

The great spiritual divide

Do we live One life in Christ's body or are we independently religious?

Is there in us life in the Spirit or life in the flesh?

Is our mind set on the spirit or is the mind set on the flesh?

In any case, we are at best an admixture undergoing transformation. At worst we don't have the Spirit.

We may have a new heart from God but we still have an old mind contaminated by the flesh that is our responsibility to deal with.

Romans 8:13

for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Col 3:5 ESV

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you.

Rom 8:14

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Lord, help us wield the sword of the Spirit on ourselves.

Part 1 *True faith is one life in Christ*

Part 2 *Private faith is not true fellowship*

True faith is one life in Christ

Being a Christian requires a particular Knowledge of God, true knowledge. *His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.* (2 Pet 1:3) which knowledge results in Love and fellowship, which in turn results in good works in Christ. This knowledge ensures love for God and neighbour.

Knowing God is eternal life. (John 17:3) Our combined fellowship life is with the Father and the Son. (1 John 1:3) The depth of fellowship we have with the divine should be moving us towards the same quality of life we have with one another. Knowledge, Love and fellowship are needed to Glorify God in Christ. No knowledge = No love = no fellowship = no service to God and each other. Without God's help there is no: "*Love one another as I have loved you.*"

Christ's love is full of knowledge about the Father and ourselves as we share in fellowship and service. Christ love has power to change the world, as it changes us. This is not the same love of Christ that we can claim to have without knowledge and fellowship and service. The devil is in the business of distorting knowledge so that we hold back from true fellowship. He would say you can do your own thing, independent and self-contained. However, true faith is not private faith.

Our mission in Christ also comes to be our passion as a result of knowing God's love in Christ, with whom we have ongoing loving fellowship, and who we serve with all our heart. The family of God is to transcend our earthly family. Our knowledge of God must impact the knowledge we have of one another. Our knowledge of one another is to be greater than being known in the world.

How then can we love God and His people whom we don't know? To know and to be known as a child of God is a treasure that transcends all things. This is personal knowledge which is like the knowing a wife has for her husband, it should be all knowing with nothing hidden. For the church to function as the life of Christ as His bride in the world, we need

to make ourselves known in the church while needing to know the brethren.

How can we love our brothers and sisters in Christ effectively if we don't know who they are and what they need in order to be more like Christ? We need to make ourselves known and encourage others to make themselves known. Who in the congregation knows who you really are in your inner being so they can help you grow? Who then will know what you need that they can help you with for you to become more like Christ?

Is our spiritual family and its health and function in Christ the centre of our lives? Our family relationship in Christ should be greater than anything we may have in the world. No one can say they have an earthly family that equals the heavenly. If our relationship is as it needs to be, we will have a desire to build up one another in love for Christ. As a result, we are all required to make and teach disciples to make and teach disciples to live for Him by the power of His love. Doing religious work without a devoted relationship with the Church and His people is not true fellowship.

Jesus gives us a warning.

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’” Matt 7:21-23

Service without a meaningful relationship with Christ and each other is worthless to the kingdom of God. And knowledge of each other is only as fruitful as God intended when it reflects the knowledge of our relationship with Jesus Christ.

However, the Christian is now in Christ, but not yet like Christ; so, we are to be real, willing not to hide our warts by pretending to be something we're not. And we are to be willing to share the testimony of the good work that God has worked in us so we can encourage others to resist being private.

The Christian community is Fellowship - Greek 'koinonia'

Fellowship is communion, and communion is a function of the informed heart. Communion requires true knowledge of Christ to make the right connection with the heart and each other. But the filling of the head without making a loving connection makes the gaining of doctrine an end in itself. *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and you shall love your neighbour as yourself."*

Our loving connection with God is to be replicated in our love for man made in His image and likeness; especially with those He has given to serve Christ. This is the work of God.

"Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."

Ezekiel 36:26-27

Knowledge without a sensitive heart to obey is learning without doing. Knowing and loving is true fellowship. Loving knowledge impacts the inner being with service to Christ and His Church. True faith is open to incomprehensible love.

that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Eph 3:16-19

What love we freely receive from God we freely give to His people. We are to be a living loving sacrifice. (Romans 12:1) Giving the things God has given us in service to others is how we actually find life. God is the giver of all good things, (James 1:17) and He gives us everything we need to fulfil His will. (2 Pet 1:3-4) Therefore, *"Freely you have received; freely give."*

Matt 10:8

True faith is real fellowship in community

From 'True Community' by Jerry Bridges

“In recent years, many Christian leaders and pastors have begun to emphasise the importance of community among believers. This is a much-needed corrective to our tendency toward an individualistic approach to the Christian life, but it does raise the question What is biblical community? And is there a biblical basis for using the word community in our Christian context?

Again:

To answer that question, we need to explore the meaning of the Greek word koinonia and its most common English translation, the word fellowship. Koinonia, in its different grammatical forms, is actually translated several ways in the New Testament: for example, participation, partnership, sharing, and of course fellowship. In our Christian circles, the word fellowship has come to mean little more than Christian social activity. It may mean the exchange of pleasantries over coffee and cookies at church, or the social functions of our high school or campus ministry groups. This is not the meaning of fellowship in the New Testament.

Again:

In both Acts 2:42 and 1 John 1:3, the New English Bible translates koinonia as "sharing a common life." This is the most basic meaning of koinonia, or fellowship. It is sharing a common life with other believers, a life that, as John says, we share with God the Father and God the Son. It is a relationship, not an activity.”

The community of God is where He cherishes His children

Koinonia requires real love, agape love. What does Agape love really mean in the Bible? When the word “agape” is used, it refers to a pure, sacrificial love that intentionally desires another’s highest good. “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.” John 15:13

This is the love of God. Being loved by God is to be immensely cherished by God as His Son is cherished. Cherishing is first of all love, but we can love without cherishing. This is the love that is willing to die for the beloved.

We can love things, and we can love people at a distance. We can love our football team and in the same way we can love our church. But this idea of love means having a private faith, which is loving at a distance. But the cherishing that comes from God is love, it is the highest, noblest, strongest feeling one person can have for another. Cherishing is not only a willing bonding of the outer life, but also of the mind, and it also impacts the spiritual and emotional aspects of life which we share in common union with the other.

Effectual saving faith is also affectionate faith for God and others. When we receive Jesus Christ, we receive a person whose love knows no corruption. True faith is effective faith to be intimately joined with God and each other in love. "*As I have loved you, love one another.*" However, living with someone who has 'private faith' is like being unequally yoked, you may be married, you may live in the same house, and your spouse may say they love you, but deep down you live alone. The banner for private faith is: '*Private property, keep out*' At such times it is important to remember that you are cherished by God. '*The banner over me is love.*' Song of Solomon 2:4

John Piper wrote in his book 'What is saving faith'

"Saving faith, as it receives Christ, trusting and treasuring all that God is for us in Him, is the way God unites us to Christ. In this union, God is 100 percent for us forever. He will never cast us out (John 6:37; 10:28-29). We are justified permanently (Rom. 8:30). And the very same instrument by which God unites us to Christ, namely, saving faith also severs the root of sin. The root of sin is the treasuring of other things above God. Saving faith is the God-given treasuring of Christ above all. Therefore, saving faith severs the root of sin. It does so by a positive force, the preference for Christ and all His ways. By the miraculous new birth, Christ becomes our joy. And this joy

overflows in righteousness and love (Luke 14:14; 2 Cor. 8:2; Heb. 10:34; 12:2).

Therefore, saving faith is designed by God, not only as an inward, invisible act of treasuring Christ, but also as an act that bears visible, God-glorifying fruit in bodily behaviour. It is precisely the nature of saving faith as a treasuring trust that gives it the power that severs the root of sin and bears the God-glorifying fruit of visible righteousness and love. This is the beautification of Christ's bride. She will treasure Him above all, and everything she does will reflect His worth. This will be the beauty of her holiness. She will be most satisfied in Him, and thus He will be most glorified in her."

Community is where God calls us to know Him intimately

This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

John 17:3

D.A. Carson 'The Gospel according to John'

“Eternal life turns on nothing more and nothing less than knowledge of the true God. Eternal life is not so much everlasting life as personal knowledge of the Everlasting One.

Again

it is clear that knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ entails fellowship, trust, personal relationship, faith.”

To claim to be a Christian without affectual love acting on the feelings and emotions that bind us to a local Church is inconsistent with what God teaches us about the unity of God's communing people.

The devil knows more about Jesus than all of us, but he doesn't know Him as his Lord and saviour to love and obey. He doesn't know Him as His priestly King who sacrificed Himself for his justification. He doesn't know Him as his greatest treasure who is more valued than all the world. He doesn't know Him as his firstborn brother leading the way in holiness into the presence of the Father. He doesn't know Him as his image and likeness that will transform his life from the inside out. He doesn't know Him as the one who lives in his heart so that through loving devotion he will be charged into His heavenly image before the Father. He doesn't

know Him as the true vine who shares His life and work with everyone who is joined with His body. The devil promotes private faith that lives for the externals and denies the heart. *They honour Me with their lips but their hearts are far from Me.*
Matt 15:8

True faith lives in the faith giver and is dependent on His life to live. *"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."* John 15:4-5

The unfruitful branch hasn't died with Him to self-interest so that Christ now lives in him as his life. Knowing the Father and the Son is to have knowledge of the kind of personal intimate love that cannot be known in the natural world. *"I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me."*
John 17:23

Community is Fellowship with Christ

what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.
1 John 1:3

And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.
1 John 5:20

We are in Christ together, this means we have one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one life, one truth, one hope, one love, one purpose, one body, we are one bride, one community. This truth is what draws us together in Christ, even if the majority of us cannot yet perceive it to be true. Unrealised oneness is because the imperative to deny self and take up our cross has also not yet fully been accepted by us all to be necessary for our one Life in Christ Jesus to be a reality. Jesus has said that no can follow Him without taking up their cross. The cross is the door to fellowship. Without our cross putting to death the flesh in us in order to follow Christ through the narrow gate, the way to the life we want is our private faith. Without our cross we want our personal interpretation of

the word of God. Without our cross we live for ourselves. Without our cross we want the blessings of God without the sacrifice which costs us everything in the world. Without our cross we want our rights. Without our cross we don't want those in Christ to bother us with knowledge of our self-interest. Without our cross we won't put others first. Without our cross we want Church on our own terms. Without our cross we idolise ourselves. Without our cross the oneness love of God in the Church is dead to us. True fellowship is together in Christ.

John Calvin. Ephesians 4:1-2

You see then, in effect, that what we have to consider here is that since God has not called first one man alone and then another, as though He meant to part us asunder, but directs His voice to all, and will have it serve for a holy bond to all, we must respond not only with our mouth, but also with our whole life, and there must be true unity among us. P315

Ephesians 4:11-12

It follows then that Jesus Christ intends to dispense His gifts to us in a certain manner. And from this we have to conclude that he who presumes in himself and surmises that he has all that is necessary, grossly deceives himself, and that in two ways. For there is no man who has received such perfection that he does not need to profit still from his brethren.

On the other hand, the lowlier and ignorant must not envy them that excel them in learning and wisdom, because it is God's will to have it so, and so it must be, seeing He will have His church governed by the means of men. P361-362

True fellowship means we live for one another so that we can present everyone mature in Christ. (Col 1:28) How can we provide wise counsel to our brethren to assist their growth in holiness when we don't really know who they are and how their lives are progressing?

We are all fallible creatures of a fallen world. We tend to measure others by ourselves. And our reactions to what we don't understand are often consistent with the nature of our personal brokenness from our life in the

flesh. True fellowship means God's love has no limits on transparency and therefore has no barriers to intimacy. Transparency is the door frame to closeness, and intimacy is the door to heaven. Transparency enables intimacy and fellowship with the Father and the Son by the Spirit who invites the people of God to be intimate with God.

John Piper. So when I talk about Christian fellowship as a means of perseverance, the fellowship I have in mind is the mutual bond (and I think mutual would be the adjective form of *koinonia* in English) that Christians have with Christ that unites us in a profound and eternal relationship of love that should express itself in joyful and affectionate service for each other's good.

Community is life together in communion

Our word fellowship, also translated communion come from the Greek, '*koinonia*' which is one another love in Christ. It should not be surprising that the most repeated command we have from God is to love one another.

God calls us into community in order for us to commune with Him and us with each other. To commune God's way means to focus on God with deep intimate communication, sharing our heart and mind with God and with each other who share in our commune with God.

The community of God is so closely knit it is described as a spiritual body with Jesus Christ as the head of the body. In His community He is the centre of life for the commune we call the Church. As His body, we are His tongue, we speak for Him, as His hands we work for Him, and as His feet we go into the world for Him. As His heart we love for Him. We are His means of working together for the administration of His kingdom as we remain in commune with Him for the glory of God; we call this communing abiding in Him. *"And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them."*

Acts 4:32

To be of one heart and soul means we are essentially of one mind, venerable together and transparent before God and one another. This means nothing will be hidden that could damage our love for God and

each other. We would be the same to each other as we are to God. The commune is plural, we can't commune alone. The commune of Christ lives in communion together as an ordinary, common place, every day community under God. The members who live in this communion are part of the community of Christ who love one another as He has loved us.

“We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him.”

1 John 3:16-19

Community life of faith is a corporate life

This faith life in Christ cannot be for a singular individual, but is only possible through a committed spiritual congregation working together cooperatively. *The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.*

Rom 8:16

True faith that comes from God, and the Holy Spirit produces the qualities of His nature in those born again by the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit list in Galatians is only a general indication that those in Christ will have available the life qualities of their God. *'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.'*

Gal 5:22-23

The full fruit of the Spirit is seen in the life of Christ who is our life. The whole outcome of salvation is that we are made holy as family and begin to live in the presence of God together. We are to understand that the church is the presence of the body of Christ that Christians share as believers in Christ. So, faith is living in the promised presence of God.

Instead of isolating ourselves we should be eagerly seeking the gifts of service the Spirit has provided in each member, according to His

determination, for our benefit so that we can all be built up by one another in Christ. This is the corporate life of faith.

Private faith is from the world and separates us from unity in Christ. True faith in Christ unifies all who are in Christ by the working of the Spirit of God. *'For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.'*
1 Cor 12:13

'So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.'
Eph 2:19-22

The only way God's children can reflect God's life is by daily walking truly according to the new life we have in God by the powerful working of His Spirit. There is no doubt that whoever has died with Christ to sinful flesh now lives together with Christ. *'Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.'*
Rom 6:4-5

Since we have been raised up with Him, it is very important we keep ourselves holy and blameless, because we who are washed in the blood of the Lamb are the temple of God where God lives. *'Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?'*
1 Cor 3:16

For our faith to be effective in living and loving with Christ, the indwelling Lord needs to be more real to us than all the pleasures and comforts of the world. He needs to be more real to us than all the trials and disagreeable discomforts of the world. We need to abide together in Christ in community and Christ must live in us. *'Christ in you, the hope of glory.'*
Col 1: 27

Community is loving one another in all things

This love of God for one another is the love that seeks the highest good for all, just as God in Christ seeks to transform us into the image of Christ. The ‘one another’ verses of the Bible that relate to our shared lives in Christ indicate what His fellowship is supposed to look like as we love one another.

Love one another is mentioned 17 times. ★

★ *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.* John 13:34

★ *By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*” John 13:35

★ *“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.* John 15:12

★ *This I command you, that you love one another.* John 15:17

★ *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honour;* Rom 12:10

★ *Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another;* Rom 13:8

★ *Abound in love for one another,* 1 Thess 3:12

★ *you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;* 1 Thess 4:9

★ *the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater;* 2 Thess 1:3

★ *a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,* 1 Pet 1:22

★ *keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.* 1 Pet 4:8

★ *we should love one another;* 1 John 3:11

★ *and love one another, just as He commanded us.* 1 John 3:23

★ *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.* 1 John 4:7

★ *Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.* 1 John 4:11

★ *if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.* 1 John 4:12

★*Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another.* 2 John 1:5

Be of the same mind. Rom 12:16; Rom 15:5

let us not judge one another anymore, Rom 14:13

Build up one another. Rom 14:19

Accept one another. Rom 15:7

Abel to admonish one another. Rom 15:14; Col 3:16

Greet one another with a holy kiss. Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12

Have the same care for one another. 1 Cor 12:25

Serve one another. Gal 5:13

Showing tolerance for one another in love. Eph 4:2

SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE...for we are members of one another. Eph 4:25

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other
Eph 4:32

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.
Eph 5:19

Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Eph 5:21

with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; Phil 2:3

bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, Col 3:13

with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another Col 3:16

comfort one another. 1 Thess 4:18

encourage one another. 1 Thess 5:11 Heb 10:25

build up one another. 1 Thess 5:11

Live in peace with one another. 1 Thess 5:13

always seek after that which is good for one another. 1 Thess 5:15

But encourage one another day after day, Heb 3:13

stimulate one another to love and good deeds. Heb 10:24

encouraging one another Heb 10:25

<i>Do not speak against one another</i>	James 4:11
<i>Do not complain, brethren, against one another,</i>	James 5:9
<i>Therefore, confess your sins to one another,</i>	James 5:16
<i>pray for one another.</i>	James 5:16
<i>Be hospitable to one another.</i>	1 Peter 4:9
<i>As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another.</i>	1 Pet 4:10
<i>keep fervent in your love for one another.</i>	1 Pet 4:8
<i>have fellowship with one another.</i>	1 John 1:7

The Community of faith serves the Church with Christ

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

Eph 2:10

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gifts....for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”

Eph 4:7, 12-13

John MacArthur wrote: “God’s truth is not fragmented and divided against itself, and when His people are fragmented and divided it simply means they are to that degree apart from His truth, apart from the faith of right knowledge and understanding. Only a biblically equipped, faithfully serving, and spiritually maturing church can attain to the unity the faith. Any other unity will be on a purely human level and not only will be apart from but in constant conflict with the unity of the faith. There can never be unity in the church apart from doctrinal integrity.”

The Church is Christ working through us according to His word. When the truth of the redeemed people of God is found in the members, they are living as the flesh of His flesh, the bone of His bone, with one life in the Spirit. When this reality of God becomes no more than a figment of

our imagination, then the spiritual unity of our one life in Christ disappears like a mist in the hot sun.

As with all the instructions of God, we can see that the opposite to what He commands is evident in a lack of holy motivation and obedience. Therefore, if we are not loving and living for Christ, *building up of the body of Christ*, we are still living for ourselves. He died for all that we would be one life in Him, living His life by the power of the Spirit as the children of obedience.

"For just as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one part, but many....so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same care for one another. And if one part of the body suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if a part is honoured, all the parts rejoice with it. Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it."

1 Cor 12:12-14, 25-27

If we live day by day as being anything less than actuality joined together with Christ in our hearts, and being renewed in our minds, to be of the same mind in Christ, then the claims of the church to be unified in Christ as His life on earth for the effective work of God no longer has the authentication needed to be seen to be true in practice.

Sinclair Ferguson wrote in 'Maturity'

“In addition, the Corinthians valued the personal reception of spiritual gifts by themselves more than the employment of them for others. In this way they placed a premium on abilities rather than on loving. In fact, Paul says that they were zealots when it came to spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14:12), but in the process they were employing a false set of values. As a result, they had become puffed up instead of being built up.”

Summons to service

“The ability to serve others is a gift of grace. When Paul discusses the different forms of service exercised in the church, he describes them as gifts. This is clear in Rom 12:3-13, 1 Cor

12-14, and, perhaps supremely, in Eph 4:1-17. In this last passage he sees the ministry of the word (given by Christ through apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers) nurturing the whole body of Christ as members mutually upbuild one another in love through the use of their particular gifts (Eph. 4:7-11). Such ministry is rooted in our personal consecration to the Lord (Rom 12:1-2 leads to Rom. 12:3-13).

Alongside this lies a further emphasis: true service involves self-denying love for the church (Eph. 4:15; 1 Cor. 13). The same principle that guides a husband in his marriage, guides the Christian in relation to the bride of Christ. The Jesus Principle' is also the church's principle: we are to be willing to lay down our life for the sheep (John 10:11, 15). This makes our service Jesus-like.”

Are we true to our calling?

Salvation is about God calling us to intimate continual communion with Himself through the work of His Son. The work of the Son is the Church created in His image because all are born again in the image of Christ, one life, one Spirit. All those in the Church should be growing in unbroken intimacy in their communion with God and each other. The spiritual growth of the Church in the likeness of Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of all who are in Christ because they have been born again by the same Spirit of intimate love to live in communion with God.

All the children of God who have been washed by the blood of Christ are cleansed to remove the contamination of the world of sin so they can share the intimacy of the Father and the Son by the powerful working of the Spirit. If we are still holding back, resisting the need to be vulnerable and transparent with the members of the Church, we are resisting the work of the Spirit of God and we quench the Spirit, we douse His fire in us so we grow cold in our affections for one another and Christ.

The church is to display the transparent beauty of holiness found in the wonderful intimacy to be experienced with God our heavenly Father and His beloved only Son. *Therefore confessing our sins to one another,*

(James 5:16) and *bearings each other's burdens*. (Gal 6:2) And this should never be found to be as scarce as hen's teeth, because we are called to this life and equipped for community by our rebirth through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Church is not a building; the Church is created by the binding together of many humble and broken hearts for the purpose of intimate communion shared with God in Christ. This is a Godly intimacy only made possible through the sacrifice of the Son of God who now lives in the redeemed community by the Spirit of God as the Church.

What the Church lacks most today is this transparent unending intimacy of communion with God and each other. The communion of the children is to have no discernible difference between what is experienced between the Father and Son. But we often find every obstacle is erected to prevent sacrificial intimacy by whatever religious or worldly means that can be utilised for the express purpose of denying the establishment of unfettered devotion and service in the communion of the saints in the Kingdom of God. The enemy of God has had some success in taking away our power to serve God by denying godly communion.

At the behest of the prince of the flesh we hide from each other and God, even in our Church services, and then we continue to hide from each other if we bother to stay for a cuppa, for even then we talk of everything other than what God has been talking to us about, which should concern all who are in Christ and not be taken as some private affair that's nobody else's business. We might even ask "how the week has been" but we don't really want to hear what is going on in your life. "How are you" is supposed to get the response "fine thank you." Most of the time we only asked "how you are" for the sake of protocol, with no actual interest in your thoughts and feelings, or the struggle you have privately endured, and for which help is needed from the people of True Faith.

The fellowship of the saints is to be a mutual hungering and thirsting after God together as a deer pants for water so our souls long for communion with God and each other with no divisions or barriers to divide and destroy divinely created intimacy. There is one body of Christ; and One Spirit of God revealing the truth of God to the world through the intimate love each one of us has with one another, so the

world may know we are disciples of Jesus Christ. This means we are of one mind with God. The apostle Paul: *'Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.'*

Phil 2:2

We are not called to live as if we are independent; and isolated from the only body that gives life to the world. We are called to know the fullness of joy in intimacy with God and one another because we are hidden together in God through Christ.

Col 3:3

Only when we are committed to communion with God and each other in the same way Jesus Christ was committed to communion with the Father, will we see God's will manifest in the lives of all who claim Christ as Lord and Saviour. Then all of us will humble ourselves before God and each other in the likeness of Christ for the work of the Gospel in the world.

Part of the Lord's Prayer for our intimacy says: *"that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one."*

John 17:21

Where does the rubber hit the road?

For Christian fellowship to have the right effect so that we can know and be known, there must be transparent intimacy otherwise we cannot bare one another's burdens and build up one another in love. We make much of doing the work of Christ, but we do less about putting on Christ who produces the fruit that will have eternal significance.

Many people think life for everyone else is the same as they conceive it to be according to their own understanding. But we only have relational relevance that can change things to the extent that our concept of reality matches the lives of others according to the word of God. Christians are to build their reality on Jesus Christ who is their rock. The one another imperatives in God's word are the cement that glues us to the Rock and each other.

The Spirit Himself compels the believer with (*agapaó*) love, to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice for the good of others, which is our acceptable sacrifice of worship.

John 15:13; Rom 12:1-21

Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament-
“Agapao speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in an object which causes one to prize it. It springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object. It is a love of esteem and approbation. The quality of this love is determined by the character of the one who loves, and that of the object loved.”

To be part of the true community of Christ requires our death to self. The reason we have received 51 imperative commands designed is to encourage our *agapaó* so that we can learn to put off the flesh of self and put on the sacrificial love of Christ. The more we implement the 51, the more we reveal the *agapaó* love of Christ so that the world might see our good deeds and give glory to God.

The fellowship of the saints is to be a mutual hungering and thirsting after God together as a deer pants for water so our souls long for communion with God and each other with no divisions or barriers to divide and destroy divinely created intimacy. There is one body of Christ; and One Spirit of God revealing the truth of God to the world through the intimate love each one of us has with one another, so the world may know we are disciples of Jesus Christ. This means we are of one mind with God. The apostle Paul: *'Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.'*

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No one can live as an island. God has determined that all His children are co-dependent on one another. No one can say "I don't need another,"

any other for that matter. The body of Christ means no one is left out of sharing in the transformation of our lives. Everyone is equipped to provide an essential component of the working of God for the good of all. No one knows it all without all the others.

But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. If they were all one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those members of the body which we deem less honourable, on these we bestow more abundant honour, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honour to that member which lacked, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

1 Cor 12:11-27

We often approach discipleship by focusing on the visible work of faith, and spend little time being involved with the heart of the person we are discipling. The heart requires the massage of our presence in the daily activity of the life of the one we are building up. Jesus walked every day with His disciples. He slept with them, He ate with them, He was hungry

with them, He got wet with them, He saw everything that was on their mind and all they did. He suffered the loss of a friend with them. His teaching was in the context of their daily lives. In the same way the one another imperatives He commands are the engine room that makes our corporate service acceptable to God.

The new converts in Acts 2ff shared their lives, maybe not as intimately as with Jesus in the flesh, but still intimately. The issue was that they were all transparently vulnerable to one another, so that they could build up one another because they were aware of the weakness of each other. None of us knows it all, we don't even know enough to survive as an overcomer alone. The emphasis is on US. WE, TOGETHER.

There are many trials we may have to endure under the hand of God that no one knows about. We may be unequally yoked. We may have rebellious children. We may have endured an extremely tortuous and painful life. We may have been rejected by the church for Christ's name's sake. We may be constantly misunderstood. We may be unjustly accused. We may be blindly required to take responsibility for things that are not ours. We may be living alone in the Church.

If someone has endured suffering and abuse from an early age, they will be much more sensitised to seeing and experiencing abuse in all things. And after the pressure to suppress its memory in their deepest mind has been relieved by the love of Christ setting them free; and even then, as a result of the past life that God had providentially provided for them, their interests in spiritual things will be in accord with their suffering in the world; so their passion will be to correct the same errors they see in the Church. After that there is the matter of our personal hidden sin no one knows about. The fact is, we don't even begin to know most people in the Church. Mostly we just don't know others, and we don't know ourselves. *"Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall."*

1 Cor 15:57

We profess to live in the body of Christ, but we often live a separated life by choice. Our words of unity in Christ don't always match our actions. By implementing the 51 imperative commands we demonstrate to the saints that they are valued and included in our sphere of influence.

Home Churches will not be the solution for the need of practical spiritual community, if the contact doesn't include loving fellowship according to the implementation of the divine imperatives that puts sacrificial love into actions. Loving the saints has to go deeper than the structure. Programs and our processes can never replace the need for the need to be cherished by the family of God, and cherishing requires knowing and being known for who we really are as individuals.

Jesus said "*Love one another as I have loved you*" He didn't just mean without regard to the person's physical needs and desires. For His love is to be experienced in the innermost part of our being.

If the practice of our faith doesn't include knowing and being known in relation to the inner man, then we have religion without a heart, and we have sidestepped the purpose of love to transform the fabric of the soul. As the ministers of the love of Christ, each member of the body is in effect a physician administering the correct medicine needed to build up the saints according to their particular needs at a particular time. If we don't know what needs to be healed, we will administer incorrectly.

True faith is one life in Christ.

True faith is divine communion. True faith needs and desires spiritual interaction with everyone who is in Christ. True faith is like God's Omelette. All the eggs broken and mixed together over the heat of God's perfecting fire. Our Omelette is as cooked as our sanctification allows. No Omelette is fully cooked on earth. True faith lives for Christ having begun to die daily to independent self. Luke9:23

Knowing each other is very important if we are to be able to minister to one another effectively. And even if someone opens themselves for us, our perception may will be a distortion gained through our own habitual fleshly filters. As a result, our tendency to misunderstand needs to be taken into consideration.

D.A. Carson. 'A call to spiritual reformation ' On Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians he wrote.

"Nevertheless he here prays that the Christians' love will increase and overflow "for each other" (that is, for fellow believers in the church) "and for everyone else" (that is, for

those outside the fellowship). Similarly he writes a little later in the letter, "Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else" (5:15).

This is a hard, brutal world. There are many protestations of affection, many forms of pseudo-love, whether in ancient Greco-Roman civilization or in our own. But Christian love, mature, deep, and unqualified, is a rare commodity. When it is displayed, it speaks volumes to a society that gorges itself in self-interest, lust, mutual- admiration pacts, even while it knows very little of love."

Private faith is not true fellowship

Private faith is an oxymoron

Faith In Jesus Christ is very personal, but true faith can never be private.

There are two kinds of Faith. Private faith is not true fellowship.

Private faith is fleshly and doesn't need constant input from anyone else in Christ. Private faith is like having a number of eggs packed in a carton, all separate and independent. No constant meaningful spiritual interaction is desired with the others.

The motto of private faith. "*you will be like God.*" (Gen 3:5) Independent and with a sovereign private domain. The devil plays with the mind, so as we think, we are.

A.W. Tozer 'Man: the dwelling place of God '

The apostolic fellowship is also a fellowship of truth. The inclusiveness of the fellowship must always be held along with the exclusiveness of it. Truth brings into its gracious circle all who admit and accept the Bible as the source of all truth and the Son of God as the Saviour of men. But there dare be no weak compromise with the facts, no sentimental mouthing of the old phrases: "We are all headed for the same place.... Each one is seeking in his own way to please the Father and make heaven his home."

We say we are saved by faith alone, but faith is never to be lived alone. Faith never isolates us from the people of faith. God saved us into His church, to live in community, to grow up together so that everyone can be made complete in Christ. And while we are growing up, God commands us to share faith with the lost world. There is no such thing as "private faith" if we are members of the body of Christ.

The devil makes sure there is danger in making ourselves known in the church so that it can easily be interpreted as self-promoting, thus giving others an opportunity to remain in hiding. The last thing Jesus Christ would have done would be to hide from His disciples who He really was, because knowledge is needed for life. He was also in the business

of showing His disciples who they really were. And because He made Himself known, the world said He was self-promoting and they killed Him. You would expect that from the world, but surely not the church!

Private faith is not true faith

The world has a private faith, and this is not true fellowship. Nothing has changed. Saving our lives in the world, or keeping ourselves private in the church is hiding from God and each other.

The world applauds the right of the individual to privacy. The world does what is right in their own eyes. When we come to live in Christ, we surrender our declaration of independence and commit ourselves to live with Christ and His people.

Even then, when we are included in the family of God, we bring with us some of the independent thinking of the world, and we don't realise we are actually living in denial of that which we claim to cherish so much. We work out our sanctification by putting to death the mind of the flesh. Even as we make progress there is still more work to do. The one another teaching we have received from God is to correct what we don't see as flesh working against His will. When we hold to a little bit of private faith, we not only deny the unity of the body of Christ, but we deny Christ as Lord and master over all of our life.

Unfortunately, all of us have hidden ourselves to some degree or other, because all of us have naturally erected a veil between ourselves and others. We may be saved from the darkness into the light of the kingdom of God, but we still tend to live in the shadows and resist complete exposure to the light of the Spirit needed to be made complete in the body of Christ.

Col 1:28

Our hiding becomes obvious if we want to talk about what God is doing or has done in us in an attempt to break down the barriers. If we attempt to enquire about what God is doing in the lives of others, the subject is often quickly changed. If we are zealous for the truth of the scriptures and the one life of the church, we will question everything that has a hint of separation, and then we may well be considered to be trouble makers.

Private faith is an excellent means of promoting external religion without the power to overcome our separation from one another because it denies the existence of the Spirit to govern all things in the life of the believer. *If we walk by the Spirit we will not carry out the desires of the flesh.* Gal 5:16

Private faith is a shell without the living yolk of the chicken inside. It may be in the nest beside the living eggs but does not share in their potential for life.

Private faith has become so normal that AW Tozer even wrote that those who seek authenticity in Christ will find that the saint has to walk alone.

The pain of loneliness arises from the constitution of our nature. God made us for each other. The desire for human companionship is completely natural and right. The loneliness of the Christian results from his walk with God in an ungodly world, a walk that must often take him away from the fellowship of good Christians as well as from that of the unregenerate world. His God given instincts cry out for companionship with others of his kind, others who can understand his longings, his aspirations, his absorption in the love of Christ; and because within his circle of friends there are so few who share his inner experiences he is forced to walk alone. The unsatisfied longings of the prophets for human understanding caused them to cry out in their complaint, and even our Lord Himself suffered in the same way. AW Tozer *Man the dwelling place of God*

Working in harmony with one another we are to be making disciples by putting on Christ. Jesus shows us that this means a close daily walk where we cannot hide who really are. With private faith we think we are discipling when we hardly spend any intimate time with others.

If a Christian today can feel like such a stranger in his community, should he then hold to a private faith? This article addresses this question, and explains that if you allow your faith to be pushed to the private sphere, it will have a massive impact on your life as a whole. Ultimately, private faith is no faith. The only defensible answer to secularization is to let one's faith

permeate all of his life. Source: De Reformatie. 3 pages.
Translated by Bert Stulp.

Private faith is the power of one to the exclusion to others

How urgent is the need to put to death what is earthly in us. Private faith must be killed off if we are to be free from all hypocrisy and the practice of claiming to have higher standards or more noble beliefs than is the case. The power of one is the life of the unbeliever who walks according to their own understanding isolated from God. Because our sanctification is incomplete, every baptised believer has some level of private faith that must be put off depending of the thoroughness of their sanctification.

Many believe they can pray and be Christians without the Church because they want to know God on their own terms. They are unwilling to conform to the teaching of Jesus while insisting we accept their terms. *'But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.'*

1 Tim 4:1

Having a relationship with God is about us, one another, gathered together with the Lord. God calls us to daily communion with Himself and each other as the Church. The defensive armour of private faith will never spontaneously surrender the inner self to others and allow others to require they surrender all they have decided is their own domain.

Therefore, since His people are the Church, and the Church is replicating His Holy and righteous life of humility and sacrificial love, everyone who comes to His Church should have left their private life behind and now have nothing to hide in order to grow together into the image of Christ who is our God and saviour; as we grow in our knowledge by obedient faith, for the love of Christ controls us.

2 Cor 5:14

The only thing that impedes spiritual growth is the flesh and our private interests of the world that we cling to through the blindness of pride in order to protect ourselves from having to change. This is the tyranny of sin that we must repent from daily by surrendering to Christ as Lord and Saviour so we can put to death all that remains of self-protection and the pride of the flesh that has contaminated our souls. Sin hides behind the idea we must protect ourselves, but God calls on us to offer this self as a

living sacrifice. *'I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.'*
Rom 12:1

Private faith denies Christian accountability

John Piper.

The point behind accountability isn't just to share about sin and hear the hard words of rebuke. Though the wounds of a friend are a sign of their faithfulness, accountability should also be a time to build each other up and encourage each other toward God's goodness and grace found in the cross of Christ. My friends and I reminded each other who we were in Christ: accepted completely, daughters of the Most High, and forgiven. We reminded each other that we knew Jesus, he was ours and we were his, and we could draw near to him and his throne of grace. In my experience, there were five characteristics that make accountability particularly life-giving:

1. We expressed a genuine love for one another because God had transformed our friendship into sisterhood. We were devoted to one another. John 15:17; Rom 12:10
2. Each week we had a choice to extend grace or judgment. We could display the love and grace that God had already extended through the judgment of Jesus on the cross. Rom 14:13
3. Each of us had an opportunity to be honest, which we may not have accomplished had we not established the habit. Eph 4:25
4. There were times we would need to extend forgiveness. Honest friendship sometimes leads to hurting one another. Also as one person might go through a season of struggling with the same temptation we'd learn to bear with our friend.
Rom 12:16; Col 3:13
5. We bore each other's burdens in prayer. Gal 6:2

As much as people resist the imperatives of one another accountability clearly explained to us in the Scriptures, is to the same degree their faith is about themselves, and not about living for and serving the purpose of the whole body of Christ. This insular private religion is not conducive

to denying ourselves and laying down our life for others as Jesus commanded.

Faith is not a private matter, it is the work of God convicting sinners, which brings about repentance, so that an obedient relationship with God in Christ is possible in conjunction with His body the church. Private faith is actually in opposition to God's will.

This new life in Christ reveals our cooperative responsibility as a people of God, for we are all working together with Christ by the power of the Spirit. God is the originator of all things pertaining to life; and man is to respond to His work. The children of God are one Spirit with God and each other in order to reflect the life and purpose of their Father. This faith life produces family affection for all who are of the same faith.

Without the family cooperation needed for life in the Lord, there is no effective affectionate life in Christ. True faith changes our desire to work together for His pleasure. And Godly faith turns our private desires into His desires as we live as one family. True faith makes His divine purpose our corporate responsibility. Without this disposition of the heart of faith motivated by love, we will bight and devour one another.

Our Father has given us brothers and sisters to assist us in the process of our spiritual growth. But when we insulate ourselves from their God given ability to help, we are simply clinging to the pathetic idea that our faith is a private matter, and of no business of others in Christ.

Therefore, private faith prevents accountability which is needed for our unity in Christ. No accountability means no unity. Unity is only possible when the scriptures alone are the measure for our life. When we won't agree on all that scripture teaches, we will not make ourselves accountable to one another. When we require things that are not supported by scripture, or when we take scriptures out of their proper context, we ensure disunity.

Faith comes from God by the word of God, all for the glory of God. Faith is about God giving us the belief that unites us to the living Christ, to serve Him only. So, faith is never to be about "me." Faith requires the death of "me." Faith is communal, it is never singular, because faith is

the glue that binds all believers to one life in the living Saviour Jesus Christ.

Those who have received saving faith from God are cemented into His family, which, in love and divine intimacy, exceeds even the most loving and supportive family of man. Unless the attitude of self-denial that was in Christ is in us, we won't live for those who God has chosen to be given to Christ who still live in the world, having not as yet heard the gospel in the depth of their heart and repented.

Much of what passes for Christianity today is about "me" and it is idolatry. Real followers of Christ have undertaken to die to "me" daily by denying themselves and taking up their cross. And they have commenced to eject out of the mind all inclinations of selfish influence that remain from the natural man.

If we have a privatised faith, we are not the slaves who only live for Christ, and we don't serve Christ for the good of others. If we are not living as slaves for the purpose of working for His redemption for sinners, we are only giving Him lip service. No, No. *'Not by way of eye service, as people pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.'*
Eph 6:6

The default setting of our thinking from the old man of sin is about "me" what I want, how I feel, what I enjoy, and my plans for happiness, all this in exclusion from the presence of God. Therefore, the default way of the mind needs to be on Christ so our faith is not about us as separate individuals, our belief, our worship, our plans, our privacy. *'But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.'* 1 Cor 6:17

As with all the instructions of God, we can understand that the opposite to what He commands will be evident in a lack of holy motivation and obedience. Therefore, if we are not loving, and living for Christ, we are still living for ourselves. He died for all, *'one has died for all, therefore all have died;'* (2 Cor 5:14) so that we would be one life in Him, living His life by the power of the Spirit as the children of obedience.

When we separate the living Christ from the true doctrine of the church, we end up with a wooden edifice where love no longer has a part in meaningful fellowship. Love has then taken on another meaning that

denies intimacy with God. The living organisms has passed away. The life of the Spirit no longer produces the passion for self-sacrifice in building up the body in love and making disciples of all nations.

Without the unity of one life in Christ we have form without power. Faces without personal knowledge and intimacy. Law without grace in our relationships. Religious structure without the sacrificial blood and bones that is needed to get results. We have an oorganisation without the living organisms. Arms without legs. Head knowledge without a heart to reveal the living Christ. We have private religion without soul connectedness. We conduct church as a business in the world without the life of God. We lose the core of our mission to make and train discipline from all nations and instead live for the outward form without the reality of His inner life by the Spirit.

Private faith serves the interest of the individual

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” Luke 6:45

Many people claim Jesus Christ as Lord, but few people live obediently with Him on a daily basis. Many have taken up religious practice without receiving Jesus Christ to direct their life in the way He lived with God.

Many will try to live good lives and believe they are entitled to be accepted into heaven, but have never repented from self interest in order to live for Him who died and rose again on our behalf.

Multitudes wear a cross as an ornament, but it is hard to find someone who has denied themselves and taken up their cross to follow the example of the One who died in our place so we can walk with Him. The visible Church is not always the one that has the indwelling Spirit for power to love sacrificially as Jesus requires.

But we need not be deceived. Jesus tells us how we can judge a person’s character. What is on the inside is what the tree is really “made of” and will determine what kind of fruit the tree produces. Jesus says that the same is true of people.

In Luke 6:45, Jesus says that people can be judged by what they do because these things reveal what is really going on inside the person: “A

good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of." If we want to know what is on the inside of a person, we simply watch their actions; and the way they speak on a daily basis. This is being realistic. *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*

What the heart values most it serves most. It depends on whether it is for the world or the kingdom of God. How are we spending our days, are we seeking to please ourselves or God? Do we invest our time pursuing the things of the world, or are we seeking to walk with God to fulfil His desires?

It is then we can know what He meant when He said: *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

John 13:34-35

The love that comes from God is a desire rising in our heart for Him and His people, that desire is not just some enjoyable fleshly emotion. The love of God goes far beyond our quest for sweet emotional desire. In Christ we make ourselves sacrificially available, always honest, showing compassion and mercy to everyone. These are unavoidable factors that belong in any worthwhile relationship, especially with those who commune in the Church. The love of God includes our affections but is driven by self sacrifice.

God's desire is that those who are loved can show the richness of His life by loving others. This desire for love to be made evident in us is the grace of God that we now share in Christ. The Father's love in Christ comes as the result of costly sacrifice. This willingness to deny self for the good of others is how God's love can be readily apparent in the lives of those who are in communion with God. *"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."* John 13:35

The love of God moves the heart to be sensitive to the touch of God. The quality of God's love is clear in the Bible. *'Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take*

into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Cor 13:4-7

The love of God cannot be shown fully if we remain private and secretive. True love requires we are vulnerable and transparent as we deny ourselves and look to the spiritual needs of others as our Father in heaven does. A failure to deny self will mean our words of love will be superficial and a worthwhile community will be impossible. *“For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it”* Luke 9:24

When we are too emotionally attached to self-preservation, we need to change the object of our affection to Christ, so we walk by faith and not by sight. God offers us refuge from feeling that we have to put up barriers and be on guard so we can come together with nothing to hide.

With private faith we use religion to hide from one another

Even now in the church we say we want to know the truth, and the truth exposes darkness, but we only want the truth as long as the truth is not about us, because we can't handle the truth that exposes our darkness with the light of God. We are in Christ but we are still fallible creatures of a fallen world. We tend to measure others by ourselves. And our reactions to what we don't understand are often consistent with the nature of our personal brokenness.

A good example is given by the Lord Jesus when He talks about how we want to deal with a little thing in someone's life while we want to hide a storm in ours. (Matt 7:3-5) Serious self-exposure to the truth of God's light is the first step towards communion with God and each other. Our God has come to set everyone who is in Christ free from their darkness and spiritual death so they can have His light and life. Consequently, Jesus began preaching by saying: *“repent for the kingdom of God is at hand.”* Matt 3:2

In other words, if we want to be free from the darkness we have to turn away from self-determination and spiritual isolation; and place ourselves completely under the rule and dominion of the God of Light. The Salvation of Christ moves us from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of Light in communion with Christ. *'Then Jesus again spoke to*

them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." John 8:12

The Lord Jesus takes our death and darkness and gives us His Life and Light. The communion of light is consistent with a life of humility, obedience, vulnerability, and transparency; all of which are to be self evident in the life of Christ in His Church.

Our sanctification from God is the process of growing in the light by putting to death that which is still earthly and dark in us and causes fractures in the community of love. Life in the light requires we are vulnerable and transparent so the Spirit can work through us. This is the condition of the heart of Paul who wrote: *"For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."* 1 Cor 2:2

If we consider the depth of intimacy the Holy Spirit makes possible between man and God, and between one other; it is often likely we are often very shallow people, because we are not always open to what God has given us in communion with each other.

Private faith avoids intimacy as if it threatens our life

To live a life pleasing to God we need to ensure we remain open and available to all in the Church with the love and devotion of God. But this is not always the case as Paul reminds us. *"We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us."* 2 Cor 6:12

When we hold God at a safe distance, we are afraid of His intimacy, because we have a fear of being exposed to His Holy presence, and we forget our hearts are an open book to His piercing gaze. In the same way we also avoid real depth of intimacy with one another because we want to remain as we are; we fear we won't be liked if what we accept in ourselves is known in the Church.

Because of our own doing, we claim we desire intimacy with God's people but we avoid honest vulnerable transparency like the plague. Public confession of personal sin in the Church is avoided at all cost, so the words of James are skipped over as if they were never written. *'Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.'* James 5:16

If we are hiding our inner self from the scrutiny of others, we are also hiding ourselves from God, regardless of what we claim otherwise. Godly intimacy is what God calls fellowship. The Holy Spirit is continually asserting His right through providence to lead us into true fellowship. Are we submissive to His efforts to bless us together as one life in the presence of God?

In order to maintain private faith and our inner privacy, we need to have built up barriers to keep others from intruding into our private space. This been the case, not only are we preventing others from getting close to us, but we are excluding ourselves from real intimate involvement with others in communion.

Our flesh wants to protect itself from having to grow up on the inside in terms of our emotionally, our minds and spirituality, and we don't like struggle with the result that we fail the test of becoming vulnerable and open to the heart of others and God Himself.

When we love as Christ makes possible by giving us His life, we open ourselves up to having that love rejected by others, as Jesus was rejected, in our homes, in our churches and especially by our enemies. But this trial of our faithfulness is part of our God given growing pains, so that we look to Christ and love with Him because we still need each other when the body is unwilling.

There are to be no lone strangers in the body of Christ. The Church is saved to share Communion with God in order to live in intimate fellowship with God as the people of God. Having a relationship with God is not just about us as individuals, we are one body of another who we love, Jesus Christ our Lord. We gathered together with the Lord to love others as He loves us.

To claim to be a Christian without binding oneself to a local Church and getting personally involved in the lives of the members is inconsistent with what God teaches us about the unity of God's communing people. To separate oneself in some sort of private religious endeavour is to be cut off from the significant others and the intimacy of life in Christ.

Privacy is about me, my and mine and it guarantees immaturity. This can only be seen as setting a different agenda to the Lord's commands,

which results in excluding others from His loving presence as He is working in us for His good pleasure.

If there is to be any chance of real fellowship, it will only come when we can be encouraged to trust God enough to lower the barricades because we have seen that the significant others in our lives are there because He has chosen them for our good.

If we are still holding back, resisting the need to be vulnerable and transparent with the members of the Church, we are resisting the work of the Spirit of God and we quench the Spirit, we douse His fire in us so we grow cold towards His chosen people.

Walking by the Spirit is to live the communion life together in the presence of God. The children of God are eternally bound together by divine love with chords that can never be broken, even when we are out of sight of each other. We are not called to live as if we are independent and isolated from the only body that gives life to the world. We are called to know the fullness of joy in intimacy with God and one another, because we are hidden together in God through Christ.

Private faith is not unified with love

Private faith has not subjected itself in humility to the proper working of the body under the authority of the Spirit of God. Private faith may do some work for the church, but is not willingly subjecting itself to the body working on itself. Private faith has arrived at its own destination, half baked.

For each member of the body to grow in the likeness of Christ, there must be both the giving and receiving of the provisions of the Spirit which are allocated to every member. The Body life of the Church is co-dependent, it grows by mutually and transparently supporting one another in love under the leading of the Spirit. Members of the body of Christ who are devoted to the body will desire the willing contribution of all the other members.

Private faith takes no responsibility for mutual receiving the grace of God allocated to each member for the common good, and as a result we remain independent of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Private faith

will prefer to talk about anything other than what God is doing in their lives.

Church is the body of Christ under the active dominion of the Holy Spirit. Failing to be mutually submissive and open to the body to carry out the purpose of God, is failing to be humbled before God, for the Spirit of God is personally active in the lives of all who have denied themselves to live for Christ.

“It seems odd, that certain men who talk so much of what the Holy Spirit reveals to themselves, should think so little of what he has revealed to others.” Charles Hadden Spurgeon

All believers are joined together in Christ at the head, through our hearts, and by the hip. So that we are living out His life as His chosen instrument in the Church. No one can have a private relationship with Christ without also being united completely with His people in love. If we are one body in Christ as God's word declares, why are we so disconnected as a whole?

Loving one another cannot be restricted to just a few people of our choice if we are sincerely saved. Therefore, how can we honestly claim to be Bible believing Christians when we don't know what's happening with the lives of so many in our local congregation?

As one Pastor put it, “we spend years going to church to get our needs met – the service was for us, the sermon was for us, the music was for us, the pastor was for us, the fellowship was for us. We are looking for fellowship, and the motivation revolves around getting our needs met... And so, we really haven't changed at all. We're still consumed, absorbed, obsessed, and infatuated with what we need and frustrated by what we don't have.”

There is abundant evidence that we still live for self and not for Christ. The local church ought to be the place where we can find genuine fellowship in Christ. *“I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.”* John 17:23

This fellowship of communion refers to our common union in the love of God. This communion we have is fellowship with God and those in Christ that fulfils the work of Christ in order for us to know and experience God now and forever.

John Owen wrote: “Believers have a duty of affectionate, sincere, genuine love in all things towards one another; a love compared to that of Christ for the Church.” ...“At present it is a grace that, shamefully, has been lost amongst those who call themselves Christians, to the dishonour of Christ and His Gospel.” John Owen 1616-1683

This communion of fellowship is based on the love of God. "*I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.*" (John 17:26) A polite Hello and “how are you” is not what it’s all about. Fellowship is about knowing God and sharing the love of God with His chosen children. How many people in the church know who you are as God's child?

True fellowship means that the teaching of God is always open to evaluation and application by God's people together, so that any blind spots in our understanding can be bought into the light. The individual is not naturally open to the scrutiny of others according to the written word of God. The one-hour church service we prefer is for many supposed to be the be all and end all of our fellowship, and this makes it easy for those who are misinformed to escape scrutiny.

If the Spirit of God is resident in each of us, conviction will provoke questions when we hear God’s word, and the fellowship of Christians should be given time to see the truth. We do that together, because iron is for sharpening iron.

Private faith inhibits Evangelism

We can't make disciples for Christ to be made in His image if Christ is not living through us personally to be like Him. We go on learning doctrine and don't understand that death of self is the only way to one life in Christ.

If Christ is in us His love would be the all-compelling power to pursue His passion for unity in the church for outreach in the world. Building up

the body of Christ would be essentially part of life in the Spirit. Passion for carrying out the commands of God would be as natural as breathing.

As much as people resist the imperatives of 'one another' accountability as clearly explained to us in the Scriptures, is to the same degree that their faith is about themselves, and not about living for and serving the purpose of the whole body of Christ reaching the world. If evangelism is ever going to be a natural part of our daily life, this attitude of me-ness, that was not in Christ, needs to be eradicated from within the body of Christ and all those who claim His life.

"Me", wants to be part of the body of Christ for personal enjoyment, and at the same time stubbornly resists the spiritual input of other members of Christ who are chosen and gifted by God to build up each other with His life of service and self-forgetfulness.

For many private Christians, evangelism is a duty to be performed, not an inner compulsion from the love of Christ that is willing to die daily so others can live. Faith is not a private matter, it is the work of God convicting sinners, which brings about repentance, so that an obedient relationship with God in Christ is possible in conjunction with His body the church.

Unless the 'me' of the natural man dies in us, we will not know the experience that Paul who wrote about: *'For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that those who live would no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose on their behalf.'*

2 Cor 5:14-15

Unless privatised faith is put to death by ourselves under the governance of the Spirit, we will not see evangelism as a natural part of living as we should do, always considering that we walk moment by moment in the presence of God. Until our desire evangelism for discipleship is as natural as breathing, becoming the primary task of the church; the responsibility of every member of the body to make disciples will be neglected.

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." Matt 28:19

To fail to make disciples is to fail to obey the Lord Jesus. Jesus wasn't telling us to get people saved, He was telling us to make disciples who we would teach to be like Him as we have learnt to be like Him. For many, the lifestyle of a follower of Christ has been substituted for a religious program so self can be satisfied. If there is no compulsion of the Spirit to obey Christ by making disciples, it would appear that there is no obedience in relationship with Christ. We can't teach what we haven't learnt in our inner being.

Evangelism in discipleship is to be a daily experience that happens as naturally as eating when we walk by the Spirit. Evangelism is not a program, it is not an occasional duty to be performed, evangelism is an inner all compelling necessity, for without the compelling power of the Spirit we are dead; so dead that the love of Christ is not calling us to die to self so we can do what He commanded we do daily. True faith means we have died with Christ to live for Him.

'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.' Gal 2:20

The controlling "me" died with Christ. The Christ of God who is now our Lord and Saviour and lives in His people to fulfil His salvation plan, His way. *"I will put My Spirit within you and bring it about that you walk in My statutes, and are careful and follow My ordinances."* (Ezek 36:27) *"the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."* Rom 8:4

Self-denial is central to obedience and life in the presence of Christ. *'And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me."* (Luke 9:23) The cross is our assigned instrument of death, and we must choose to sacrifice ourselves. Rom 12:1-2

And the crucified believer lives for the good of others. *'Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility, consider one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, as He already existed*

in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross.'

Phil 2:3-8

The devoted believer is yoked to Christ and enslaved into His plan and purpose. *'The one who was called as free, is Christ's slave.'* 1 Cor 7:22

If we are in Christ, His Spirit is in us to will and to do for His good pleasure. *'Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought for a price: therefore glorify God in your body.'*

1 Cor 6:19-20

'For just as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body..... For the body is not one part, but many.' (1 Cor 12:12-14) Faith works the will of God. *'For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.'* Eph 2:10

Faith demands dying to self in relation to the flesh of the natural man, and dying isn't easy, but possible with the enabling of the Spirit. This death to self is continually compelled in us by the love of Christ in order for us to love our neighbour and do good works in His name. Putting self to death is only possible when we follow the leading of the Spirit of God in humble obedience to live according to His will. *'For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons and daughters of God.'* Rom 8:14

Evangelism for discipleship is the natural outworking of the redeemed life of faith received from God. Scriptural knowledge without dying to self is what satan enjoys. If we have died with Christ, we will live for Christ. Therefore, making disciples demands we give our utmost in self-denial, as demonstrated by Christ. And making disciples deserves our complete diligence in following His example. It means putting to death all that pertains to self, and the things of the world, in order to love Him and live for Him. If we truly love Christ, we will find His love all compelling.

Where is Christ seen in our love for each other?

“Love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous; love does not brag, it is not arrogant. It does not act disgracefully, it does not seek its own benefit; it is not provoked, does not keep an account of a wrong suffered, it does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; it keeps every confidence, it believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

1 Cor 13:4-7

We are called for intimate communion on the vertical and horizontal plain.

'This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.'

John 17:3

'That they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.'

John 17:21

Real intimacy comes from God by the Spirit to fill the heart of the inner man who has salvation in Christ. This intimacy does not just know about the Father and the Son, it's about knowing and being known personally in the depth of our being. In Christ we are an open book, a book that is open to the brethren.

This love of God is no private affair of natural man. This love from God is to be shared in common understanding with all the saints, so all the saints can share with each other the unsearchable love of God. This is the true intimacy our Father wants for all His children. God is working so we can know together our intimacy with Him and the Son, that we are one life together with God looking out for the good of others as we: *'Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.'* Gal 6:2

Because God is working to reveal Himself to us through Christ Jesus, it follows that each of us has as much of God as we want; we set the limit, not God. God has no limit as to the depth of intimacy that we can enjoy with Him and with each other. In the same way, each of us sets the limit as to how close we allow others who are in Christ to be intimate with us.

Those who have a greater desire for spiritual communion have more desire for God who is light to banish their darkness. Those who have no desire or little care for God because they love the world, live in the darkness. Limits of intimacy and the secrecy shielding the heart come

from the realm of darkness. Those who are in the darkness resist coming to the light. Life in the dark is a private cave to be protected at all cost. The darkness is self-interested, self-determined and prideful, it is disobedient to God who calls us to be open to honest relationships with Him and others. Disobedience is entrenched in the darkness. The nature of the darkness is to hide its deception from being exposed to the outside world, so sometimes friendship is claimed but the reality produces no fruit to glorify God.

“And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

John 3:19-21

Where to from here?

Private faith is not true fellowship. The reason for the 51 ‘one another’ imperatives in the New Testament is that the earthly family of God in the Church is naturally dysfunctional. All of us have come into the kingdom to some degree or another with a private faith that is unable to deal adequately with life in accordance with the godliness of the kingdom of God due to the extent that our minds are still corrupted by the flesh.

It doesn’t matter how lovely our natural family life was, it was never like heaven. If it was a good life, we may not appreciate how much it falls short of the glory of God. If it was a bad life, we may seek that which was lost to us naturally and think we can have it all in the Church family, and often be disappointed because our sanctification together is a divine process of purification.

No one is excluded, all of us have to work out our salvation before God and each other. This is not only for our own sake but for the love of every member, a love which in turn builds up the health of our spiritual family. This is why 17 of the one another verses call on us to love one another sacrificially. The remaining 34 inform us how that love is to be worked out in our lives.

We are here to glory Christ by making and training disciples. The spiritual health of the body motivated by sacrificial love will have a big impact on the amount of fruit that is harvested and lasts for eternal life. Private faith doesn't sacrificially support the body of Christ in order to present everyone complete in the image of Christ.

Private faith deals with peripherals, the faith from God has its best results when it deals primarily with the heart. If we are not getting and giving heart massages we are only dealing with secondary issues, we need to be concerned with the engine room, where the power to do the work of God originates.

If we are not interested in what is going on in the hearts of our brethren, we will never know them well enough to help them do the work of God from the heart. *'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'*

Matt 22:37-39

The heart must be for God and for each other. Our cross can only be carried when the heart is wholly given to Christ, because we have to live in self-denial to love God and one another. *"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."*

Luke 14:27

If we are not concerned with the heart that motivates our actions, we will not be able to respond to the heart needs of our people. The people we belong to and should care for might as well keep their struggles to themselves because no one has the ears of love to listen and understand in order to share the burden and build up the heart in Christ. Private faith therefore inhibits evangelism that bears fruit for eternal life.

Our personal dysfunction is often hidden from us to protect our flesh from being exposed to the light in Christ until we are tested and convinced of our error by various trials under the hand of God. In this process of purification, we need all the help God has made available in the gifting of all our brothers and sisters in Christ. We not only work out our salvation with God, but we work it out with our divine family in Christ. In Christ we are made complete, so now we complete what we have been created for in Him. The rewards for faithfulness may not come in this earthly life. For we are being preparing together for life in

heaven, and each of us will be rewarded for our sincere efforts to love one another as we make disciples on the way.

Changing Private faith into Body Life is a work of the Spirit of God that we must surrender into as we co-operate with Him through obedient faith. Loving one another is sacrificial and can only be done by walking in harmony with the Spirit's enabling.

Resistance to God's work in us is a cosmic battle. In order to prevent the Reign of Christ, the principalities and powers in the heavenly places want to preserve the private faith of the flesh. But the Spirit of God is with us so that we can put private faith to death, so that we can live the unifying faith that is in Christ as His life in the church and prove to be His disciples.

Self-protection is the natural way of the flesh, but when we look to Christ, we will see that self-sacrifice is the way of God. The way to eternal life is by dying to self and any idea of private faith in order to live for the communal life of Christ. The Christian life is the Christ life, and Jesus shows us that this life of God in man is no private matter. *"The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me."*

John 17:22-23

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."

John 13:34

Every church, regardless of how reformed it may be, and every Christian, regardless of how sanctified they have become, are to some degree or other, still unable to live the ideal expression of God's love because of the imprint of the sin that remains unsanctified to deny the reality of God's love in man. Regardless of anyone's assertions to know all that is required, no one knows all that needs to be known in order to love as God loves.

However, in spite of the stain of sin limiting the expression of God's love in us and others, we who live for Christ are resolutely compelled by His love to go on to be true to our calling to live according to His divine

image imparted to us by the Holy Spirit. This is the grace of God made available to us in spite of the war of the world in sin.

This divine undertaking to love is possible through our commitment to personal sanctification and holiness. We need to realise that the fulfilment of the love of God in Christ will only be fully realised in us when the Lord returns and we all realise who we really are when we see Him face to face as we inherit His New Heaven and Earth.

For now, we have the promise sealed in us by the Spirit of God, then, we will have the manifestation of the glory of Christ who is the fulfilment of all the promises of God for us who have been chosen in Him. Until then, we don't dare deny the promise of God. But because of the weakness of the flesh we are sometimes shocked to discover the flesh of private faith in ourselves and others. God is our loving Father who is faithfully working all things together in heaven and earth for our good so that we are ultimately transformed into the image of Christ on His return. So, we shouldn't give the devil an opportunity to rob us again.

for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

Rom 8:13-14,16-17

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Phil 2:12-13

While our life of faith is a personal experience, it is not for us alone. We are made new in Christ for each other. No greater love has a man (woman) than this, that he (she) lay down his (her) life for his (her) friends. While putting on Christ is a process, we sometimes tend to live as if we have already arrived. As much as we live for self as if we have arrived, we have a private faith that denies our unity in Christ with all who are His. We forget that we are all at best only half baked.

Being half baked doesn't absolve us from the need to lay down our life for the brethren, because if we are actually in Christ, His love should compel us to live for Him. Church is not only for our enjoyment of God's family love; Church is Christ, and He calls us to come and love with Him as we die for others by affectively taking up our cross to live with Him. Church is for us to actually know others and be known by others as Christ knows, so that we can bear one another's burdens in love. How many people in the Church do we know well enough to understand their pain and struggles in order to support their faith effectively?

Living for others takes heartfelt effort in forgetting ourselves in order to remember that the others belong to Christ who we believe lives in us, because we have died with Him and we have been raised up together with Him with eternal life. When we get this right, we will get evangelism right. We will know what it means to lead others out of the darkness and into the light of the kingdom of God. All of our life is part of God's Providence for the good of those He has chosen. All our pain, all our struggles, all our brethren. Our life is for His glory alone. All of us are for one another in Christ.

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

1 Cori 13:1-3

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Rom 11:34-36

Who understands the power of Your anger And Your fury, according to the fear that is due You? So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.

Psalm 90:11-12

Robert May

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