

A cluster of white grapes is shown against a white background. The grapes are round and have a slightly textured surface. A dotted rectangular frame is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the word "LOVE" in a black, serif font.

LOVE





---

## THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVE

---

*And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us,  
and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice  
to God for a sweetsmelling savour.  
— Ephesians 5:2*

READ JOHN 15:12-17

**R**ipley's *Believe It or Not* reports that Marcel Leclure, a painter from Paris, France, wrote a very lengthy love letter. He wrote *Je vous aime* ("I love you") 1,875,000 times (1,000 times the year 1875). He was enthralled by the sound of the words, so he dictated the letter to his scribe, who wrote it, and had his hired helper repeat the phrase each time it was written. Thus the phrase was repeated in oral and written form 5,625,000 times. The story concludes with the words, "Never was love made manifest by as great an expenditure of time and money."

But I know a greater expression of love. Calvary was a much greater demonstration of love. And Christ, in our daily reading, declares what is the greatest expression of human love (v. 13). Christ commands us to "love one another," but He also gives the example "as I have loved you" (v. 12).



The essence of Christianity can be stated in one word: love. That includes God's love to us and our response of love to Him and others. John, writing in 1 John 4:19, 21 connects the two: "We love him, because he first loved us. . . . And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."

It is not by accident that the first fruit of the Spirit that Galatians 5:22 mentions is love. In a sense, love encompasses the eight fruit that follow. Joy is love's cheerfulness; peace is love's confidence; longsuffering is love's composure; gentleness is love's consideration; goodness is love's character; faith is love's trustworthiness; meekness is love's strength; and temperance is love's discipline.

The Old Testament emphasizes love. The words of Jesus in our daily reading contain two quotations: Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. The best known verse of the New Testament (John 3:16) is about God's great love; and 1 Corinthians 13, perhaps the best known chapter in the New Testament, is about the supremacy and endurance of love. Duty makes us do things well, but love makes us do them beautifully.

We love the gifts that God gives us. Let's love the Giver. The wise lover values not so much the gift of the lover as the love of the giver.



## LOVE GOD

---

*I will love thee, O LORD, my strength.*  
— *Psalm 18:1*

READ MATTHEW 22:34-40

**T**he young son of a Bible scholar said, “Papa, what do the words *cherubim* and *seraphim* mean?”

His dad explained that *cherubim* comes from a Hebrew word meaning “knowledge,” and *seraphim* has to do with “flame.” He added that it is commonly thought the cherubim are angels who excel in knowledge and the seraphim are those who excel in love.

“Then I hope,” the boy said, “that when I die I will be a seraphim. I’d rather love God than know everything.”

The boy’s theology of the afterlife may not have been the best, but his desire to love God was excellent. As shown by the daily reading, the first and foremost command is to love God. Psalm 31:23 says, “O love the LORD, all ye his saints.”

Jesus made clear that the basic way we show love to God is by obeying Him. John 14 records that Jesus explained this truth three times during His last words to the disciples on the eve of the Crucifixion. Verse 15 says, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Verse 21 says, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is