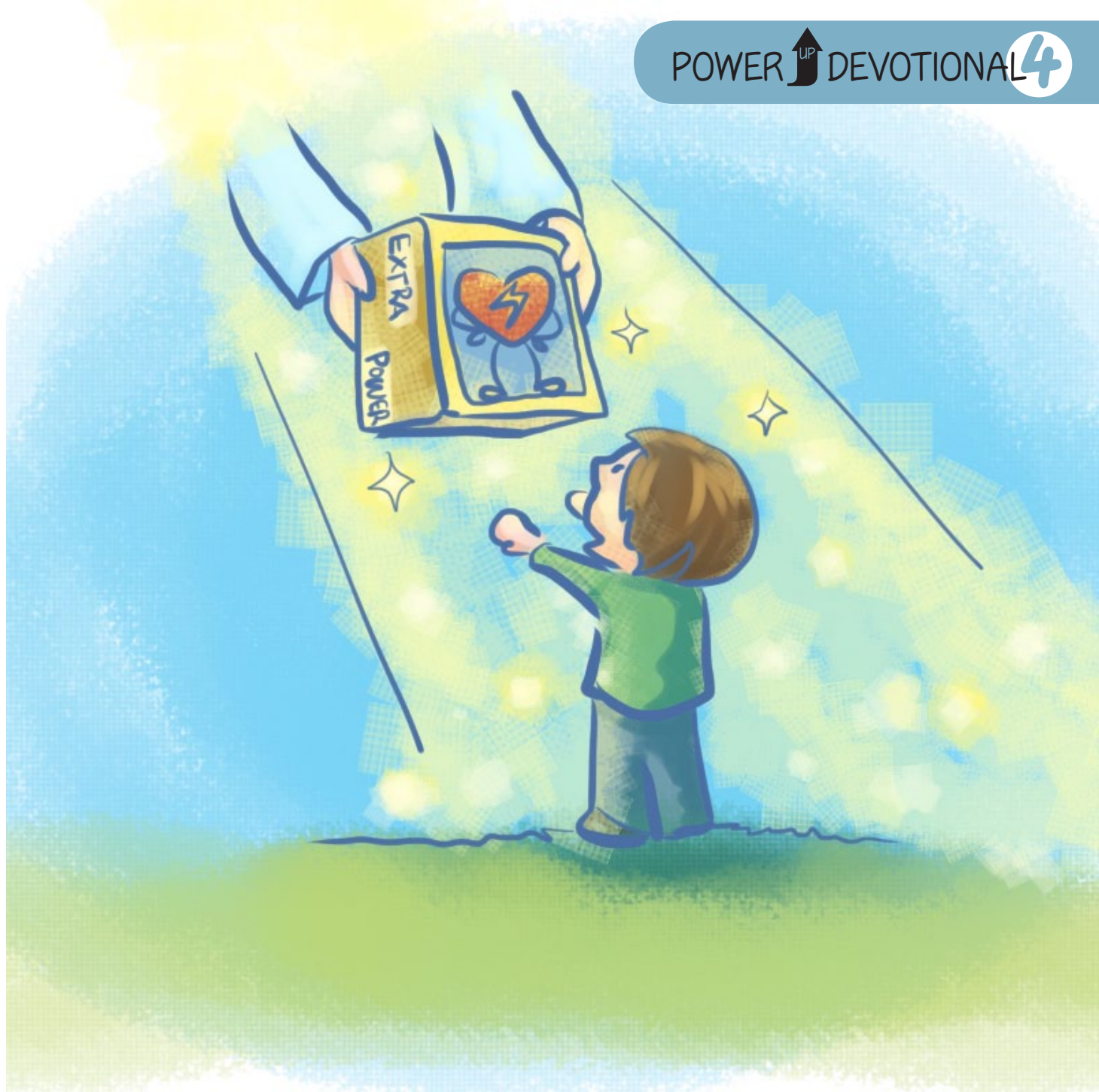
1. Love is shown through action.
2. There are no boundaries to love; we are to show love to all who need help.

We aren’t to love only the pretty people, or the people from the same country as us, or who like the same things we like, or who are easy to get along with. Jesus said that even sinners have the ability to love those who love them (Luke 6:32). But we are to love EVERYONE.

This is a pretty big thing that God is asking us to do. It would be impossible, except that God doesn’t expect us to do it by ourselves.

In 1 John 4:7 the apostle says, “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from **God.**” (NIV). And again in the next verse, “God is love” (1 John 4:8).

God is the source of all love. When we are abiding in Jesus and choosing to act according to how Jesus’ Spirit guides and directs, we’re able to base our actions on the principle of love.





Bite-sized: Love is a fruit of the Spirit which enables you to give care and comfort to others. You receive this power when you are abiding in Jesus and spending time in His Word.

Memorize it:

- 1 Corinthians 13 (This chapter helps us to know what love looks like so that we can make decisions based on love.)

Action: Can you think of other stories in the Bible, throughout history, or in works of fiction, where the characters were moved by the fruit of the Spirit of love? See if you can list 10 accounts!