

The Source of Good Things

Say you were taking your dog for a walk, and as you walked you noticed a fit-looking guy going for a jog. Later you see him in the park's sports arena doing some flips on the parallel bars. You conclude that he must be a gymnast. Maybe he isn't on the Olympic team, but his skill level shows that he spends a lot of time practicing.

Perhaps you don't particularly care for gymnastics—you're more of a baseball fan yourself, but you understand commitment to the sport you love.



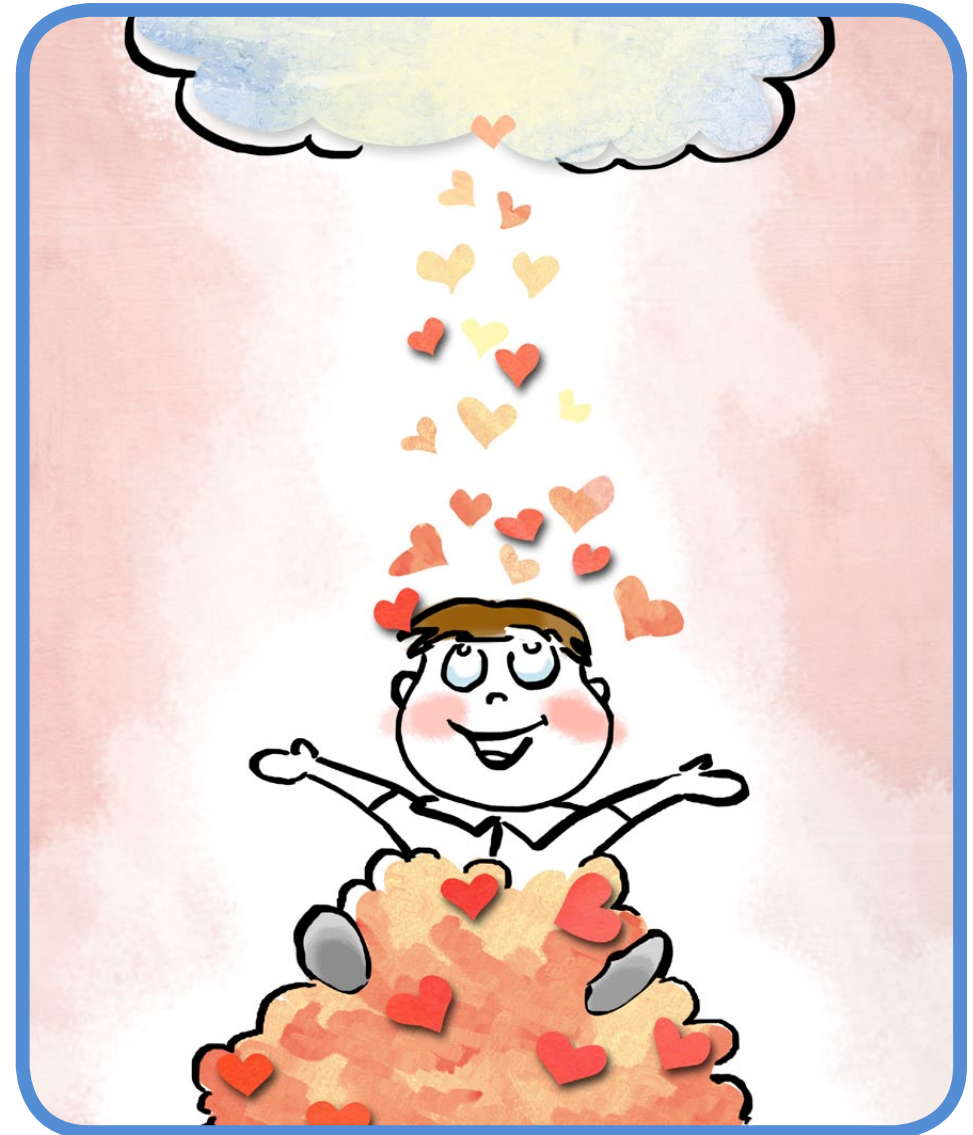


When you're into something, there are tangible manifestations—because when you love something, it shows. If you love baseball, you'll be a fan—a follower of the latest and the greatest—or perhaps you'll even play it yourself. Or, if you have an unexplainable love for butternut squash, you eat it when it's in season, and think about eating it when it's not. If you feel extra close to someone (such as a friend, a sibling, or a parent), you enjoy being with them, and want to spend time in their company.

If we're able to see obvious manifestations in our lives of the things that we love and appreciate, what are the things we can see when the God of all creation regards us with great affection? How is that love shown? The following verses are just a few of the many promises given from a loving Father to manifest His eternal and everlasting love for His children:

- 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. (John 3:16)
- Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)
- The joy of the Lord is your strength. (Nehemiah 8:10b)
- The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. (Psalm 23:1)
- And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)
- He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. (Isaiah 40:29)

(Verses taken from the New International Version.)





Because Jesus loves us, it shows. Stop for a moment and make a mental list of everything that you really like. Now imagine what it would be like to combine your liking for those various things all together into one big emotion. Jesus' personal fondness for each of us is many times more than that. Jesus' love for us is better than the best of any thing ever invented, discovered, or that could be dreamed up!

When we are close to Jesus, God's Spirit manifests itself in our lives because Jesus wants us to know that He loves us, and He wants us to be a reflection of Him to others so they can know Him. In the Bible this manifestation of His Spirit in our lives is referred to as "the fruit of the Spirit." That's because the word "fruit" used in this way means "the product or consequence of something done." ¹

Footnotes:

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What does this fruit look like? The Apostle Paul describes it in Galatians 5:22–23, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (NIV).

Bite-sized: God’s Spirit is the source of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and moderation in your life.

Memorize it:

- Galatians 5:22–23

Action: In your notebook or diary, list some of the experiences you’ve had recently in which you felt one of the fruits of the Spirit (listed in Galatians 5:22–23) present in your life.

