

Vital Signs are indicators of LIFE...

1. Physical signs that indicate a person is physically alive (heart beat, breathing rate, temperature, blood pressure)
2. Fruit of the Holy Spirit indicate that a person is spiritually alive. ***The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*** (Gal 5:22-23)

1. LOVE – The Chief Characteristic of the Christian Life

- No wonder... because God is love!
 1. *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1Jn 4:7,8)*
 2. *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.. (1John 4:15-16)*
 3. *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:34,35)*

2. A 'put on' that's not a 'put on'

- God's directive to love
 1. *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on** (from the heart) tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. (Col 3:12-14)*
 2. *Therefore be imitators (mimetes) of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. (Eph 5:1-2)*
 3. *Imitate (follow) me, just as I also imitate (follow) Christ. (1Cor 11:1) {And you should follow my example, just as I follow Christ's. (NLT)}*

3. What does 'love' look like?

- 1 Corinthians 13 provides us with very practical indications...
 1. *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. (1Cor 13:4-8 NIV)*

4. The Fruit of the Spirit is God's character being formed in us – It is a process of 'becoming more like Christ'

- God is not so interested in what we are, as He is in what we are becoming.
 1. Followers and disciples of Jesus Christ should be 'becoming' the most loving people on the earth (John 13:34,35)
 2. Remember, Spirit-fruit bearing is God's work in us, as we abide in Him and cooperate with His workings
 3. We can love because He first loved us (1Jn 4:19) – *Freely we have received, freely give* (Mt 10:8)
 4. Without love, nothing else matters

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. (1Cor 13:1-3)
 5. Loving God... and loving one another

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also. (1John 4:20-21)