*Series: Life in the Spirit, 5*

A Life of Love

**1 Corinthians 13, Romans 12:9-21**

“It is in the dynamic of relationships that motives are born. The most beastly acts of barbarity are products of hate relationships; and the most daring, selfless, sacrificial acts of courage spring from love relationships.”

(from *The Love Motive*, by Jon Tal Murphree)

“One of the great reasons why God cannot bless us, is our lack of love. When the body is divided, there cannot be strength. If a vessel is cracked into many pieces, it cannot be filled. You can take part of a broken vessel and dip out a little water with it; but if you want the vessel full, the vessel must be whole. That is true of Christ’s church.

God’s son came to show what love is, and he lived a life of love here on earth with his disciples, in compassion for the poor and miserable, in love even to his enemies. He died the death of love. When he went to heaven, he sent down the Spirit of love, to come banish selfishness and envy and pride, to bring the love of God into the hearts of all people.

God has no selfishness, he keeps nothing to himself, his nature is to be always giving. God delights to pour out his love into us, his redeemed children. Why is the fruit of the Spirit love? Because God is love.”

(from *Loving God With All Your Heart*, by Andrew Murray)

“If anyone says, ‘I love God’ yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.” 1 John 4:19-21

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. Matthew 22:37-39

My prayer to love God and others:

 **I Corinthians 13** (the *Message Bible*, by Eugene H. Peterson)

 **1** If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don’t love, I’m nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate.

**2** If I speak God’s Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, “Jump,” and it jumps, but I don’t love, I’m nothing.

**3-7** If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don’t love, I’ve gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I’m bankrupt without love.

Love never gives up.

Love cares more for others than for self.

Love doesn’t want what it doesn’t have.

Love doesn’t strut,

Doesn’t have a swelled head,

Doesn’t force itself on others,

Isn’t always “me first,”

Doesn’t fly off the handle,

Doesn’t keep score of the sins of others,

Doesn’t revel when others grovel,

Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,

Puts up with anything,

Trusts God always,

Always looks for the best,

Never looks back,

But keeps going to the end.

**8-10** Love never dies. Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be canceled.

**11**When I was an infant at my mother’s breast, I gurgled and cooed like any infant. When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good.

**12** We don’t yet see things clearly. We’re squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won’t be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We’ll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us!

**13** But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love