

**What does it
mean to be
the Church?**

Why I love the Church

- **Christ is the head of the Church (Ephesians 5:23)**
- **The Church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 5:23).**
- **Christ is the Savior of the Church (Ephesians 5:23)**
- **Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her (Ephesians 5:25).**
- **Christ nourishes and cherishes the church (Ephesians 5:29).**

Although these are references to the entire body of Christ, we cannot claim to love the Church as an invisible global body of believers if we are not loving a specific Church with all the challenges involved.

The person who loves God will cultivate a deep love for the Church, not in the abstract, but in real-life relationships.

Why I love the Church?

- Those who say they love God but do not love the Church could be deceiving themselves about their love for God.
- We cannot love God in the abstract.
- We show our love for God by active, serving love for His people.
- **I John 4:20** - “For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.”

Our love for God should compel us to commit to a particular local church, not just out of faithfulness to tradition, but in devotion to our Lord who promised,

**“I will build my church;
and the gates of Hades
shall not overcome it”**

(Matthew 16:18).

Church as the dwelling place of God

“Don’t you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? God will destroy anyone who destroys this temple. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple” (I Corinthians 3:16-17).

Life and Community by the Spirit

Galatians 5:15-16 - “If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Galatians 5:24-25 - “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Life and Community by the Spirit

Galatians 5:19-21 - If we live in our own strength and according to the desires of our sinful nature, our relationships will be threatened and disrupted by – “...hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, and envy....”

Life and Community by the Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23

[NIV] - “But the fruit of the Spirit is...”

[NLT] - “But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives...”

- Each of the 9 virtues appear as commands in the Scripture (or with imperatival force).
- But we cannot produce a life that pleases God apart from God’s work in and through us

(see - Phil. 2:12-13)

Life and Community by the Spirit

- **Love:** self-sacrificial devotion for the good of others
- **Joy:** deep gladness; hope-filled satisfaction in God's goodness and love
- **Peace:** calm tranquility; a conciliatory disposition
- **Patience:** steadfast endurance in difficulty or provocation
- **Kindness:** sympathetic kindness in consideration to others
- **Goodness:** generosity that overflows from kindness.
- **Faithfulness:** true and reliable; dependability
- **Gentleness:** humble and self-deferential
- **Self-control:** keeping oneself in check; disciplined

Life and Community by the Spirit

Relationship covenant for those who walk by the Spirit

We agree (in dependence on the Holy Spirit), that our words, attitudes and actions toward one another will be expressed lovingly, joyfully, peacefully, patiently, kindly, generously, faithfully, gently and with self control.

The Back Story to our Theme

- We were created in and for glory
- We fell from glory to ruin
- Redeemed to be restored to glory

1. We were created in and for glory

Genesis 1:26-27 “Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness,...’ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

2. We fell from glory to ruin

Romans 3:22-23 “There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”

3. Redeemed to be restored to glory

Romans 3:23-24 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

II Corinthians 3:17-18 “For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

GLORY → GLORY → RUIN

The diagram consists of three words in a sequence: 'GLORY', 'GLORY', and 'RUIN'. The first 'GLORY' is positioned at the top left. A dark grey arrow points from the bottom of the first 'GLORY' to the top of the second 'GLORY', which is centered below the first. Another dark grey arrow points from the bottom of the second 'GLORY' to the top of 'RUIN', which is positioned to the right of the second 'GLORY'. All text is in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

Galatians 5:15-16 “If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. 16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Galatians 5:24-25 “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Galatians 3:2-3 “I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard?
3 Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?”

**How do we return to the
glory we were made for?**

Five Resources

1. **God's Spirit** (Ephesians 5:18-21; Galatians 5:16-17, 22-23)
2. **God's People** (Hebrews 3:13-14;13:17; Ephesians 4:11-16)
3. **God's Word** (Hebrews 4:12; I Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:21-25; I Peter 1:23;2:1)
4. **God's throne** (Hebrews 4:16; Colossians 4:12; James 4:8; I Peter 5:7-8)
5. **God's discipline** (Hebrews 12:1-11; James 1:2-5; I Peter 1:6-8)

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT



GALATIANS 5