

Life on the Vine
Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit in Christian Community

Introduction: A Place to Belong

You are members of God's very own family, citizens of God's country, and you belong in God's household with every other Christian. Ephesians 2.19b (LB)

How do you know you belong in this Adult Bible Class? Why are you in this particular Adult Bible Class as opposed to one of the others?

What is the *culture* of this Bible class? How do you identify with its *culture*?

What about its *culture* (make-up) sets it apart from or defines it in relation to the other Bible Classes offered here at church?

What is *culture*?

Why does culture have such a strong/powerful influence on us?

How does it shape us?

How do we resist its "power" over us?

Is it important to belong to a community, to a culture?

Why is it important to belong?

Is it important to belong to church community?

Look at Romans 12.4-5; 1 Corinthians 12.12-27.

What does Paul say about belonging to a church community?

Is membership or participation within the church community elective?

What are the benefits of belonging to a church community?

How does being a part of a church community help me to combat the secular culture I live in?

How do I counter what the “world” wants with what God has called me to do?

In the coming weeks we will look closely at the Fruit of the Spirit as described by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 5.22,23. The following thoughts will guide us as we look at each individual fruit:

1. The fruit of the Spirit are the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives—they are not primarily the result of our own efforts.
2. We do realize that there are forces in our culture that work against the growth of the fruit of the Spirit within us. As farmers seek to provide optimum conditions for the growth of their crops, we seek to cultivate our lives in ways conducive to the work of the Spirit.
3. Following the lead of Paul, we are interested in how these fruit are growing within our community of faith more than how we experience them as individuals.