

**Lesson 1**  
**“What Is The Church?”**  
**Matthew 16:13-20**

**Introduction:** Jesus loves His bride so His faithful followers must as well. A major part of living out a Christian worldview is functioning properly in the corporate expression of Christianity, which is the Church. However, there are many false perceptions about the church today. Outside the church many see it as outdated, outmoded, and irrelevant. Attempts to be spiritual without church involvement are on the rise. One person responded to a Gallup poll by saying, “I am my own church.” However, my greater concern is the false perceptions and practices among churches and Christians themselves. Many professing Christians are leaving the churches and attempting to live the Christian life on their own.

**What is a church and how does this apply to our lives?**

**(Matthew 16:13-20).** “When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” **14** So they said, “Some *say* John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” **15** He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” **16** Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” **17** Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. **18** And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. **19** And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” **20** Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.”

**1. The Church is built upon the confession of Jesus Christ (v. 13-17).**

“When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” **14** So they said, “Some *say* John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” **15** He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” **16** Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” **17** Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”

Jesus Christ is both the cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20) and head of the Church (Colossians 1:18). Therefore, the only way to truly be a member of the Church is

to confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. You can be a member of a church, but not be a Christian and not a member of the universal Church. Church membership should be for those who repent of sin, trust Christ, and publicly confess Jesus through baptism (see Acts 2). Apart from this, church is just a religious country club. The false confession of human opinion is not enough. The church is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). We are called to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

**2. The church is people.** The word, “church,” means “called-out ones.” It is referring to an assembly of people. An old saying states, “The church is not a building, the church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place, the church is a people. It has a universal (Hebrews 12:23, 1 Corinthians 12:13) and local expression (1 Corinthians 1:2).

This means that:

- A. The building does not make a church.
- B. We are the church, and the church is what we make it (sum of its parts).
- C. The way to truly build a church is by building people. People come before programs, traditions, or buildings.
- D. God is calling us to reach out to all people.
- E. God is calling each of us to be the type of church members who build up His church and not tear it down.

**3. The church belongs to Christ (v.18-“my church”).** “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” This means that Jesus is the:

**A. Founder and Foundation (Ephesians 2:20).** “having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone,*”

**B. Purchaser (Acts 20:28).** “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

**C. Owner**

**D. Designer and Builder**

**E. Ruler (Ephesians 5:23)** “For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.”

**F. Centerpiece (Revelation 2:1):** The Church belongs to Jesus-not us. The Church is about Him-not us. It is about pleasing Him-not us.

**(Revelation 2:1)** “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:’”

**4. The church is triumphant (v. 18).** “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

Jesus won the victory on the cross. We are more than conquerors now (Romans 8:37). This victory will not be fully applied until the return of Christ, but Jesus is overcoming Satan’s opposition and building His Church until then.

**5. The church is empowered by the authority of and commissioned to share the Word of God (v. 19).** “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

This is the where the authority for our ministry comes from. We are to preach the Word (**2 Timothy 4:1-5**). “I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: **2** Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. **3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; **4** and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. **5** But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

Here are three specific applications of this truth:

**A. Evangelism-**Jesus is the door of salvation (John 10), but the Word of God is the key that opens the door (**Romans 10:17**). “So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (**Significance of this being in the pagan area of Caesarea Phillipi-had a grotto devoted to the worship of Pan**)

## **B. Affirming or rejecting professions of faith**

**C. Church discipline (see Matthew 18:15-20)** “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. **16** But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ **17** And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. **18** “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. **19** “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. **20** For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How would you define church?
2. What are reasons you have heard people give for leaving churches?
3. Discuss the possible interpretations of v. 18 and what they think about them.
4. What are some of the practical implications of a church being a sum of all of its people?
5. How should it affect our approach to church and how we think about church that the church belongs to Jesus?
6. How should it affect us that the gates of hell will not triumph against the church?
7. How should God’s Word guide the ministry of a local church?

**Lesson 2**  
**“What Defines A Church: Regenerate Church Membership”**

**Introduction to the entire study: Overall Definition**

**The local church is a community of regenerated believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord. We function under the authority of Scripture. In obedience to Scripture we organize under qualified leadership, gather regularly for preaching and worship, observe the biblical ordinances of baptism and communion, are unified by the Spirit, are disciplined for holiness, fulfill the Great Commandment to love one another in the church and our neighbors outside the church, and scatter to fulfill the Great Commission as missionaries to the world.**

Lesson 2 is specifically about regenerate church membership. This is the idea that the Church (universal church) is made up of those who are truly regenerate, born again children of God. Therefore, the local church, as the tangible expression of the church, should strive to do everything it can to have a truly regenerate church membership. We will probably never fully achieve this (parable of the wheat and tares), and we certainly cannot know people’s hearts with certainty. However, we can take practical steps to be careful with who we receive into membership. We can ask people to share their testimonies. We can have a membership class or other types of discipleship classes. Here is some biblical material about this subject.

**It is of the utmost importance that we make sure that we have a new life in Christ, that we are truly born again. Just being religious or being a church member is not enough to make us right with God. However, born again children of God are part of His Church.**

Let’s look at this through the lens of the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus in John 3:1-16.

**1. A new life is our foremost spiritual need (v. 1-3).** “There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” 3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

- a. 1<sup>st</sup> things 1<sup>st</sup>
- b. Nicodemus was:
  - 1. Religious-Very devoted
  - 2. Righteous-moral
  - 3. Rich-Had money
  - 4. Ruler-Had power

-Had everything going for him, but wasn't satisfied, and it wasn't enough. He needed God. He needed **"a new life."**

**2. A new life is of a fully supernatural nature (v. 3-8).** "Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born [a]gain, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

**3. A new life is fully provided by the sacrifice of Jesus (v. 9-14).** "Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?" 10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? 11 Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of Man who is in heaven. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up."

- A. Jesus is God who left heaven. He came down to be lifted up.
- B. He went to the cross as our substitute and took the curse upon himself.
- C. This is pictured by the Old Testament reference to Numbers 21:4-9. It says, "Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. 5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For *there is* no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." 6 So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. 8 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery *serpent*, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” 9 So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.”

**4. A new life is freely received by faith in Jesus (v. 15-16).** “That whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

### **Why have formal church membership?**

A commonly debated issue among Christians is the whether or not it is biblical to have a formal church membership. In properly evaluating the issue, it is imperative to set the proper context. We are in a different setting today because there are many churches and denominations. That was not the issue in biblical times. A person became a “member” of the church by being saved and baptized. Some people today say that they have been saved and are part of the body of Christ so they do not need to “join” a church. There is not a specific chapter and verse that tells us to do church membership (and maybe part of the problem is simply the terminology and some of the baggage that it carries because of some unbiblical traditions surrounding the issue). However, I believe that the New Testament churches had a form of membership and so we are following the pattern of Scripture by having formal membership. Also, there are several scriptural principles that speak to the issue and demonstrate that formal church membership is God’s will.

Church membership that means simply having your name on some dusty roll is not a biblical concept. However, the concept of being committed to a particular local congregation and having a formal process of defining, making, and being accountable to that commitment is a biblical principle. That is what we are espousing at True Life Church. To be clear, I am saying that “becoming a church member” is a process where a truly born again, biblically baptized person affirms the beliefs and mission of a particular local congregation, places themselves under the authority of that church and its leadership, and commits themselves to share in the life and ministry of that fellowship. This is not a cold induction into a dead

institution but an induction into a living body. There has to be some type of measurable, practical way to do this. **The point of church membership is an expression of relationship, commitment, and submission to biblical accountability.**

### **What is the biblical basis for making this type of commitment and having regenerate church membership?**

1. Acts 2:40-47 is a summary statement of the progress of the early church. It pictures 3000 people being added to the church through salvation and baptism and then becoming an active part of the fellowship and ministry of the church. Did they become a part of the universal church or the local church? The answer to me seems to be YES! Salvation makes us a part of the universal church for sure, but the New Testament pattern seems to be that it also ushered people into the life of a local church. They became “members” of the church through salvation and baptism. With multiples churches and denominations today, we have to have a more formal way for people to identify themselves as members of a local congregation.

**(Acts 2:40-47)** “And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” **41** Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*. **42** And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. **43** Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. **44** Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, **45** and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. **46** So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

2. 1 Corinthians 14:40 says, “Let all things be done decently and in order.” Church membership is an application of this principle. How can a congregation have people in ministry and leadership roles without knowing who is committed to the congregation? We find a picture of this principle in the Old Testament in the Book of Numbers when God ordered the children of Israel to take a census so they would know who they had in the army. God commanded them to count and organize because that is His nature (see 1 Corinthians 14:33) and our need. His

nature and our need have not changed. A church needs to know who is in its army in the spiritual war we are fighting.

3. The church in the book of Acts obviously counted and kept records of who was a part of the congregation (Acts 1:15, 2:41, 4:4). Church membership is simply a way of doing this in our context today.

**(Acts 1:15)** “And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said,”

**(2:41)** “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.”

**(4:4)** “However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.”

4. Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 pictures all believers as individual members of the one body of Christ. This is clearly talking about the universal church in particular. However, I think it applies to the question at hand regarding the local church in the sense that we need to know who are members of that particular body, and these are the actual believers that we are tangibly “members of one another” with. Once again, there has to be some way to define that or else you are left open to the idea that anyone who walks through the doors is part of the church. However, that is definitely incorrect because someone cannot be a member of a New Testament church without salvation, scriptural baptism, doctrinal soundness, submission to proper spiritual authority, and the testimony of a godly life. Plus, he was writing to particular local churches.

**(Romans 12:3-8)**. “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. **4** For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, **5** so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. **6** Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; **7** or ministry, *let us use it* in *our* ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; **8** he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

**(1 Corinthians 12:12-26).** “ For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. **13** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. **14** For in fact the body is not one member but many. **15** If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? **16** And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? **17** If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling? **18** But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. **19** And if they were all one member, where *would* the body *be*? **20** But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body. **21** And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” **22** No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. **23** And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty, **24** but our presentable *parts* have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that *part* which lacks it, **25** that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another. **26** And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with *it*. ”

5. We are commanded to submit to proper spiritual authority (Hebrews 13:7, 17). However, it seems apparent to me that we must be committed to a particular congregation in order for this to be lived out.

**(Hebrews 13:7).** “Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of *their* conduct.”

**(v. 17).** “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”

6. 1 Corinthians 5 and several other passages command the church to practice proper discipline. However, membership is necessary for this to be carried out in the proper manner.”

To summarize, we are only truly a part of the church if we are saved. Everyone who is saved is part of the universal church. However, we are also to be tangibly connected to a tangible expression of the church, which is a local church. Let me

close this lesson with this quote from theologian Millard Erickson. He says, “...We must nevertheless not minimize the importance of the visible form of the church. It was apparently the standard procedure for the believer to become a part of the fellowship (see, e.g., Acts 2:47). While we do not know exactly what membership in the apostolic church entailed, it was certainly for the purposes of edification, prayer, service, and as can be seen particularly in Acts 5, discipline. We should therefore emphasize the importance of every believer’s becoming an integral part of a group of believers, and making a firm commitment to it. Christianity is a corporate matter; and the Christian life can be fully realized only in relationship to others.”

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What makes a person a genuine, born again Christian?
2. What are things that people trust in instead of or in addition to trusting Jesus alone for salvation?
3. In your spiritual background, have you been taught to believe in and practice formal church membership or taught against the need for formal church membership? What reasons have you heard for each?
4. Talk through the reasons given formal church membership in this lesson.
5. If you are a member of True Life, why did you decide to formally become a member? What membership meant to you? Why would you recommend someone else to become a member?

**Lesson 3**  
**“What Defines A Church: The Authority Of Scripture”**

**Introduction:** A true church functions under the authority of Scripture. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” This means that the Bible is true, but since it is the inspired Word of God and is true, that means it is also authoritative. What do we mean when we say that Scripture is authoritative?

**1. The ultimate authority is the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Luke 6:46-49).** “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say? 47 Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. 49 But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.”

**2. However, His Lordship is expressed through the Scriptures. In the New Testament, we have the apostolic witness to Jesus and the authoritative teaching of the apostles which is continually binding upon the Church (2 Peter 1:12-21).** “For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you*, 14 knowing that shortly I *must* put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. 15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. 16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” 18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.”

Peter shared the purpose for the writing of the New Testament in verse 15 when he said, “Moreover, I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.” In other words, there needed to be a written record for when the apostles, the God-appointed human, authoritative leaders of the early church, were no longer there. That means that the New Testament carried apostolic authority. It is “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). It is the certain and unerring rule of faith and practice, which is meant to be believed and obeyed. One of the criteria for the early church recognizing that a writing belonged in the canon of Scripture is that it had to be written by an apostle or a close associate of an apostle. Even beyond that, however, we see here the connection between the Old and New Testaments. He speaks of the prophetic word in verse 19. In chapter 3, verse 2, he writes, “That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior.” Jesus had already confirmed the Old Testament Scriptures and said they were about Him (Luke 24:44).

Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Matthew 24:35). In Matthew 5:18, Jesus said, “For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.” A jot is a *yodh*, which is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. A tittle is a little mark on a letter in the Hebrew alphabet that distinguishes it from another letter. You could say that Jesus is saying down to the crossing of the “T’s” and dotting of the “I’s,” not one bit of the law is going to pass away until all of it is fulfilled. It prepares us for the coming of Christ. In John 10:35, Jesus said, “The scripture cannot be broken”. In addition, John 17 records a prayer of Christ to His Father. In verse 17, Jesus said to His Heavenly Father that “your word is truth.” When I say that the Bible is God’s truth, I am only saying what Jesus said.

Also, Jesus affirmed many passages in the Old Testament that liberals and skeptics deny. He affirmed the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (John 5:45-47), Jonah literally being in the belly of a great fish (Matthew 12:40), the historical reality of Noah and the Flood (Matthew 24:37-39), the Exodus account of the wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness (John 6:49), the burning bush (Matthew 22:32), and the historicity of Adam and Eve (Matthew 19:5). The Old Testament was Christ’s Bible while He was on the earth. Therefore, the Old Testament and the apostolic witness comprise the Scriptures. Ephesians 2:20 says, “Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.” **Practically, this means that when we read the New Testament it is**

like the apostles speaking to us with the authority of Christ so we are required to obey.

### **3. The authority of Scripture means practically that when the Bible speaks-God speaks, that settles it, and we must obey.**

We see examples of this in the life of the early church, and we see the apostles functioning under the authority of Scripture in the book of Acts (see Acts 1:15-26 and Acts 15:1-21).

**(Acts 1:15-26)** “And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, **16** “Men *and* brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; **17** for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.” **18** (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. **19** And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) **20** “For it is written in the Book of Psalms: ‘Let his dwelling place be desolate, And let no one live in it’ **(Psalm 69:25)**; and, ‘Let another take his office.’ **(Psalm 109:8)** **21** “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, **22** beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” **23** And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. **24** And they prayed and said, “You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen **25** to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” **26** And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”

**(Acts 15:1-21)** “And certain *men* came down from Judea and taught the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” **2** Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question. **3** So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. **4** And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had

done with them. **5** But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.” **6** Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. **7** And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up *and* said to them: “Men *and* brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. **8** So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as *He did* to us, **9** and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. **10** Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? **11** But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.” **12** Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. **13** And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, “Men *and* brethren, listen to me: **14** Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. **15** And with this the words of the prophets agree (**Amos 9:11-12**), just as it is written: **16** ‘After this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; **17** So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the Lord who does all these things.’ **18** “Known to God from eternity are all His works. **19** Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, **20** but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, *from* sexual immorality, *from* things strangled, and *from* blood. **21** For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

**Principle: The authority of Scripture means: “God said it, that settles it, we must obey it.”**

#### **Applications:**

- 1. Our calling is to get to know God through studying, understanding, applying, and obeying His Word.**
- 2. Scripture determines what we believe and how we live as individuals and as a church.**
- 3. What the Bible teaches trumps: what other people say, what religion or church says, what culture says, my thoughts, my experiences, my feelings, etc.**

- 4. Obeying Scripture is actually how we show that we are trusting God because faith is taking God as His Word and acting on it.**
- 5. Developing this conviction in our children is one of the most important pieces in their spiritual development.**
- 6. Conviction that makes a difference in the world comes from standing on the Word of God without apology (see also Daniel 1:8).**
- 7. Life will not work when we do not listen and obey (Romans 6:16, Luke 6:46-49).**
- 8. Our shortcoming and failures in obeying Scripture show us our need for a Savior who gives us grace (Galatians 3:24) in order to be saved and the power to then obey God.**

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is the connection between living under the Lordship of Christ and obeying Scripture?
2. How do we practically apply this principle that we have studied in this lesson to our personal lives? To our church life?
3. What does it mean to us that our faith and preaching is the apostolic witness?
4. Discuss this statement. Life only works when we obey God's Word.
5. Discuss how we apply the third application at the end of the lesson.
6. How do we live with biblical conviction?

## Lesson 4

### “What Defines A Church: Biblically Qualified Leadership”

**Introduction:** The Bible teaches that there are two offices in a church (Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3). They are: pastors (or they could also be called elders, bishops, overseers, or shepherds and still be biblical) and deacons. Warren Wiersbe writes, “Church organization was quite simple in apostolic days: There were pastors (elders, bishops) and deacons (Phil 1:1). It seems that there was a plurality of elders overseeing the work of each church...” Pastors are to lead and feed God’s church. Deacons are servants who function as pastoral assistants to meet the needs of the congregation.

### Elders

It is my conviction that good leadership is essential for having a good church. John Maxwell says, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” Thus, it is essential for a church to have the proper leadership structure with the right type of leaders. John MacArthur says, “Biblically, the focal point of all church leadership is the elder. It is the elders who are charged with teaching, feeding, and protecting the church, and it is the elders who are accountable to God on behalf of the church.” This is an attempt to state and explain what the Bible actually teaches on the subject of elders and deacons.

This is an area where my convictions have changed. A friend of mine challenged me to study this subject when we were in seminary. I really had difficulty getting past my traditions and looking at it objectively. However, I have continued to study the issue over the course of the years, and I have become convinced that the Bible teaches that a local church is to be led by a plurality of God-called, spiritually qualified men. Let us consider their Name, their Number, their Nature (qualifications and role), and some important questions regarding this issue.

Before we examine those items, we should look at a foundational issue in regard to leadership in the church. Jesus Christ is the unquestioned Leader of the Church. He is the Head. We are the Body. (“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence”- Colossians 1:18.) He is the Lord. We are the servants. The church is not really a democracy. It is a benevolent dictatorship. Majority opinion has never decided God’s will or changed God’s mind. I believe that we have read the American idea of democracy into the New Testament.

The question then is in regard to how Christ's leadership is mediated and expressed in the local church. The Bible does teach the priesthood of all believers. We all have equal access to God. However, the Bible also teaches that we are to submit to proper spiritual authority. Stephen Olford says, "Speaking to church members, the writer to the Hebrews exhorts, 'Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account' (Hebrews 13:17). Here is an area that is utterly disregarded in most of our churches today. By the infiltration of a false concept of democracy and worldly government, we have nullified God's purpose in the local congregation. The consequences are that we have produced a state of anarchy. Like the days of spiritual declension in the Old Testament times when there was no king in Israel, sadly it has to be stated that 'everyone [does] what [is] right in his own eyes' (Judges 17:6). There can be no doubt, however, that God's intention is that the sovereignty of Christ should be recognized in the pastoral leadership of the church, working out through the appointed elders and deacons. Only when such divine authority is respected and obeyed will unity, blessing, and abundant life be enjoyed throughout the membership." **We are an elder led congregational church.**

With that said in the way of introduction, let's examine what the Bible teaches about church leadership, beginning with **elders**. I will begin by sharing several Scriptures that show what the Name and Number should be.

Acts 11:29-30 says, "Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the *elders* by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

Acts 14:23 says, "So when they [Paul and Barnabas] had appointed *elders* in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed."

Acts 15:6 says, "Now the apostles and *elders* came together to consider this matter."

Acts 20:17 says, "From Miletus he [Paul] sent to Ephesus and called for the *elders* of the church." Verse 28 then says, "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you *overseers*, to *shepherd* the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

Philippians 1:1b says, "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the *bishops* and deacons."

1 Timothy 3:1 says, "This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a *bishop*, he desires a good work."

1 Timothy 4:14 says, "Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the *eldership*."

1 Timothy 5:17 says, “Let the *elders* who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.”

Titus 1:5 says, “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint *elders* in every city as I commanded you.” He then begins to list the character requirements for the elders and says in verse 7 that “a *bishop* must be blameless.”

Hebrews 13: 7 and 17 say, “Remember *those who rule over you*, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Obey *those who rule over you*, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.” *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* and several translations translate “those who rule over you” as “your leaders.” The point is that the phrase is plural which means that they had multiple rulers or leaders to follow.

James 5:14 says, “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the *elders* of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”

1 Peter 5:1-3 says, “The *elders* who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow *elder* and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: *shepherd* the flock of God which is among you, serving as *overseers*, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”

**1. Their Name:** The name is not really the key issue. We see in the preceding Scriptures that there are five interchangeable biblical terms for the person we generally refer to as pastor. A minister can be called pastor, shepherd, bishop, overseer, or elder according to these Scriptures. Pastor and shepherd are translated from the Greek word, *poimen*. Bishop and overseer are translated from the Greek word, *episkopos*. Elder is translated from the Greek word, *presbuteros*. These words simply highlight different functions of the same office. We see in Acts 20: 17 and 28, Titus 1: 5 and 7, and 1 Peter 5:1-2 that these terms are used interchangeably to refer to the same people. In other words, each of these pastoral leaders is referred to as an elder, overseer, and shepherd. They are the multiples roles of the individual office. I am using the terms pastor and elder interchangeably as I write this.

**2. Their Number: This is really the key issue! We are espousing team leadership through a plurality of pastors as opposed to a single pastor!** We see in the verses quoted above that except when referring to an individual’s qualifications for the office itself (1 Timothy 3:1) and when Peter referred to

himself as an elder (1 Peter 5:1) that these names for the pastoral office are always used in the plural. According to Acts 14:23, Paul and Barnabas ordained elders [plural] in every church [singular]. Paul called for the elders [plural] of the church [singular] at Ephesus (Acts 20:17). Philippians 1:1 refers to “the bishops and deacons” of the church at Philippi. Each of these terms is plural so why should we have a single pastor with multiple deacons instead of a plurality of each? James 5:14 speaks of the ministry of prayer and anointing of oil that the elders are to have to the sick. How can this verse really be followed without having elders? John MacArthur writes, “The biblical norm for church leadership is a plurality of God-ordained elders....Nowhere in Scripture do we find a local assembly ruled by majority opinion or by one pastor.” David Horner writes, “Throughout the biblical usage of the words relating to this office, the words are always in the plural. There is no evidence anywhere in the Bible of a church with one elder charged with the responsibility for the flock. They were appointed to serve collectively as a team to function in leadership over the body of believers committed to their care.” **That is what we are seeking to implement.** Earl Radmacher writes, “It is interesting to observe that the words ‘the pastor,’ which we use so often would have been strange to their ears. In fact, the definite article {the} is never used with the term ‘pastor’ except when referring to Jesus Christ. Truly, He is the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd. No other single human being has the same unique qualities that can merit the definite article in front of the title.” Some practical reasons for this set-up are:

**A. The pastoral job is really too much for one man.** Elders can be traced historically back through the nation of Israel and the advent of them is found in Exodus 18 when Jethro told Moses to appoint other men to help him because he was wearing himself and the people out by trying to do everything himself.

**B. This avoids a one-man dictatorship.**

**C. On the other hand, it protects the pastor from being the lightning rod for all the criticism from the congregation.**

**D. It keeps the church from imitating all of a single pastor’s shortcomings.**

**E. It gives people with different types of personalities multiple leaders with different types of personalities they can relate to and provides balance for the church.**

**F. It provides multiple spiritual gifts to the leadership team instead of the limited giftedness of one man.** It will provide everything that is needed and allow elders to focus on their particular areas of giftedness and passion instead of having to try to do everything, including things at which they are not gifted.

**G. It provides built-in accountability and godly counsel.** John MacArthur says, “Their combined counsel and wisdom helps assure that decisions are not self-willed or self-serving to a single individual (cf. Prov. 11:14).”

### **3. Their Nature:**

**Role-In essence, the pastors are to lead and feed the flock of God.**

**A. A pastor is to be a man of God (1 Timothy 6:11).** He is to be a spiritual man who walks with the Lord. Godly character is the primary biblical requirement for ministry.

**B. A pastor is to be a man of prayer (1 Timothy 2:1, Acts 6:4).** His decisions are to be guided by prayer, and he should pray regularly for his church members and those who do not yet know Christ.

**C. A pastor is to preach and teach the Word of God.** His preaching is to be biblical, doctrinally sound, and without compromise (2 Timothy 4:1-5). The apostles said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables...but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:2, 4). The one qualification for an elder than is not a character quality is the ability to teach.

**D. A pastor is to do the work of an evangelist (2 Timothy 4:5).** An evangelist is one who spreads the gospel. Pastor and evangelist are distinct offices, but evangelism is one of the primary functions of a pastor.

**E. A pastor is to equip the believers to do the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12).** The pastor’s calling is not to do all the work of the church, but he is to teach and train the people to use their spiritual gifts and function together as a team in doing ministry.

**F. A pastor is to shepherd the flock (1 Peter 5:1-4).** This is the leading, counseling, caring aspect of pastoral ministry. Prayer for the sick and ministry to the grieving is included also.

**G. A pastor is to be an overseer of the church (1 Peter 5:1).** This refers to their role as leaders of the church. Pastors are spoken of as “ruling” in 1 Timothy 5:17 and Hebrews 13:7 and 17. “Rule” means to “preside over,” “to be over,” “to superintend” (according to Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest) and “direct the affairs of the church” (Expositor’s Bible Commentary). It also refers to administrative duties.

**H. A pastor is to be an example to the church (1 Peter 5:1-4).** He is to live out his message in front of people. Actions communicate louder than words.

**Qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9)-A pastor is required to be a man of godly character with a good testimony who is seeking to emulate Jesus Christ.** 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 list the requirements for a pastor. They are:

- blameless**
- a man**
- husband of one wife**
- self-controlled**
- sober-minded**
- a well-ordered life**
- hospitable**
- able to teach**
- not addicted to drinking**
- not violent**
- not greedy for money or covetous**
- gentle and not quarrelsome**
- rules his own home well and his children are in submission to his authority**
- not a new Christian**
- has a good testimony among non-Christians**
- not self-willed**
- not quick-tempered**
- a lover of what is good**
- just**
- holy**
- holds sound doctrine**

We believe that the Bible teaches that only men are ordained by God to serve as elders (pastors) in the church. There are several reasons for this. First, pastors are

to be followed as leaders of the church with spiritual authority given to them by God (cf. Heb. 13:7, 13 and 1 Peter 5:1-4), and a woman in this role would violate the command in 1 Timothy 2:12 that a woman is not “to have authority over a man.” Second, an integral part of the pastoral ministry is teaching (cf. Eph. 4:11, 1 Tim. 3:2, 2 Tim. 2:24-26), and a woman being in this teaching role would violate 1 Timothy 2:12, which says that a woman is not permitted “to teach or to have authority over a man.” Third, there is absolutely no example in the Bible of a woman having this type of role. The twelve apostles appointed by Jesus, other apostles named in the New Testament, and all named pastors were men. Fourth, women are prevented from being pastors because a pastor must be “the husband of one wife” (1 Tim. 3:2). Some people would contend that this could be translated the wife of one husband or spouse of one spouse. However, the Greek text shows this to be impossible. In Greek, the phrase is *mias gunaikos andra*. *Andra* is accusative, singular, and masculine. *Gunaikos* is genitive, singular, and feminine. *Mias* is a numeral that is genitive, singular, and feminine. *Mias*, one, and *gunaikos*, wife, are in agreement so the only possible translation is “husband of one wife” or “man of one woman.” Fifth, a requirement to be a pastor is for a man to rule his own house well. 1 Tim 3:4-5 says that a pastor is to be “one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?).” There is a connection between men leading in the home and men being pastors who lead the church. Of course, just being male does not qualify a man to be a pastor, but he must meet the character requirements elucidated in Scripture. **I have added our position paper on this issue at the end of this lesson after the discussion questions in case you have other questions about this issue.**

### Deacons

**1. Their Role (Acts 6):** The role of the deacon is primarily defined by the meaning of the word. The word literally means “one who waits tables,” “servant,” and “minister.” It is a functional role. The first deacons in Acts 6 were appointed to be pastoral assistants, take care of a problem, and provide benevolence type ministry to the widows. David Horner has written, “The deacons were also called upon to serve the body, but their responsibilities are nowhere specifically defined other than the functional role of servant. They were to serve in whatever capacity they were needed to enable the elders to fulfill their ministry responsibilities and to minister to the needs of the congregation.” The focus of the role of the deacons at True Life will be as ministers to the congregation through small group leaders, involvement in the ministries of the church, direct ministry to families in the congregation, helping take care of the church’s property, administration of the

benevolence ministry, and other duties as assigned by the elders. Their service is designed to set an example for the rest of the congregation.

**2. Their Relationship to the Elders:** Elders and deacons are clearly to work together. Deacons are pastoral assistants who are given direction by the elders. Horner writes, “Whereas the elders are called to lead the flock and serve as overseers of the ministry of the church, deacons by the very nature of their position are called to support the leadership of the elders by assuming various aspects of the work load in order to enable them to direct their attention more intently on the priorities set for them in the scriptures.”

**3. Their Character Requirements (1 Timothy 3:8-13):** As with the elders, the focus is on character. There are very strict character requirements for deacons that are very similar to the ones listed for pastors. They include: **reverence, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, doctrinally sound, tested, blameless, having godly wives, husbands of one wife, and ruling their homes and children well.** This demonstrates that God’s focus in regard to qualifications for leadership is on character.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Why does True Life believe in a plurality of pastors biblically?
2. Discuss biblical expectations of a pastor as far as his role (job description). What is expecting too little and what is expecting too much?
3. Discuss biblical expectations of a pastor’s character? What is expecting too little and what is expecting too much?
4. What is the difference between elders and deacons?
5. What is a deacon’s role?
6. Why does True Life believe in male elders?

**AN EXEGESIS OF 1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15**  
**What Is The Role Of Women In The Local Church?**

This passage is a section of a personal letter from Paul, the aged apostle, to his son in the faith, Timothy. The thrust of the passage is Paul's inspired teaching concerning men and women's roles and conduct within the church. The purpose of this writing is a faithful exegesis of the passage in the English text, using the New King James Version of the Bible. This will be accomplished by setting forth the background, doing a verse-by-verse study, making a theological analysis, and concluding with some practical applications.

**BOOK, HISTORICAL, AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND**

The books of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus are frequently referred to as the Pastoral Epistles because the teaching in them focuses on sound doctrine, qualifications for leadership within the church, relationships in the church, and the protection of the church from various ungodly influences.<sup>1</sup> Traditionally, the church accepted Pauline authorship of each of these letters. However, critical scholarship, beginning with Schmidt in 1804, has assailed this notion for the past two centuries.<sup>2</sup> It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider all of the various arguments on the subject. The book claims to be written by the apostle Paul to his "true son in the faith", Timothy (1:1-2), and this writer believes it is a genuine testimony from the hand of an apostle of Jesus Christ rather than some type of pious forgery. Therefore, Pauline authorship is assumed.

The Pastoral Epistles are commonly dated between 63 and 67 A.D. with 63 being a very possible date for the writing of 1 Timothy.<sup>3</sup> Liftin gives an excellent summary of the assumed chronology behind this dating. He writes,

Paul's missionary journeys occupied approximately the years A.D. 48-56. From 56-60 Paul was slowly making his way through the Roman courts, arriving ultimately at Rome. For two years, 61-62, Paul was held

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<sup>1</sup> W. A. Criswell, ed., The Believer's Study Bible: New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 1715.

<sup>2</sup> William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary: New Testament (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992), 886.

<sup>3</sup> Criswell, 1715.

under house arrest in Rome, at the end of which time, it can be surmised, he was released. From 62-67 Paul traveled more or less freely, subsequently writing each of them a letter. Thus the approximate dates for 1 Timothy and Titus are perhaps 63-66. After being recaptured and once again imprisoned, Paul wrote Timothy a second letter, 2 Timothy. Thus 2 Timothy, dated approximately A.D. 67, represents the last Pauline Epistle.<sup>4</sup>

In 1 Timothy, Paul, the aged apostle of Christ, nearing the end of his earthly life and ministry, is writing to his spiritual son, Timothy, who is overseeing the church at Ephesus. Timothy was a native of Lystra who joined Paul on his second missionary journey.<sup>5</sup> Timothy's mother was a Jew, and his father was a Greek (Acts 16:1). His mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, were genuine believers who must have greatly influenced Timothy (2 Tim. 1:5). Apparently, Timothy was relatively young (1 Tim. 4:12). However, he had a good report among the brethren (Acts 16:2), and he came to be a close and trusted associate of Paul. On the other hand, Timothy did have his share of weaknesses. He seemed to "have been by nature somewhat passive, timid, retiring, and easily intimidated," and this forced Paul to repeatedly exhort him into action.<sup>6</sup> Paul was attempting to pass the torch of the gospel on to Timothy without allowing the flame to be dimmed.

The apostle knew Timothy needed instruction and preparation in order to effectively carry on his ministry in a strategic and difficult location such as Ephesus. Therefore, Paul wrote, "But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15)." This writer believes that the verse just quoted expresses Paul's purpose in writing and serves as the theme verse for the entire letter. Proper conduct in the church, especially among leaders, is essential because the church "is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

Paul prepared Timothy for proper conduct in two ways. First, he prepared Timothy on a personal level. Among other things, Paul charge Timothy to "instruct

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<sup>4</sup>John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament Edition (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1983), 729.

<sup>5</sup>Criswell, 1715.

<sup>6</sup>Walvoord and Zuck, 730.

the brethren” (4:6), “reject profane and old wives’ fables” (4:7), “be an example” (4:12), “take heed to yourself and to the doctrine” (4:16), “fight the good fight of faith” (6:12), and “guard what was committed to your trust” (6:20). Second, Paul prepared Timothy by giving instructions about proper order in the church. He did this by warning Timothy about false doctrine (1:3-11), calling the church to prayer (2:1-7), defining roles and conduct of men and women in the church (2:8-15), giving the qualifications for leaders in the church (3:1-13), enlightening Timothy about apostasy (4:1-5), giving instruction about how to relate to various groups within the church (5:1-25), and warning against greed (6:3-10).

The passage being exegeted in this paper, 1 Tim. 2:8-15, is an exhortation concerning order in the church. It focuses on the conduct, roles, and relationships of men and women. In its immediate context, the passage is preceded by Paul’s call to prayer on behalf of all people and is followed by a listing of the standards for those holding leadership positions within the church.

### VERSE-BY-VERSE STUDY

#### VERSE 8

Paul expressed his strong desire that men pray everywhere.<sup>7</sup> However, it is important to remember that Paul’s desire really comes from God because he is an apostle speaking under inspiration. The phrase could be understood, then, as being God’s desire that men pray everywhere. Based on the context, “everywhere” means “wherever Christian congregations assemble” and “not every place indiscriminately.”<sup>8</sup> In verses one and two, Paul had dealt with the topic of public worship by exhorting Timothy to lead in prayers for everyone. Then, in verses three through seven, Paul digressed and wrote about Christ, the Mediator. According to Wuest, “The word ‘therefore’ is resumptive, picking up again the general topic of public worship from which Paul digressed in verses 3-7.”<sup>9</sup>

Paul not only encouraged men to pray, but he also gave them practical instructions about prayer. He gave them a positive and a negative exhortation.

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<sup>7</sup>W. E. Vine, Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1981), 299.

<sup>8</sup>Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament: Volume IV (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946), 221.

<sup>9</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest’s Word Studies From the Greek New Testament for the English Reader: Volume Two (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973), 45.

First, Paul encouraged the men to pray, “lifting up holy hands.” Praying with raised hands was a common Old Testament practice that carried over into the early church.<sup>10</sup> This prayer posture is illustrated by paintings on the walls of the Roman catacombs.<sup>11</sup> Hendricksen says this method of prayer “is a fit symbol of utter dependence on God and of humble expectancy.”<sup>12</sup> The emphasis is on holiness. In this context it refers to moral purity and emphasizes a life that earnestly desires to please God.<sup>13</sup>

Second, Paul encouraged men to pray “without wrath and doubting.” This is the negative exhortation. “Wrath,” *orge*, means strong anger, and it refers to a settled and ongoing spirit of indignation against another as opposed to *thumos*, which is more akin to a temper tantrum.<sup>14</sup> “Doubting,” *dialogismou*, means “skeptical questionings or criticisms.”<sup>15</sup> The word can picture a question and answer dialogue. Vincent writes, “prayer, according to our writer, is to be without the element of skeptical criticism, whether of God’s character and dealings, or of the character and behavior of those for whom prayer is offered.”<sup>16</sup>

#### VERSES 9-10

The phrase, “in like manner also,” links verses 8 and 9 together, and it shows that “the writer’s thought is still running upon the public assemblies for worship.”<sup>17</sup> However, Paul turns his attention to the matter of proper dress for women involved in public worship. “Women” is plural, and this writer believes it refers to women in general. Paul instructed them to “adorn themselves in modest apparel.” There is

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<sup>10</sup>Walvoord and Zuck, 735.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>William Hendricksen, New Testament Commentary: Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1990), 104.

<sup>13</sup>Hayne P. Griffin, Jr. and Thomas D. Lea, The New American Commentary: Volume 34 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 95.

<sup>14</sup>Vine, 55.

<sup>15</sup>Vincent, 221

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

a play on words in the Greek text of the preceding phrase. It could be stated, “*kosmio* themselves in *kosmein* apparel.”<sup>18</sup> The basic noun form of the word, *kosmos*, refers to creation.<sup>19</sup> The basic verb form, *kosmeo*, means to “arrange, to put in order.”<sup>20</sup> In other words, the Christian women must arrange themselves in an orderly way that is consistent with their Christian testimonies.<sup>21</sup>

Paul then goes on to tell the women how properly to adorn themselves by giving both positive and negative instructions like he did with the men. The positive instruction is that the women are to adorn themselves “with propriety and moderation.” “Propriety” means an appropriate reserve.<sup>22</sup> “Moderation” means a soundness of mind and judgment.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the positive instruction is for women to employ appropriate reserve and sound judgment in their dress. Paul’s negative instruction is that women not adorn themselves with “braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing.” Lea and Griffin write of this phrase, “The prohibition against ‘braided hair’ or expensive jewelry or clothing prohibits a gaudy, showy display, not normal attention to neatness and good taste.”<sup>24</sup> The focus of modesty in this particular context is on not flaunting wealth.

Verse 10 begins with the word, “but,” and this word connects the two verses together and also indicates a contrast in thought. According to Vine, proper “means to be conspicuous among a number, to be eminent, distinguished by a thing, hence, to be becoming, seemly, fit.”<sup>25</sup> “Profess” means to loudly and clearly

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<sup>18</sup>Barbara Aland and others, eds., The Greek New Testament (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993), 716.

<sup>19</sup>Wuest, 46.

<sup>20</sup>Vine, 32.

<sup>21</sup>Wuest, 46.

<sup>22</sup>Hendricksen, 106.

<sup>23</sup>Vine, 44-5.

<sup>24</sup>Griffin and Lea, 96.

<sup>25</sup>Vine, 44-5.

proclaim a message.<sup>26</sup> “Godliness” literally means God-fearing.<sup>27</sup> “Good works” are activities attempted for the sake of obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, Paul is saying that women who verbally proclaim to fear God should focus on activities for the sake of Jesus instead of their outward appearance. He wants their practice to match up to their profession.

#### VERSE 11

Paul wrote, “Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.” The context is public worship. “Learn” means “to increase one’s knowledge.”<sup>29</sup> According to Vine, silence “indicates tranquility arising from within, causing no disturbance to others.”<sup>30</sup> The question concerning this phrase is whether or not total silence or quietness is meant. Liftin writes,

The word, *hesychia*, translated ‘quietness’ in 1 Timothy 2:11 and silent in verse 12, does not mean complete silence or no talking. It is clearly used elsewhere (Acts 22:2; 2 Thes. 3:12) to mean ‘settled down, undisturbed, not unruly.’ A different word (*sigao*) means ‘to be silent, to say nothing’ (cf. Luke 18:39; 1 Cor. 14:34).<sup>31</sup>

Paul also tells the women to be in full submission, but he does not specify who they are to submit to. This writer believes that married women are to be in submission to their husbands, and all church members are to follow the leaders of the church together (Heb. 13:17) as long as those leaders are following Scripture.

#### VERSES 12-14

“And” connects verse 11 with verse 12. Paul gives two prohibitions in this verse. He did “not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man.” Because “permit” is present tense, Wuest translates, “I do not permit a woman to

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<sup>26</sup>Hendricksen, 108.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Vine, 231.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 324.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 242.

<sup>31</sup>Walvoord and Zuck, 735.

be a teacher.”<sup>32</sup> Because of the context of the public gathering of the church, teaching would have to refer to the teaching of the Word of God. Therefore, this is a prohibition of women teaching men the Word of God in public gatherings of the church. Also, Paul did not allow a woman “to have authority over a man.” “Authority” means dominion and refers to a person who moves on his own authority.<sup>33</sup> A woman who attempts to exert authority over a man is acting on her own authority because God has given authority to men in the home and the church. This is clearly the reason that Paul would tell women to be in submission to the men.

Paul then went on in verses 13 and 14 to lay out the reasons for the prohibitions he gave in verse 12. He linked the verses together with the use of “for” at the beginning of verse 13. According to Drumwright, for, *gar*, “is the conjunction that commonly expresses the ground or reason for an action or a statement.”<sup>34</sup>

Paul gave two reasons for what he wrote in verse 12. The first reason was that “Adam was formed first, then Eve.” This dealt with the fact that Adam was first in the creation because creation is the basic meaning of “formed.” Paul is appealing to the creation account contained within Holy Scripture in order to buttress his position. It is important to note that the headship of the man was ordained by God at creation and before sin came into the world. Thus, male headship is God’s ideal and not a perversion brought about by sin.

Paul’s second reason was the fact that “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.” Paul is not being unfair and placing all the blame on Eve because he had already declared Adam’s guilt and responsibility in Rom. 5:12-21. There are two different Greek words used for “deceived” in this verse. The first, pertaining to Adam’s lack of deception, was *epatethe*, and the second, pertaining to Eve’s deception was *exapatetheisa*, which was a strengthened form of the first.<sup>35</sup> *Exapatetheisa* “means to thoroughly beguile

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<sup>32</sup>Wuest, 48.

<sup>33</sup>Vine, 89-90.

<sup>34</sup>Huber L. Drumwright, Jr., An Introduction to New Testament Greek (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 34-5.

<sup>35</sup>Aland and others, 716.

or deceive wholly.”<sup>36</sup> This writer believes Eve was beguiled by the wiles of the Tempter, but Adam, who had been directly instructed by God on the matter, participated in willful disobedience against God’s command (Rom. 5:19) instead of being beguiled by Satan. Adam was following the woman instead of being the leader God wanted him to be, and it got him into serious trouble. Paul warned Timothy against allowing women to teach or have authority over men because of the pattern God set forth in creation, and then Paul gave the primary example of the problems that arise when this is not followed when he appealed to the Fall.

### VERSE 15

Verse 15 is generally considered to be one of the toughest verses in the Bible to interpret. There have been several different interpretations advanced in regard to this verse. First, women are spiritually saved by bearing children.<sup>37</sup> Second, women are kept safe physically during childbirth.<sup>38</sup> Third, this verse is a reference to salvation through the birth of the Messiah.<sup>39</sup> Fourth, women would avoid the errors listed in verses 11-12 by having children.<sup>40</sup> Fifth, the verse is a reminder that women find true satisfaction from their role in Christian homes.<sup>41</sup>

The first interpretation listed above cannot be true because salvation is by grace through faith in Christ (Eph. 2:8). In addition, verse 15 clearly pictures a saved woman. The second one is not correct because even Christian women have died during childbirth. The third interpretation, while sounding plausible, is reading into the text. Also, childbearing is plural and does not refer to an individual birth.<sup>42</sup> The fourth interpretation does not fit because a woman can have children and still refuse to be in submission to her husband. The fifth interpretation seems to fit the context of the passage. Women are to fulfill their

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<sup>36</sup>Vine, 279.

<sup>37</sup>Griffin and Lea, 102.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

God-given role instead of claiming the men's role. The verse is a picture of sanctification, which is one aspect of our salvation. Paul is stressing the importance of childbearing and motherhood, and the reality that God uses childbearing and motherhood in the sanctification of Christian women that He blesses with children.

### THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

In addition to understanding a passage of Scripture in its immediate context, it is also important to understand a passage of Scripture in the context of the overall teaching of the Bible. Therefore, this section will focus on a comparison between the teachings set forth in 1 Tim. 2:8-15 and teachings in other parts of the Bible on the same subjects.

Verse 8 contains tremendous teaching on prayer that is definitely in line with the rest of the Bible. Paul told men to pray "everywhere." 1 Thess. 5:17 gives the command to "pray without ceasing." Paul admonished them to pray with "holy hands." Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear." Paul also encouraged the men to pray "without wrath." Jesus said, "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Mt. 6:15). Also, Paul encouraged them to pray without "doubting." Jesus taught his disciples that they could move mountains if they had faith as a mustard seed (Mt. 17:20). Therefore, an effective prayer life will be marked by persistent prayer, a confession of sin, an attitude that forgives instead of holding grudges, and faith that God will do what He says He will do.

In regard to the way women should dress, Peter was in total agreement with Paul. Peter wrote, "Do not let your adornment be merely outward-arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel-rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God" (1 Peter 3:3-4). There are at least three theological assumptions behind Peter and Paul's desire for modesty in women's adornment. First, women should focus on good works and a quiet spirit because "the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). Second, women should focus on good works and a quiet spirit, instead of an emulation of the world's fashions, because Christians should seek to please God rather than men (Gal. 1:10). Third, women should focus on good works and a quiet spirit because focusing on outward appearance shows a lack of proper priorities. Jesus said, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about

your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on” (Mt. 6:25).

The concept of female submission taught by Paul in this passage is another concept taught elsewhere in the Bible that is a hotly debated topic. Peter told wives to “be submissive to your own husbands” (1 Peter 3:1). Submission is grounded in the fact “that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God” (1 Cor. 11:3). God Himself said to Eve, “Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you” (Gen. 3:16). Pastors are told to have their children in subjection. However, husbands are never told to put their wives in subjection. On the other hand, women are told to be in submission to their husbands at least three times in the New Testament. Therefore, submission is not to be coerced by husbands, but it is to be done voluntarily by wives out of obedience to God and love for their husbands. The greatest example of voluntary submission was given by the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:5-11).

Biblical submission does not imply any inferiority on the part of women. Genesis 1:27 says, “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” This verse clearly demonstrates the complete equality of men and women. However, God has ordained different functions and roles for men and women. He has given men the role of headship (cf. 1 Cor. 11:3, 8-11) and called for women to respond in submission. Once again, this is no way implies any inferiority for women because 1 Cor. 11:3 also says that “the head of Christ is God,” and the Bible clearly teaches the equality of the Father and the Son (cf. John 5:16-18). It is also important to be clear that the commands are directed to husbands and wives in particular. Scripture does not teach that women are to submit to men in general.

Another controversial topic in 1 Tim. 2:8-15 is Paul’s command to “let a woman learn in silence.” In 1 Cor. 14:34, Paul said, “Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak.” However, 1 Cor. 11:5 speaks of women praying and prophesying. Some people consider these verses to be contradictory, but this writer believes they are actually complementary.

How can these verses be reconciled? The key is to note exactly what each verse is prohibiting or allowing. In 1 Cor. 14:34, Paul uses the word for complete silence, *sigao*, and this verse occurs in the context of guidelines for judging prophetic utterances. Therefore, it would seem to be a prohibition of women judging these utterances in the context of public worship. In 1 Tim. 2:11, Paul wanted women to “learn in silence.” Therefore, he is requiring quietness during

the time of the teaching of the Word of God. In other words, he is desiring that women be learners instead of teaching men. Neither one of these restrictions is contradictory to the fact that Paul allows women to pray and prophesy.

The Scriptures do not allow women to judge prophetic utterances or have a teaching or authority role over men. Are there other restrictions given to the ministry of women? The pastorate and diaconate are two areas of ministry that many people consider also to be off limits to women. What do the Scriptures actually have to say about them being off limits to women?

It is the opinion of this writer that the Bible clearly precludes women from being pastors. There are several reasons for this. First, pastors are to be followed as leaders of the church with spiritual authority given to them by God (cf. Heb. 13:7, 13 and 1 Peter 5:1-4), and a woman in this role would violate the command in 1 Tim. 2:12 that a woman is not “to have authority over a man.” Second, an integral part of the pastoral ministry is teaching (cf. Eph. 4:11, 1 Tim. 3:2, 2 Tim. 2:24-26), and a woman being in this teaching role would violate 2 Tim. 2:12. Third, there is absolutely no example in the Bible of a woman having this type of role. The twelve apostles appointed by Jesus, other apostles named in the New Testament<sup>43</sup>, and all named pastors were men. Fourth, women are prevented from being pastors because a pastor must be “the husband of one wife” (1 Tim. 3:2). Some people would contend that this could be translated the wife of one husband or spouse of one spouse. However, the Greek text shows this to be impossible. In Greek, the phrase is *mias gunaikos andra*.<sup>44</sup> *Andra* is accusative, singular, and masculine.<sup>45</sup> *Gunaikos* is genitive, singular, and feminine.<sup>46</sup> *Mias* is a numeral that is genitive, singular, and feminine.<sup>47</sup> *Mias*, one, and *gunaikos*, wife, are in agreement so the only possible translation is “husband of one wife” or “man of one woman.” Fifth, a requirement to be a pastor is for a man to rule his own house

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<sup>43</sup> Many Bible scholars cite Julia (Romans 16:7) as an exception to this. This writer does not agree with that conclusion. Please see Wayne Grudem and John Piper’s detailed explanation of this issue on pages 79-81 of *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*.

<sup>44</sup>Aland and others, 716

<sup>45</sup>Wesley J. Perschbacher, ed., *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1990), 26.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 84

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 276.

well. 1 Tim 3:4-5 says that a pastor is to be “one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?).” There is a connection between men leading in the home and men being pastors who lead the church. Of course, just being male does not qualify a man to be a pastor, but he must meet the character requirements elucidated in Scripture.

The question of whether or not women are allowed to be deacons is a much tougher question. There are valid arguments on both sides of the issue. In favor of ordaining women as deacons, it can be said that the diaconate is a role of service and not a ruling/teaching role. Second, Rom. 16:1 refers to Phoebe as “a servant (*diakonon*) of the church in Cenchrea,” and *diakonon* can (but does not have to be) be translated as deacon or deaconess.<sup>48</sup> Third, in 1 Timothy 3, qualifications are given for pastors and deacons. No qualifications are listed for pastor’s wives, but qualifications are listed for women (either deacon’s wives or deaconesses depending on the translation) within the qualifications for deacons. Kenneth Wuest, in his *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, writes, “Here it should be translated ‘women.’ It does not necessarily refer to the wives of the deacons, and for the following reasons; first, the words, ‘even so,’ are the translation of *hosautos*, which is used in introducing the second or third in a series. The series here is of Church officials; second, there is no possessive pronoun in the Greek, which would be needed if the women were the wives of the deacons; third; the four qualifications which follow correspond, with appropriate variations, to the first four required of deacons as regards demeanor, government of the tongue, use of wine, and trustworthiness; and fourth, this is a section dealing wholly with Church officials. The reference here is to women who hold the office of deaconess, as Phoebe (Rom. 16:1). Fourth, the fact that “wives” (1 Tim. 3:11) is not preceded by a pronoun in the Greek text means that the proper translation could be women instead of wives.<sup>49</sup> If this is the case, the Bible does allow women to be deaconesses.

On the other hand, a case can also be made against women being ordained as deacons. First, some would contend that the seven ordained in Acts 6 were the first deacons and all were all men. Second, *diakonon* in Rom.16:1 and *gunaikas* in 1

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<sup>48</sup>Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 414.

<sup>49</sup>John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Shepherdology: A Master Plan for Church Leadership* (Panorama City, California: The Master’s Fellowship, 1989), 183.

Tim. 3:11 could also be translated servant and wives, respectively.<sup>50</sup> Third, 1 Tim. 3:12 says, “Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.” Fourth, just as there is no pronoun before “wives” in the Greek text of 1 Tim. 3:11, there is also no pronoun before “children” in verse 12. However, it is clear that their children are being referred to so verse 11 could also mean their wives. Fifth, the ecclesiastical term for deaconess is *diakonissa*, and the term is not used here or anywhere else in the Bible.<sup>51</sup> Sixth, deacons are clearly referred to on both sides of verse eleven, which would seem to point towards men being deacons.

This question is definitely a gray area that does not call for dogmatism. Evangelical Bible scholars are split regarding their understanding of this passage. This writer sees how it could be viewed either way. However, this writer feels that the arguments listed above, particularly Wuest’s explanation, for women being deacons are a little bit stronger. If a church does have women as deacons, their ministries should be limited to service (as should the ministry of male deacons as well).

Another issue that should be considered is the application of the admonition for women not to teach men in 1 Timothy 2:12. Is this absolute or limited? Wayne Grudem and John Piper write of this, “When Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:12, ‘I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent,’ we do not understand him to mean an absolute prohibition of all teaching by women. Paul instructs the older women to ‘teach what is good. They they can train the younger women’ (Titus 2:3-4), and commends the teaching that Eunice and Lois gave to their son and grandson Timothy (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14). Proverbs praises the ideal wife because ‘She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue’ (Proverbs 31:26). Paul endorses women prophesying in church (1 Corinthians 11:5) and says that men ‘learn’ by such prophesying (1 Corinthians 14:31) and that the members (presumably men and women) should ‘teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs’ (Colossians 3:16). Then, of course, there is Priscilla at Aquila’s side correcting Apollos (Acts 18:26). It is arbitrary to think that Paul had every form of teaching in mind in 1 Timothy 2:12. Teaching and learning are such broad terms that it is impossible that women not teach men and men not learn from women in some sense. There is a way that nature teaches (1 Corinthians 11:14) and a fig tree

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<sup>50</sup>Aland and others, 563 and 717.

<sup>51</sup>Archer, 414.

teaches (Matthew 24:32) and suffering teaches (Hebrews 5:8) and human behavior teaches (1 Corinthians 4:6; 1 Peter 3:1). If Paul did not have every conceivable form of teaching and learning in mind, what did he mean? Along with the fact that the setting here is the church assembled for prayer and teaching (1 Timothy 2:8-10; 3:15), the best clue is the coupling of 'teaching' with 'having authority over men.' We would say that the teaching inappropriate for a woman is the teaching of men in settings or ways that dishonor the calling of men to bear the primary responsibility for teaching and leadership. This primary responsibility is to be carried by the pastors and elders. Therefore we think it is God's will that only men bear the responsibility for this office."<sup>52</sup> This writer believes this prevents a woman from being a pastor/elder, preaching in the worship service of a local church gathered, and teaching men as the primary teacher in mixed classes (while not preventing them from sharing and contributing). Some complementarian churches limit this to worship services and allow women to teach mixed classes outside of the worship service. It does not apply outside of the church in personal interaction (such as conversation or counseling) even within the church, or in family settings.

Paul places some limitations on the ministry of women in the church. However, many people, for various reasons, do not consider his instructions to be binding on us today. It is very important to consider some of these arguments.

There are four main arguments. First, it is sometimes argued that according to Gal. 3:28, there is no male/female distinction in Christ. The verse says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This argument ignores the fact that the context of the chapter is salvation through faith alone, and this verse is referring to the fact that anyone can be a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Also, the roles assigned by God in creation are not abolished by the Christ who completely fulfilled the Old Testament. Furthermore, Paul is not so foolish that he would have a contradiction between Galatians and 1 Timothy.

Second, it is often argued that Paul's teaching about a woman's function is not applicable today because he was only addressing specific problems in the churches to which he was writing. However, Paul's appeal to Creation and the Fall means that his teaching is timeless and not just limited to a specific situation. Also, he clearly listed the reasons for what he wrote, and they were the creation order and Eve's role in the fall as opposed to listing specific problems at Ephesus (cf.

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<sup>52</sup>John Piper and Wayne Grudem, ed. Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood (Wheaton, Illinois, Crossway, 2006), 69-70).

Phil. 4:2-3 where Paul does deal with a specific problem involving two women). In 1 Corinthians 11:3, he used the Trinity as an example of what he was teaching. A common pushback to this line of argument is that it is inconsistent to consider the teaching about women teaching and leading to be timeless but the teaching about women and head coverings to be cultural and only applicable to the first century. However, complementarians believe that the principle taught in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is timeless (and actually the same as has been espoused throughout this paper), but the head coverings were an outward expression that was a temporary cultural expression (although there is nothing wrong with women applying this and wearing some form of them in church today). It is outside the scope of this paper to explore this topic in detail, but consider what Thomas Schreiner said about it. He wrote, “Am I suggesting that women return to wearing coverings or veils? No. We must distinguish between the fundamental principle that underlies a text and the application of that principle in a specific culture. The fundamental principle is that the sexes, although equal, are also different. God has ordained that men have the responsibility to lead, while women have a complementary and supportive role...Now, in the first century, failure to wear a covering sent a signal to the congregation that a woman was rejecting the authority of male leadership. Paul was concerned about head coverings only because of the message they sent to people in that culture. Today, except in certain religious groups, if a woman fails to wear a head covering while praying or prophesying, no one thinks she is in rebellion. Lack of head coverings sends no message at all in our culture.”<sup>53</sup>

Third, some people argue that Biblical teachings about such issues as slavery must also be applicable today if the teachings about women are applicable. However, slavery was not ordained by God, and the teachings were temporary regulations of a man-made institution. In fact, the application of Biblical principles has led to the abolition of slavery in many places. On the other hand, the role of women was ordained by God Himself. Their role is the product of creation and not culture as demonstrated above.

Fourth, there are those who contend that Paul was a chauvinist who was reflecting the cultural bias of his day against women. To be logically consistent in making an argument, it is necessary to take the argument out to its logical conclusion. What is the logical conclusion of this argument? If this argument is true, it means that Paul was a liar because he claimed that his gospel “came through the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:12). It would also mean that Paul

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 138.

was a hypocrite because he told Christians to “not be conformed to this world” (Rom. 12:2) when he was conforming to the ideas of his culture. It would also mean that the Bible is a fraud because Paul claimed that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16). Furthermore, it is actually even wrong to assume that Paul was conforming to his culture in his views on this subject. Clinton Arnold has written, "It is crucial to recognize that this passage [he is referring to Ephesians 5:21-33 and the command for wives to submit to husbands] does not represent a cultural concession to the prevailing forms of patriarchy in Roman households (as a number of modern commentators assume). This passage is countercultural at its core. Paul sets Christ as the example for both wives and husbands, but in particular the husband, as he seeks to understand how he is to exert his leadership and authority in the home. The pattern Paul provides completely redefines what every first-century man in the church would have assumed as important in their role as husband. They are no longer to look at the heavy-handed, oppressive ways that their father and grandfathers ruled in their homes. Rather, they must now look to Christ to see what it truly means to be a leader.”<sup>54</sup>

Despite the fact that their role is limited in some areas, women do have a major role to play within the church. This role includes: prayer and prophecy (1 Cor. 11:5), teaching other women (Titus 2:4), giving personal counsel and instruction (Acts 18:26), sharing a testimony (John 4:28-29), witnessing about Christ (Mt. 28:7), hospitality (Acts 12:12), service (Rom. 16:1-2), and really anything else not forbidden to them by Scripture, which includes a multitude of ministries.<sup>55</sup> In addition, there is the incredibly important ministry of motherhood.

### PRACTICAL APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

This passage speaks to Christians’ lives in at least four major areas: acceptance of the Bible as the authority for our lives, our walks with God, our marital relationships, and order within our churches. First, the Bible must be the authority for our lives. The rise and influence of humanism and feminism has caused many who profess faith in Christ to shrink away from the Biblical position on the issues dealt with in this paper. However, the true Christian must realize God is the only source of truth and make a commitment to believe, study, obey, and stand for God’s Word even when that results in an uncomfortable and unpopular position. We are called to please God rather than men.

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<sup>54</sup> Clinton Arnold, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians (Zondervan, 2010), 380.

Second, this passage deals with our personal walks with God through the teachings on prayer and women's adornment. Men are told to make consistent, believing prayer from a pure heart that does not harbor any unforgiveness a priority in their lives. Women should focus on their inner qualities and doing good works instead of attempting to keep up with the latest fashion trend.

Third, this passage contains teaching that should affect our marital relationships. Wives are to be in submission to their husbands. Of course, husbands are to love their wives like Christ loves the church (Eph 5:25) and lead in a godly way.

Fourth, this passage definitely contains teaching that should affect the way we conduct ourselves in church. Just imagine what "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15), would be like if holy men gave prayerful teaching and leadership, and the women followed them in humble submission. The church would be dramatically changed and would be much more like God wants it to be.

## **ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup> W. A. Criswell, ed., The Believer's Study Bible: New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 1715.

<sup>2</sup> William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary: New Testament (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992), 886.

<sup>3</sup> Criswell, 1715.

<sup>4</sup> John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament Edition (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1983), 729.

<sup>5</sup> Criswell, 1715.

<sup>6</sup> Walvoord and Zuck, 730.

<sup>7</sup> W. E. Vine, Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1981), 299.

<sup>8</sup> Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament: Volume IV (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946), 221.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest's Word Studies From the Greek New Testament for the English Reader: Volume Two (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973), 45.

<sup>10</sup> Walvoord and Zuck, 735.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> William Hendricksen, New Testament Commentary: Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1990), 104.

<sup>13</sup> Hayne P. Griffin, Jr. and Thomas D. Lea, The New American Commentary: Volume 34 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 95.

<sup>14</sup> Vine, 55.

<sup>15</sup> Vincent, 221

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Barbara Aland and others, eds., The Greek New Testament (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993), 716.

<sup>19</sup> Wuest, 46.

<sup>20</sup> Vine, 32.

<sup>21</sup> Wuest, 46.

<sup>22</sup> Hendricksen, 106.

<sup>23</sup> Vine, 44-5.

<sup>24</sup> Griffin and Lea, 96.

<sup>25</sup>Vine, 44-5.

<sup>26</sup>Hendricksen, 108.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Vine, 231.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 324.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 242.

<sup>31</sup>Walvoord and Zuck, 735.

<sup>32</sup>Wuest, 48.

<sup>33</sup>Vine, 89-90.

<sup>34</sup>Huber L. Drumwright, Jr., An Introduction to New Testament Greek (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 34-5.

<sup>35</sup>Aland and others, 716.

<sup>36</sup>Vine, 279.

<sup>37</sup>Griffin and Lea, 102.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Many Bible scholars cite Julia (Romans 16:7) as an exception to this. This writer does not agree with that conclusion. Please see Wayne Grudem and John Piper's detailed explanation of this issue on pages 79-81 of Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood.

<sup>44</sup>Aland and others, 716

<sup>45</sup>Wesley J. Perschbacher, ed., The New Analytical Greek Lexicon (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1990), 26.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 84

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 276.

<sup>48</sup>Gleason L. Archer, Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 414.

<sup>49</sup>John F. MacArthur, Jr., Shepherdology: A Master Plan for Church Leadership (Panorama City, California: The Master's Fellowship, 1989), 183.

<sup>50</sup>Aland and others, 563 and 717.

<sup>51</sup>Archer, 414.

<sup>52</sup>John Piper and Wayne Grudem, ed. Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood (Wheaton, Illinois, Crossway, 2006), 69-70).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 138.

<sup>54</sup> Clinton Arnold, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians (Zondervan, 2010), 380.

<sup>55</sup>Criswell, 1718.

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**Lesson 5**  
**“What Defines A Church: Biblical Preaching And Worship”**

**Main Idea: The Bible is God’s perfect Word that must be boldly and accurately preached.**

**(2 Timothy 3:14-4:4)** “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, **15** and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **16** All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: **2** Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. **3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; **4** and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

Let’s break this principle down and look at the details of it.

**1. The Bible must be boldly and accurately preached because many are turning away from the truth (v. 3-4).** “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; **4** and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

These verses are being fulfilled in our day. Many people want their ears tickled and prefer man-made myths to the truth of God. However, that means there is a greater need for bold and accurate preaching instead of a lesser need. We must obey God instead of following the tides of public opinion.

**2. The Bible must be boldly and accurately preached because we are commanded to preach the Word (v. 2).** “Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”

This is a command-not a choice! Nehemiah 8:8 says, “So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to

understand the reading.” That is a great picture of biblical preaching. Paul said that he declared the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) and preached Jesus Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2) so biblical preaching is expounding the whole Word of God with an emphasis on Jesus and His cross. Why is the Lord so serious about us preaching the Word? The key is seeing that “therefore” in verse 1 ties this passage back to what he says at the end of chapter 3 about the inspiration of Scripture.

- A. Jesus is revealed (3:15).** “and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”
- B. The Bible is God’s inspired and perfect record of His revelation to man (3:16).** “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,”
- C. The Bible is helpful to us (3:16).** “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,”
- D. The Bible is sufficient (3:17).** “that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good”

**3. The Bible must be boldly and accurately preached because of the characteristics of true preaching (v. 2).** “Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”

They include:

- A. A constant readiness to preach**
- B. Dealing with sin**
- C. Encouragement**
- D. Patience**
- E. Teaching**

**4. The Bible must be boldly and accurately preached because of the reality that we will stand before Jesus and answer to Him alone (v. 1).**

“I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:”

Ultimately, the preacher has an audience of One! If I have pleased Him, everything will be ok, but if I have not pleased Him, it does not matter what

anyone else thinks. According to Warren Wiersbe, the reality of His judgment means:

- A. We must do our work faithfully and carefully.**
- B. It should deliver us from the fear of man.**
- C. It should encourage us to keep going in the midst of difficulties.**

**Conclusion-Applications:** Here are some ideas on how to listen to a sermon in order to make it worship and make it profitable:

- 1. Expectation-Desiring a word from God**
- 2. Preparation-Prayer, heart is right and ready to worship**
- 3. Participation-Active listening (to the preacher and the Lord), note taking, response, thinking, evaluating what is said in light of Scripture**
- 4. Retention-Coming back to it afterwards**
- 5. Application-Obediently putting it into practice**

Biblically, there is a connection between the preaching of the Word and our response in worship (see Nehemiah 8:1-8, 9:3, Acts 2:40-47). Here are some basic biblical principles about what worship is and how we express it in corporate worship.

**(Nehemiah 8:1-8).** “Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that *was* in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel. **2** So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who *could* hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. **3** Then he read from it in the open square that *was* in front of the Water Gate [a]from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* to the Book of the Law. **4** So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiyah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, *and* Meshullam. **5** And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was *standing* above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. **6** And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. Then all the people answered, “Amen, Amen!” while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with *their* faces to the ground. **7** Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people *stood* in their place. **8** So they read distinctly

from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading.”

**(9:3)**. “And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God *for one-fourth* of the day; and *for another* fourth they confessed and worshiped the Lord their God.”

**(Acts 2:40-47)**. “And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” **41** Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*. **42** And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. **43** Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. **44** Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, **45** and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. **46** So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

**1. Everybody is a worshipper. The only question is who or what we are worshipping (Romans 1:18-25, Jeremiah 2:12-13).** We either worship the Creator or created things, but we do worship. The root of sin is us putting ourselves in place of God. He created us to be dependent upon Him, but we try to live independently and be our own gods.

**(Romans 1:18-25)**. “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, **19** because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. **20** For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, **21** because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22** Professing to be wise, they became fools, **23** and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. **24** Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, **25** who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”

**(Jeremiah 2:12-13).** 12 “Be astonished, O heavens, at this, And be horribly afraid; Be very desolate,” says the Lord. 13 “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, *And* hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

**2. Worship is giving glory, dedication, sacrifice, and service to that which is most worthy to us (Romans 11:36-12:1).** “For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.”

Of course, the Bible teaches us that we are to give glory, dedication, sacrifice, and service to God the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit. God demands our worship (Matthew 4:10), desires our worship (John 4:23), and deserves our worship (Revelation 4-5). However, we are worshipping falsely when we give anything glory, dedication, sacrifice, and service instead of God. We can turn good things into gods, which makes them bad things. We are idolaters when we worship anything other than God. In reality, there is a false god behind every sin that we are treating as a “functional savior” (to quote Martin Luther).

**3. True worship flows through Jesus and out of the gospel (1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 13:15, Luke 7:36-50, Philippians 3:3).**

**(1 Timothy 2:5).** “For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus,”

**(Hebrews 13:15)** “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name.”

**(Luke 7:36-50).** “Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to eat. **37** And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at the table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, **38** and stood at His feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil. **39** Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw *this*, he spoke to himself, saying, “This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman *this is* who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.” **40** And Jesus answered and said to him, “Simon, I have something to say

to you.” So he said, “Teacher, say it.” **41** “There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. **42** And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?” **43** Simon answered and said, “I suppose the *one* whom he forgave more.” And He said to him, “You have rightly judged.” **44** Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair of her head. **45** You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. **46** You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. **47** Therefore I say to you, her sins, which *are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little.” **48** Then He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” **49** And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” **50** Then He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

**(Philippians 3:3).** “For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,”

We can only come to God through Jesus, and our ability and desire to worship the one true God comes from what Jesus has done for us (1 John 4:10). Ultimately, we can only find satisfaction through the worship of Jesus because that is what we were created for (John 4:13-14). Practically, these are some of the means that we use to express our worship to the Lord according to Scripture in corporate church services:

- a. Prayer (Matthew 6:5-13)
- b. Praise (Acts 2:46-47, Romans 15:9-11)
- c. Confession of Sin (James 5:16)
- d. Confession of faith (Romans 10:9-10) [Testimony]
- e. Scripture reading and study (Luke 4:16-21, 24:27; Romans 10:17)
- f. Preaching (2 Timothy 4:2, Acts 2:14)
- g. Lord’s Supper and Baptism (1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Matthew 3:16-17, Acts 2:41-42)
- h. Offerings (Lives [Romans 12:1-2], Means [2 Corinthians 8-9])
- i. Music and Singing (Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16, Psalm 150)
- j. Fellowship (Acts 2:46-47)
- k. Physical Acts of Adoration [such as lifting of hands, clapping of hands, kneeling, bowing] (1 Timothy 2:8, Psalm 28:2, 47:1, 63:4, 134:2, 141:2)

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. Discuss the different types of preaching such as topic and expository? What do those words mean? Why does True Life focus on expository preaching?
2. Why is it so important to have biblical preaching in the life of a believer and in the life of a church?
3. What should you look for when listening to a sermon?
4. Discuss the list of how to make listening to a sermon more profitable.
5. How can you support a pastor in his preaching of the Word?
6. Do you agree or disagree that everyone is a worshipper? Why or why not?
7. What is your definition of worship?
8. How do you worship personally?
9. How do you prepare for worship in church on Sundays?
10. Discuss the list of biblical elements of worship. Are there things you would add to that list?

**Lesson 6**  
**“What Defines A Church: Rightly Administered Ordinances”**

-By ordinances, we are referring to things Jesus has ordained or commanded that the church practices until He returns. These are not the only things He has commanded us to do, but these are particularly symbols of our salvation that picture the gospel and remind us of what Jesus has done for us. We call them ordinances to distinguish them from the use of the word, sacrament, because they are outward signs and do not inwardly impart grace.

-How do we define and administer baptism at True Life?

**TLC Definition: We believe in believer’s baptism by immersion as a symbolic act, which is how Christians publicly confess their faith in Jesus.**

**1. Baptism is for professing believers only.** Why do we believe this?

**A. Jesus connected it to being a disciple (Matthew 28:19-** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

**B. The meaning of John’s baptism indicates baptism is for believers (Luke 3:7-9).** John was teaching that outward religious rituals, including baptism, do not save but that it is an inward work of God expressed in confession, repentance, and faith in the Messiah that results in the fruit of life change but is symbolized by baptism.

**C. This is the pattern we see in Acts as the church fulfilled the Great Commission.**

**-The 3000 Saved on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47):** Verse 41 says, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.” “Received” is the Greek word, *apodechoma*, and it means “to take fully.” James 1:21 says, “Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” I believe, therefore, that when we compare Scripture with Scripture it becomes clear that they were saved before they were baptized because they had fully received God’s Word, and that brings salvation according to James.

**-People saved in Samaria (Acts 8:12)**

**-The Ethiopian Treasurer (Acts 8:35-38-** “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. **36** Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?” **37** Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”**38** So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.):

The Holy Spirit led Philip to the Ethiopian who was reading from the book of Isaiah. This man did not understand what he was reading so Philip took the Scriptures and preached Jesus to him. Then we see what happened in the verses we read. The Ethiopian had to confess Christ and be saved before the man of God would baptize him.

**-Paul’s Salvation Experience (Acts 9:1-19):** Paul was saved on the Damascus Road when he encountered the risen Christ and confessed Him as Lord (v. 6). Ananias baptized him over three days later.

**-The Gentiles Saved in the Home of Cornelius (Acts 10):** God sent Peter to begin the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles. Peter preached in the home of a man named Cornelius. Verse 44 says, “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.” The Jews who were with Peter were amazed that Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit. Peter answered them by saying, “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” They were baptized with water. Therefore, it is obvious that these people were saved before they were baptized.

**-Lydia and her household (Acts 16:14-15-** Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us*. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. **15** And when she and her household were baptized, she begged *us*, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded *us*.)

**-The Philippian jailer and his household (Acts 16:30-34-** And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” **31** So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” **32** Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. **33** And he took them the same hour of the night and washed *their* stripes. And immediately

he and all his *family* were baptized. **34** Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.):

Paul and Silas were in jail. God sent an earthquake that opened the doors and loosened the chains, but they did not escape. The jailer was trembling as he ran to Paul and Silas and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They answered him, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (v. 30-31). This is the only time that question is directly asked in the New Testament, and the answer called for faith and did not involve baptism in any way.

**-Crispus and many Corinthians (Acts 18:8-** Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.)

**-The Believers at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-5-** And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples **2** he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”**3** And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.” **4** Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” **5** When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.):

Paul encountered a group of false disciples at Ephesus. They had been baptized into John’s baptism, but they had not truly believed on Christ and received the Holy Spirit. After Paul explained the truth to them, “they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (v.5). Therefore, they had been baptized once, but they still needed to have believer’s baptism after their salvation.

**D. The nature of salvation indicates that baptism is for believers. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone (Romans 4:3-5. 3** For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” **4** Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. **5** But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,).

**God regenerates us internally and not through an outward ritual (Titus 3:3-7-** For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various

lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. **4** But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, **5** not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, **6** whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.).

## **2. Baptism is a symbol. Why?**

**A. The nature of salvation.** The verses we just looked at show us that baptism is not a sacrament that conveys grace but a symbol of the salvation given by Jesus through faith. **Also, the thief on the cross was saved without being baptized.**

**B. It is actually presented as a symbol in the New Testament (1 Peter 3:21-** There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,).

### **What does baptism symbolize?**

**A. The cleansing of sin (Acts 22:16-** And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’.” This is a symbol of the blood of Jesus that cleanses all of our sins (1 John 1:17).

**B. Identification with the body of Christ through the baptism of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13-** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.).

**C. Identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6:3-5 “3** Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of His resurrection.”

## **3. Baptism is by immersion.**

**A. The New Testament Example** – Let me share two examples of this. First, when John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River (Matthew 3:13-17), “Jesus immediately came up from the water,” and this clearly pictures immersion.

Second, when Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch after his conversion (Acts 8:26-40), they “went down into the water, and he baptized him.”

**B. The Meaning of the Word** – Baptism is the English transliteration of the Greek word, *baptizo*, which literally means “to make fully wet” (*Strong’s Comprehensive Concordance of the Bible*). According to Dr. Gerald Cowen, examples of the use of this word in secular Greek literature include sinking a ship, sinking into sleep or intoxication, a person drowning himself in wine, drawing water from a vessel by dipping a cup in it, and someone who is drowned with questions. Timothy Paul Jones says, “In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the word translated “baptize” in the New Testament described Naaman’s sevenfold immersion in the Jordan River (2 Kings 5:14).” Therefore, if a person has not been made fully wet when baptized, he or she has not been baptized in the biblical sense.

**C. The Symbolism of the Act** – According to Romans 6:3-5, baptism is a symbol or picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and it is also a picture of the fact that the believer has died to sin and been raised to walk in the newness of life through Jesus Christ. Only the act of being taken under the water and raised up again can accurately symbolize these biblical truths.

#### **4. Baptism is the way we publicly confess our faith in Jesus.**

**-The pattern of Acts**

**-Matthew 10:32-33-** “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. **33** But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

**Questions And Answers:** These are some commonly asked questions that we have gotten at True Life regarding baptism. I did not address these in the video lesson. However, they are included for your personal learning and group discussion if people in your group have some of these questions.

**1. Is baptism an essential part of salvation?** No, Jesus told the thief on the cross that “today you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43) when he expressed faith in Jesus even though he could not be baptized. Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Romans 10: 9 and 13 say, “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from

the dead, you will be saved... For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Therefore, we are saved at the moment when we trust Jesus’ death and resurrection for us, confess Him as Lord, and call on Him for salvation. We should get baptized quickly to obey Jesus and make our public profession of faith. However, baptism is not a sacramental act that conveys grace. Salvation is in Christ alone.

**2. If I have been baptized as an infant did that save me or do I need to get saved and then baptized again? Or if I am not trusting in my sprinkling as a baby for my salvation but I have trusted Jesus and been born again but not baptized except as an infant, do I need to get baptized?** In regard to the first question, Galatians 2:16 says, “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.” We are saved by Jesus alone through conscious faith in Him. A baby is not capable of that. Even John’s baptism emphasized personal confession and repentance, and he told them that their religious heritage would not save them. Sometimes people argue that the “household baptisms” in Acts justify infant baptism. However, the texts do not specify how old the people were. Furthermore, in the story of the Philippian jailer, Acts 16:34 says the jailer “rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.” Therefore, the people who were baptized were old enough to be able to believe for themselves.

As far as the second question, we would say yes to being rebaptized because of our belief in believer’s baptism by immersion as a symbolic act to publicly confess our faith in Jesus. In an infant sprinkling, none of the criteria of that definition are met. It would be outside the scope of this Q @ A to consider all the arguments related to this, but the most basic argument is usually that baptism is a sign of the covenant made by believing parents for their children with baptism replacing circumcision as the sign of the covenant. This baptism has to be confirmed by faith at when the child is old enough. However, Romans 2:28-9 says, “For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; 29 but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God.” We do not believe baptism equates to or replaces circumcision in the new covenant. A big part of the message of the New Testament is to stop trusting outward rituals. Furthermore, the book of Galatians is crystal clear that salvation is in Christ alone and not Christ plus circumcision. Baptism is a symbol of saving faith. Any other view has to be read into Scripture instead of being read out of it.

**3. If I was baptized as a believer but not by immersion, do I need to get baptized again?** We know that different churches and denominations have different views on this, but we believe that immersion is the only acceptable form of baptism so we would say that the answer is yes. We explained the reasons we believe in immersion above, and we believe it is the only scripturally authorized and valid mode of baptism that adequately conveys the symbolic meaning of baptism. It is our conviction people have not really been baptized unless they have been immersed.

**4. If my baptism was meaningful in my life even though it wasn't a scriptural baptism, why wouldn't that be sufficient?** Ultimately, Scripture is our authority and not our feelings or experience. We are called to test all things according to God's Word. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 says, "Test all things; hold fast what is good." This could become a loophole to justify any unbiblical religious experience. Admittedly, this is a more extreme example that something connected to baptism, but a teenage girl told me in a Bible study several years ago that she was a Christian because she saw a vision of Jesus when she was high. She may have had that experience and it may have been very meaningful to her, but it would have been irresponsible of me to agree with her that she was saved because of that and not actually share the gospel spelled out in Scripture with her. Luke 6:46 says, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?" 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." We are to follow the Bible in our faith and practice.

**5. I have rededicated my life to the Lord, and I want to get baptized again because of that. Will you baptize me?** No. Ephesians 4:5 tells us that there is "one Lord, one faith, **one baptism.**" This means that we only get baptized once as long as it is done scripturally. We only repeat baptism when it does not qualify as a biblical baptism (see Acts 19:1-5). Baptism is only a symbol of salvation and not of sanctification (which is biblical terminology for rededication). A symbol only has meaning when it is picturing a genuine reality. Baptism is picturing our identification with Christ and His Body; His death, burial, and resurrection; and us dying to the old man and being raised up to live a new life in union with Jesus (Romans 6:3-6). In addition, we may rededicate ourselves to God many times. In fact, we are called to dedicate ourselves to the Lord daily. Which "rededication" should we get baptized for? Each time? A special one that we pick? There is no biblical warrant for this, and we are called to follow Scripture.

**6. Can I baptize my children or my friend that I led to the Lord or should a pastor do it?** We believe this is a gray area and a secondary matter, but we are happy to share our approach to this question for the sake of clarity. Can you baptize someone? We think the answer is yes. We do not believe that Bible prevents any Christian from being able to baptize a convert. The better question is, “Should you?” If it is a situation like Phillip and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8) and there is not a church around that the person can be baptized in, you should baptize that believer. If there is a church, we believe you should direct the convert to the church and its leadership. Let us explain why and how we handle this at True Life. We believe that generally baptism should happen in the gathered worship of the church because it is an ordinance of the church. It is an ordinance of the church because Jesus ordained that the church practice believer’s baptism until He returns. As an ordinance, the administration of it falls under the authority of the church so the validity of it does not depend on the administrator of it. Also, 1 Corinthians 14:40 says, “Let all things be done decently and in order.” Our practice is for our pastors, staff, or other ordained person to do the baptisms after meeting with the person who wants to be baptized to ascertain his understanding of the gospel, whether or not his profession of faith seems credible, and to explain the meaning and details of baptism. We believe this process needs to be followed carefully by trained people to do what we can to insure a regenerate church membership. We believe it is our pastoral duty that we will answer to God for to provide oversight to the process and to try to make sure the Bible is followed as closely as possible when people are baptized. We do not believe that people baptizing others, apart from very unique circumstances, outside of the gathered church body and without following this process is the best way to insure that Scripture is followed properly.

**7. Should baptism be in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit or in the name of Jesus?** People ask this question because Jesus said to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19), but there are places in Acts (2:38 for example) where it says people were “baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.” So, which way should it be? We baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to follow the command of Jesus. However, what about Acts? Is this a contradiction in the Bible? No. As New Testament scholar Craig Keener says, “This phrase simply means that the person being baptized confesses Christ.” This is why we ask people questions and have them confess their faith before baptizing them so we baptize people in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit after they publicly confess Jesus. While this is our practice, we would not ask a person who was baptized in the name of Jesus to be rebaptized if his conversion and baptism are genuine and meet the other biblical criteria.

**8. Why do I need to get baptized again if I was baptized before salvation but I am genuinely saved now? I have a relationship with God though Jesus so what does it really matter?** It is a matter of getting your baptism on the right side of your salvation. It is a matter of honoring Jesus and submitting to His Lordship in all things, which is what we are called to do as believers.

**9. Why do I have to be immersed in order to be a member at True Life? Some other churches baptize in a variety of ways or at least accept other types of baptisms even if they only immerse people in their church.** Simply, we believe it is the only biblically valid mode of baptism so we do not believe someone has been biblically baptized without being immersed. We require biblical baptism for membership because it fits the pattern of the book of Acts, it is how someone makes a public profession of faith in Christ (which is a necessity for church membership), and it expresses the symbolism of a person being baptized into the universal body of Christ by the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion.

**10. Why do Baptists make baptism such a big deal and put such an emphasis on immersion?** Really, the emphasis is on being biblical because we believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative, and sufficient Word of God; and we believe this is what the Bible teaches. Our spiritual forefathers were the Anabaptists. The word means rebaptizers, and they were named such by their opponents, who were the Catholics and Protestants. Both groups despised them because they practiced believer's baptism instead of infant baptism. However, we believe they were carrying the Reformation teaching regarding salvation out to its biblical and logical conclusion in regard to baptism so we happily stand on their broad shoulders that endured terrible persecution for this doctrine.

**11. Baptism is just a symbol so why does it matter so much exactly how it is done? Isn't the intent of confessing Christ what is really important?** Of course, confessing Christ is essential. However, we believe that all four criteria of biblical baptism need to be met, including the accuracy of the symbolism. A symbol only has meaning if it accurately conveys the reality behind it. For example, wearing a wedding ring would not really mean anything if a person was not married. This is a God-given and God-defined symbol so we do not believe we have the freedom to tinker with it.

## **The Lord's Supper:**

**Introduction:** In the New Testament, the Lord's Supper is pictured as being observed in the life of the local church. Because the Lord's Supper is a symbol of salvation, only those who have been saved should participate in it. Some churches practice open communion which means that any true Christian who is in fellowship with God and the local church, regardless of what church they are a member of, is welcome to participate in the Lord's Supper when it takes place in a church service. Other churches practice closed communion, which means you have to be a member of the church to partake with the church body. We observe it roughly once a month at True Life. The observance of the Lord's Supper is a very serious and important time in the life of an individual Christian and the life of a local church. Let's examine what the Bible has to say about it.

**I. The Instituting of the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:22-26):** It was started by Jesus Christ himself the night He was betrayed. The disciples and Jesus were having their last meal together to celebrate the Passover, and Jesus, knowing He was about to be crucified, presented the bread as a symbol of His body that was about to be broken, and the wine as a symbol of the blood He was about to spill for the sins of the world.  
**(Mark 14:22-26).** “

## **II. The Meaning of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:18-34).**

When we observe the Lord's Supper, it is a time of:

**1. Unification (v. 17-22).** “Now in giving these instructions I do not praise *you*, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. **18** For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. **19** For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. **20** Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. **21** For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of *others*; and one is hungry and another is drunk. **22** What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise *you*.”:

God does not want any divisions in His Body, the Church. Observing the Lord's Supper should remind us that we are the body of Christ that He purchased with His precious blood on the cross, and we should be motivated to restore any broken

fellowship we have with a brother or sister in Christ. A lack of unity kills churches. However, according to verse 19, this unity must be rooted in doctrinal truth.

**2. Thanksgiving (v. 24-25)** “and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” **25** In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.”:

Notice that Jesus gave thanks when he was taking the Passover meal with his disciples. If He gave thanks, how much more should we express thanksgiving? When we take the Lord’s Supper, we are to thank Him for the wonderful, incredible sacrifice He made on our behalf.

**3. Remembrance (v. 24-25)** “and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” **25** In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.”:

The Lord’s Supper is a memorial feast. We are being reminded of what Christ did for us on the cross. This teaches us that the Lord’s Supper is a symbolic act. Dr. Paige Patterson has written, “The Lord’s Supper is purely a symbolic feast established as a memorial to the most significant event ever to transpire in the history of the race – the atonement of Jesus.”

**4. Proclamation (v. 26)** “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”:

By observing the Lord’s Supper, we proclaim the truth of the atonement. The Lord’s Supper is evangelistic because it pictures the sacrifice of Christ. It is a visual sermon.

**5. Identification:** The fact that we are internalizing the elements pictures to us that we are identifying ourselves with Christ and His crucifixion. It shows that we are trusting in His death and nothing else for our salvation.

**6. Examination (v. 27-32)** “Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the

Lord. **28** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. **29** For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. **30** For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. **31** For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. **32** But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.”:

We are not to take the Lord's Supper flippantly or with sin in our hearts. Paul tells us that taking the Lord's Supper wrongly will bring the discipline of God upon us. He tells us that some people have become sick or even died because they took the Lord's Supper wrongly. We should confess all known sin before we participate in Communion.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Share your own baptism story if you feel comfortable with it. What did it mean to you?
2. Discuss any of the baptism questions that anyone would like to discuss.
3. What is your understanding of the what the Bible teaches about baptism?
4. Should churches accept different modes of baptism? Why or why not?
5. If someone asked you to explain why you believe in believer's baptism by immersion, how would you explain it and demonstrate it biblically?
6. Do you believe that communion is symbolic or conveys grace? Why?
7. Do you believe in open communion or closed communion? Why?
8. How do you prepare to take communion? Why is that important?
9. Why is it important to have these pictures and reminders of the gospel?

**Lesson 7**  
**“What Defines A Church: Unity”**

**Introduction:** Jesus prayed, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:20-21). 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 says, “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. **13** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. **14** For in fact the body is not one member but many.” Then, verse 25 tells us that God’s plan is “that there should be no schism in the body.” Schism means division.

**Ultimately, the Bible teaches us that we are one in Christ, and we are to live in unity as one. What do we need to do in order to live as one? Let’s examine Ephesians 4:1-6 in order to answer that question.**

**1. Obey the command to walk worthy of our calling by living as one with our brothers and sisters in Christ (v. 1** “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,”  
**(v. 3).** “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

“Walk” refers to a lifestyle. “Worthy” is translated from the word that we get our word, “axiom,” and it means, “to be of equal weight.” It means that the way we live is to be equal to our profession of Jesus and the possession of the incredible spiritual blessings He has given us. What a challenge! One of the ways we walk worthy is by living as one with other believers. We cannot be wrong with each other and be right with God! New Testament Christianity is a “we-thing” and not a “me-thing.”

**2. Cultivate the spiritual characteristics that are necessary for us to be able to live as one (v. 2-3).** “with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

- A. Humility**
- B. Meekness**
- C. Patiently bearing with others**
- D. Love**

**3. Make a diligent effort to keep intact the oneness we have in the Lord (v. 3).** “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

We are to give our utmost effort to maintain unity in the Body of Christ. There are times and reasons to divide biblically, but we are to avoid it if at all possible.

Divisiveness is a mark of extreme spiritual immaturity (**1 Corinthians 3:1-4**).

“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. **2** I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it*, and even now you are still not able; **3** for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere* men? **4** For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I *am* of Apollos,” are you not carnal?”

I would hate to be the one who broke the unity of the Spirit in the Body of Christ and/or in a specific local church! How about you? Here are 9 unity killers within the Body of Christ:

### Unity Killers (Sin destroys unity)

**1. Being unsubmitive to Scripture (John 17:17).** “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”

**2. Disputing over unnecessary things (Romans 14:1).** “Receive one who is weak in the faith, *but* not to disputes over doubtful things.”

**3. Not following pastoral leadership and developing factions (Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17).** Hebrews 13:7 says, “Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of *their* conduct.” Hebrews 13:17 says, “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”

(1 Corinthians 1:10-17) says, “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. **11** For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s *household*, that there are contentions among you. **12** Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.” **13** Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? **14** I thank God that I

baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, **15** lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. **16** Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. **17** For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.”

**4. Not pursuing Jesus’ mission as the common mission of the church (Matthew 28:19).** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

**5. Gossip, slander, and backbiting (Proverbs 6:19).** “A false witness *who* speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.”

**6. Unforgiveness (Ephesians 4:32).** “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”

**7. Not handling disputes in the proper manner (Matthew 18:15-18).** “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. **16** But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ **17** And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. **18** “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

**8. Lack of restoring relationships (Matthew 5:23-24)** “Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, **24** leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

**9. Being selfishly self-centered and not caring for others (Philippians 2:1-4).** “Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, **2** fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. **3** *Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. **4** Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

**4. Understand the basis for our oneness, which is God Himself and His work in us (v. 4-6).** “*There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*” “

The Triune God, who lives eternally in fellowship within Himself, is the example for Christian fellowship and unity. Paul repeats the word, “one,” throughout this section. There is one:

**A. Body (the Church)**

**B. Holy Spirit**

**C. Hope of our calling (the return of Jesus)**

**D. Lord (Jesus our King)**

**E. Faith (the body of revealed Christian doctrine)**

**F. Baptism (the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the moment of our salvation)**

**G. Heavenly Father (“who is above all, and through all, and in you all”)**

This means that when Christians do not live in oneness with love that we are incorrectly picturing our God to the world. How many people have you heard say that they do not want to go to church because of the fighting, backbiting, and lack of love among Christians? Let’s change this by living together in love and unity so that we can show the world who our great God truly is. Let’s honor Him by living as one even as He is one.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How does God’s nature relate to the oneness of the body of Christ?
2. How does the cross relate to the oneness of the body of Christ?
3. Why is having godly character essential to having unity in a church?
4. What have you seen cause disunity in churches?
5. Have you ever been in a church that split? Was it painful for you and others? What did it do to the witness of that church?
6. Why is the Christian life to be lived in community?
7. Discuss the list of unity killers and how to avoid these sins.

**Lesson 8**  
**“What Defines A Church: Being Disciplined For Holiness”**

The church is called to be a holy people (**1 Peter 1:13-21**). “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; **14** as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; **15** but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, **16** because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” **17** And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear; **18** knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, **19** but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. **20** He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you **21** who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God”.

We are made holy positionally in our salvation (**Romans 6:1-10**).”What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? **2** Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? **3** Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, **6** knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. **7** For he who has died has been freed from sin. **8** Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, **9** knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. **10** For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God”.

We are to live lives of repentance in order to grow in our sanctification and actually live in a more holy way (**2 Corinthians 7:1**) “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”.

When professing believers fail to repent, pastors are to use their authority to bring correction and attempt to provoke repentance. That process is called church discipline. Let’s examine it.

**First**, 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 clearly tells us that believers are not to settle their disputes in secular courts. Instead, these matters are to be settled “before the saints” (v.1). Paul asserts that believers will judge the world (v.2) and the angels (v.3), and this certainly qualifies us, and not unbelievers who, “will not inherit the kingdom of God” (v.9), to judge among the family of God. It is even better to allow ourselves to be cheated, *apostereo*, literally meaning to be “robbed from” (Patterson), instead of taking a brother to court. It is “already an utter failure for you that go to law against one another” (v.7). Only the devil wins in that case because it brings reproach upon the name of Christ. Therefore, we must accept our God-given responsibility to judge matters between Christians, and Christians must go to the church instead of civil court to settle problems.

**Second**, Galatians 6:1 relates that restoration must be the ultimate goal of church discipline. It says, “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” While we must administer discipline at times in order to be obedient to God, we must do it with the desire of lovingly restoring the person instead of angrily punishing them. Remember, God Himself sets this example for us because He chastens those that He loves (Hebrews 12:6), and He cannot set an example for us that is wrong because He is holy. The idea of church discipline is correction and not punishment. The Book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians relates that the person disciplined in 1 Corinthians 5 was ultimately restored to the fellowship of the church. The leadership of True Life Church will make every effort to restore a church member who is living in unrepentant sin or who is refusing to abide by the commitments he or she made by signing the membership covenant.

**Third**, Matthew 18:15-20 lays out the steps that are to be taken in situations where one Christian sins against another Christian. The first step is for the wronged person to confront the sinning brother or sister. The second step is for the wronged Christian to take one or two others from the church to act as witnesses in the situation. Finally, if the offender is still unrepentant, he must be brought to the church. Then, if there is no repentance, the sinner is to be treated “like a heathen and a tax collector” (v.17). This would have to be speaking of a disfellowshipping from the local assembly.

**Fourth**, 1 Corinthians 5 gives guidelines for dealing with public sin that affects the entire church. The sin that occasioned Paul’s response was sexual immorality between a man and his unbelieving stepmother (v.1). However, the admonitions of this passage do not just apply to this particular sin. In verse 11, Paul writes, “But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who

is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner.” Sexual immorality,  *pornos* in the Greek, is the general word to cover all sexual sin. Covetous is defrauding for the sake of gain. An idolater is an image worshipper. A reviler is one who uses abusive language. A drunkard is someone who is consistently drunk. An extortioner is someone given to extortion and robbery (These definitions came from Strong’s Comprehensive Concordance, The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, and Webster’s Dictionary).

It is important to note, however, that Paul directs criticism and commands to the church body and not the offender. He criticized them for pride and for not mourning over a sin so serious that it was even illegal according to pagan Roman law (MacGorman). He reminds them that a little leaven, almost always a symbol for evil in the Bible, leavens the whole lump, a symbol of the Church body. In other words, sin that is ignored permeates and infects the entire congregation. Paul’s remedy for unrepentant sin was to “deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (v.5). This is hard to understand, but it has to mean something along the lines of disfellowshipping a person from the church in order to ultimately redeem that person.

Therefore, the following conclusions can be drawn from this passage:

1. Church discipline is not exercised over gray areas but over clear, continued, and unrepentant sin. (v.1, 11).
2. The church must realize the seriousness and the corrupting influence of such sin, and humbly deal with the sin (v. 2, 6-8).
3. The church has the right and responsibility to judge sin in the name and power of the Lord Jesus (v.3-4).
4. The church is to deal with this sin as an entire body (v.4). [Note also 1 Timothy 5:20]
5. The ultimate goal is redemption and not punishment (v.5). The discipline is only a means to ultimately redeem and restore the offender while purifying the church.
6. Unrepentant sin must ultimately result in the exclusion of the member from the church. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, Paul called for the exclusion of the sinning member in verses 2, 5, 11 and 13. This is in perfect agreement with Matthew 18:17.

Based on these passages, the following should serve as general guidelines for administering church discipline at True Life Church:

1. For the sake of obedience to God and the purity of the church, we acknowledge (based on 1 Corinthians 6) that it is our God-given responsibility, not secular courts, to deal with disputes between Christians and to deal with sins

within the church related to those named in 1 Corinthians 5. It is important to note, however, that this does not exempt Christians from reporting criminal offenses.

2. Church discipline must always be carried out in love and with the ultimate goal of restoration.

3. The church as a whole must ultimately deal with matters where the sinner remains unrepentant. However, the church leadership should deal with the situation first and seek to bring repentance without having to bring the issue before the church body. Until the final step of bringing a situation to the whole congregation, this process falls under the oversight and leadership of the Elders.

4. In instances where one Christian wrongs another, the steps listed in Matthew 18:15-18, and not anger, gossip, backbiting, unforgiveness, slander, etc.; should be followed. The wronged Christian is to go to his brother seeking reconciliation. If the offending party will not make things right, the offended person is to take two witnesses, with the church's recommendation being two elders or an elder and a deacon. At that point, if the sinner is still unwilling to make it right, the pastors must take the matter before the church. If there is still no repentance, the church, in order to obey Jesus, must expel the sinning person from the church.

5. If it comes to the light that a person is engaging in the sins mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5 or others specifically named elsewhere in Scripture, the church must also practice discipline. In such cases, the elders must make every effort to bring about repentance and begin the restoration process. They are to do this by following the process given in Matthew 18:5-8 and spelled out in #4 above. However, if this fails, the church as a body must hear the matter, and if there is still no repentance, expel the sinning member.

6. If a person in a leadership position has to be disciplined and they repent, the church still has the right to remove that person from their position. The reasons for this are the public nature of ministry, the fact that leaders have to set an example, and the stricter standard the Bible sets for them in 1 Timothy 3 and James 3:1, which says, "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment."

In closing, there are a couple of points that need to be repeated for the sake of clarity. First, it needs to be emphasized that even church discipline is to be done in love. There is no place for judgmental and condemning attitudes. However, sin cannot be winked at either. This is the balance that must be maintained. Second, it is important to realize that church discipline pertains only to professing Christians who are church members. It does not apply to non-believers (1 Corinthians 5:10-11). Unsaved people who visit a church should be welcomed and accepted regardless of a particular lifestyle. Change and accountability comes after receiving Christ. This balance must also be maintained.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What does it mean to be holy?
2. How do we live holy lives?
3. When should churches practice discipline?
4. What are ways churches can discipline well? Poorly?
5. Have you ever been a part of a church practicing the last step of church discipline?
6. What will happen in a church body if sin is ignored and swept under the rug?
7. What does it look like to restore a sinning Christian?

**Lesson 9**  
**“What Defines A Church: The Great Commandment To Love”**

**Introduction:** 1 Corinthians 13:13 says, “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” Romans 13:10b tells us that “love is the fulfillment of the law.” Jesus said that the first commandment is to love God and the second is to love other people (**read Matthew 22:34-40**). He is saying that loving God and others is the main thing, **what it’s all about**. The church is to be known for loving God and loving other people. How can we fulfill this commandment?

**(Matthew 22:34-40).** “But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. **35** Then one of them, a lawyer, asked *Him a question*, testing Him, and saying, **36** “Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?” **37** Jesus said to him, ““You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ **38** This is *the* first and great commandment. **39** And *the* second *is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ **40** On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.””

**D) Loving God**

**A. This commandment means:**

- 1.** We are to make loving God the priority of our lives (Jesus called this the first, which means foremost, commandment. **Is loving God your top priority?**
- 2.** We are to love the real and true God (**v. 37**). “Jesus said to him, ““You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”” **Do you have a biblically sound view of God?**
- 3.** We are to love God out of a personal relationship with Him (“the Lord your God”). **Do you have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ?**
- 4.** We are to love God with the totality of our beings (“all your heart”-the spiritual nature, “all your soul”-the emotional and volitional natures, “all your mind”-the intellectual nature, and “all your strength”) **Do you love God with everything that you are?**

**B. These are some of the ways we can put this command into practice and express love to God:**

1. Obedience-John 14:15 says, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” This verse tells us very clearly that we demonstrate our love for God by doing what He says. **Because of your love for God, list at least one area that you will begin obeying God** \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Worship-Psalm 40:9 says, “I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness in the great assembly; indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O Lord, You Yourself know” (see especially Luke 7:36-50). **Because of your love for God, list at least one way you will begin to express your love in worship**\_\_\_\_\_.

**(Luke 7:36-50)** Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to eat. **37** And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at the table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, **38** and stood at His feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil. **39** Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw *this*, he spoke to himself, saying, “This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman *this is* who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.” **40** And Jesus answered and said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” So he said, “Teacher, say it.” **41** “There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. **42** And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?” **43** Simon answered and said, “I suppose the *one* whom he forgave more.” And He said to him, “You have rightly judged.” **44** Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair of her head. **45** You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. **46** You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. **47** Therefore I say to you, her sins, which *are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little.” **48** Then He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” **49** And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” **50** Then He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

**C. Love for God and others is produced in us by the love of God for us (1 John 4:7-11).** “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” We do not love more by trying harder but by focusing more on how much God loves us through the cross. As we are filled with appreciation for His love, that love will spill over to others.

## **II) Loving Others**

Church history tells us that some Roman leaders observation of the early church was, “See how they love one another.” A particular way this was manifested in the early church was their response to the severe epidemics that broke out. Stark quotes Dionysius as saying, “Most of our brother Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another.

Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbors and cheerfully accepting their pains. Many, in nursing and curing others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead.”

Dionysius also said, “The heathen behaved in the very opposite way. At the first onset of the disease, they pushed the sufferers away and fled from their dearest, throwing them into the roads before they were dead and treated unburied corpses as dirt, hoping thereby to avert the spread and contagion of the fatal disease; but do what they might, they found it difficult to escape.”

The end of verse 39, quoting Leviticus 19:18, says, “And {love} your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus taught us in the parable of the Good Samaritan that everyone is our neighbor. 1 John 4:20 says, “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God who he has not seen?” **(John 13:34-35).** “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **35** By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

### **Ways to express love to others:**

Some ways we love people include: praying for them, meeting their needs (all different types of needs), bearing their burdens, forgiving them, serving them, supporting and encouraging them, treating them as we desire to be treated, and by telling them about Christ. Jesus taught us that doing these things for people is really doing them to Him (**Matthew 25:40**). “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.’” **Because of your love for God, list at least one way you will begin to love God by loving others\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Conclusion:** Because of who He is and because of what He has done for us, God deserves our love. Do we love Him totally? How are we expressing that love to Him? Do we love others as we love ourselves? Are we demonstrating that love with our actions instead of just talking about loving others?

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Define love.
2. Why is love the most important thing according to Jesus?
3. Walk through the application questions and fill in the blanks that are in bold and sprinkled through the lesson. Discuss people’s response to them and how to put them into practice.
4. What is like to be in a church that is really loving toward God and others? What is it like to be in a church that isn’t very loving?
5. Give some examples of experiencing love from other believers.
6. What has caused your love for God to grow cold at times in your life?

## Lesson 10

### The Church Defined: The Church's Mission Is The Fulfillment Of The Great Commission

The Great Commission is Christ's mandate to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**(Matthew 28:18-20)** “But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.””,

**(Mark 16:15)** “And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”,

**(Luke 24:46-48)** “Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, **47** and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. **48** And you are witnesses of these things.”,

**(John 17:18)** “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”,

**(Acts 1:8)** “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.””

**1. The church's mission is making disciples of all the nations (Matthew 28:19).** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”

**2. The church's methodology is:**

**A. Evangelism (proclamation)**

**B. Baptism (incorporation)**

**C. Teaching (transformation)**

**(Matthew 28:19)** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”

**3. The church's message is the gospel (Mark 16:15).** “And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”,

**(Luke 24:46-47).** “Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, **47** and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

**4. The church’s missionaries are every believer (John 17:18).** “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

**5. The church’s empowering is the authority of Jesus expressed through the power of the Spirit (Matthew 28:18).** “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”,

**(Acts 1:8)** “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

**6. The church’s mission field is all the nations (people groups) (Matthew 28:19)** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”,

**(Acts 1:8)** “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.””,

**(Revelations 7:9-10).** “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, **10** and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

**7. The end result of the mission is planting new churches.**

### **Applications:**

- 1. Prayer**
- 2. Witness**
- 3. Disciple**
- 4. Pray, give, and go out to do missions**
- 5. The church will be local and global**
- 6. Serve in the church because everything connects together**

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. Why did Jesus make the Great Commission the mission of the church?
2. Should the Great Commission be the mission of every church? Do we have a choice in the matter?
3. How do church that prioritize this mission look different from churches that don't?
4. How are you making the Great Commission a priority in your life?
5. When was the last time you shared the gospel or your testimony with someone?
6. Who would God have you to share the gospel with?
7. Make a list of people to pray for their salvation.
8. Are you praying for missions? How can we pray for missions?
9. Should you go on a mission trip? Why or why not?
10. What should you share when you share the gospel with someone?
11. Are you discipling anyone? How can you do that?
12. Do you see yourself as a missionary? How would this affect your life?
13. How does the Holy Spirit empower us to witness?
14. Do you have a heart for the nations? What does that look like? How would that change your life?