

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

A
DISCIPLESHIP SERIES
Level Seven of a multi-level discipleship education from



By
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Building Christian Churches

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BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

SUGGESTED USE

This course will not make an individual a disciple. The application of the Word of God to the saved person's life, and the correct heart action that follows, makes a person a disciple. If any individual wishes to become Christ's disciple, he or she must apply the Scripture to life and not just gain knowledge. In I Corinthians 8:1, the Bible tells us that knowledge "puffeth up". In writing this material, it is not my desire to cause individuals to become puffed up, but rather to become sincere followers of Jesus Christ.

Because of the depravity of mankind, it is a necessity to copyright this material. I do not wish to hinder the use of this material in discipling others. Therefore, I give the freedom to anyone to copy or reproduce this material *except* for purposes of selling or making a profit. The copyright laws restrict changes or alterations in this material to prevent others from claiming authorship.

I strongly advise that all memorization and homework be done from the Authorized King James version of the Bible. There are many versions of the Bible on the market today and most of them with changes that devalue Christ and the doctrines of God. When I study the Bible, the King James Version is always my final authority and, consequently, I find no need for questionable translations.

Please use this material as a tool to help others. I encourage experienced Christians to teach and train younger Christians to follow Christ with their spirit, soul and body. May God bless you as you make disciples.

Sincerely,

Frederick T. Allen, Pastor

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

INTRODUCTION

THE CURSE OF

INDIVIDUALIZED CHRISTIANITY

UNIVERSAL CHURCH

SECTION ONE: UNIVERSAL CHURCH VERSUS LOCAL CHURCH

In churches today there is much confusion over the local church and the universal church. Many churches are very weak, and even being destroyed, for lack of participation or loyalty from their members. Not only are churches being destroyed, but also numerous Christians have lives that are weak and non-functional.

Ten years ago, a survey was taken of those who professed to be Christians. The book Radically Unchurched reported the findings that showed nearly half of the people who stated they were Christians did not regularly attend church. Nearly all of those who did not attend church said they were members of *the church*, but not part of a local church here on earth. This discipleship course has been developed because of the destruction that comes upon the lives of individualized Christians.

The Roman Catholic Church started the concept or idea of a universal church over three hundred years after the Bible was written. They quote in their doctrine, “The Church is the Body of Christ, united in the true Faith handed down by the Apostles through the ages, with Christ as its head.”

The modern term “Universal Church” has come to mean the **whole number of Christians**. This concept would more appropriately and correctly called “**the family of God**” instead of “**the church**”. The term “**the church**” came from the Catholic Church, whose name actually means universal, and in statement means the **whole number of members of the specific Roman Catholic Church**. When the Protestants came out of the Roman Catholic Church, they kept the term universal church and **changed the meaning** of the term to mean “**the whole number of all Christians**”. This was done to diminish the power and control of the Catholic Church.

The use of this concept, or meaning of this term, did not come from the Bible and was never used in the Scriptures. The definition of the word church to include all Christians **does not correctly**

represent the Greek word “ekklesia” that is translated church in the Bible. The word “ekklesia” comes from two words: “ek” which means “from” or “out of”, and “kaleo” which means, “to call”. The two words together mean, “to call out from”. The word “ekklesia” has no plural. The word was used as both singular and plural and is translated both church and churches. The word “ekklesia” was translated three times as the word “assembly” in Acts 19 instead of the word “church”. (Acts 19: 32, 39, 41). **There is no use of the word “ekklesia” in the Bible that does not mean “called out assembly.”**

The word “church” in the Greek (ekklesia) literally means “**the assembly of citizens when called out from their homes to designated gathering places for the discussion of public business**”. The early use of the word “church” was not used as a general body or denomination. It was used and accepted by Baptists and others who held to the independency of local churches, and did not designate any other body as the church. They reserved the word church to exclusively describe their local bodies or assemblies.” (Bancroft).

Many Protestant preachers and professors today try to use the Scripture to substantiate the doctrine of the universal church, but they always misrepresent the words and meanings of Scripture. Verses are taken out of context and applied to a universal church, even when it is obvious that a specific local church is being discussed in the context. A majority of authors and preachers base their doctrine of the universal church out of the book of Matthew, using the same base as the Catholic Church. Because Jesus said, “my church” in Matthew 16:18, (which is singular) they all say the word church must mean there is only one church, determining all other references to church or churches by this one reference.

MAT 16:13-19 “When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, **Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God**. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon **this rock** I will build **my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

These verses in Matthew deal with Jesus being the **foundation** (Rock) upon which the **church and other churches were going to be built. The first church they formed was the one at**

Jerusalem, which multiplied and became many churches. The word **ekklesia** (church) was not singular or plural. Jesus was stating clearly that the **ekklesia** (church or churches) belonged to Him. He also made it clear that He was giving the power to form the church and churches to His apostles.

Many teachers and preachers do not take into consideration some of the verses in the book of Acts that clearly identify **the church** as the **first church that started, which was at Jerusalem**. All the apostles worked to form that first church. God allowed persecutions to take place to **scatter and multiply the church**, just like He did after the flood when everyone wanted to stay together.

ACT 5:11 “And great fear came upon all **the church**, and upon as many as heard these things.”

ACT 8:1-3 “And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against **the church which was at Jerusalem**; and they were **all scattered abroad** throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, **except the apostles**. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havock of **the church**, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.”

A good way to help understand this concept is by looking at Abraham and his descendents. God made promises to Abraham that included all his descendents. **The promises were to one that became many, while still to one.**

GAL 3:7-9, 14, 16, 18, 29 “Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. ... That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. ... Now to **Abraham and his seed** were the promises made. He saith not, And to **seeds**, as of many; but as of **one**, And to thy seed, which is Christ. ... For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. ... And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's **seed**, and heirs according to the promise.”

The following are other primary verses used by the followers of the universal church to substantiate this doctrine. In studying the Bible, every word is important for correct understanding:

1. From Ephesians: the pronoun **ye** clearly represent the **group of saints that were at Ephesus**.

Paul sent Tychicus to meet with those Christians at Ephesus, which clearly shows there was a **specific group of believers being referred to as one body**.

EPH 1:1 “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:”

EPH 6:21-22 “But that **ye** also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to **you** all things: Whom I have sent unto **you** for the same purpose, that **ye** might know our affairs, and that he might comfort **your** hearts.”

From Ephesians, the followers of the universal church doctrine say there is only one body of Christ. However, when you read the following verses, they clearly explain that God has not made several different ways to go to Heaven or different ways of Christianity.

EPH 4:4-6 “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as **ye are called** in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

Verse four uses the phrase **ye are called**, which excludes the writer Paul, clearly contradicting any application to a **universal** church. These verses apply to **one specific group of Christians**.

2. From Romans: the followers of this doctrine say there are many who are saved and all the saved are in one body. However, when Romans chapter twelve is compared to Romans chapter fifteen, it is clear to see Paul making references that **all who are saved should know the things of God and be members of one specific body, like the church at Rome**.

ROM 12:1-5 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. **For as we have many members in one body**, and all members have not the same office: **So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.**”

ROM 15:4-7 “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant **you** to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That **ye** may with one mind and one mouth glorify

God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.”

3. From Corinthians: these followers say because Paul uses the word “we” to describe the one body of Christ, it has to be universal. When **all the passages in Corinthians** are taken into account, Paul makes it clear that both **Jews and Gentiles are the same in Christ**. He also makes it clear that there is only **one body of Jesus Christ, which supplied salvation for all**.

1COR 10:16-17 “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the **blood of Christ**? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the **body of Christ**? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are **all partakers of that one bread**.”

1COR 12:12-14 “For as **the body is one**, and hath many members, and all the members of **that one body**, being many, are **one body**: so **also** is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into **one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles**, whether we be **bond or free**; and have been **all** made to drink into **one Spirit**. For the body is not one member, but many.”

It is clear Paul is writing to **one specific church** in all of these passages.

1COR 11:18-20 “For first of all, when **ye come together in the church**, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies **among you**, that they which are approved may be made **manifest among you**. When **ye come together therefore into one place**, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.”

1COR 12:18-20 “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body.”

1COR 12:25-27 “That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And **whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it**. Now **ye** are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

1COR 14:23-24 “If therefore the **whole church be come together into one place**, and all speak with tongues, and there **come in** those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:”

4. From Colossians: they say that all the saved are called into one body. Again, when one looks at the pronoun *ye*, Paul is excluding himself. He also identifies Onesimus and Epaphras as being part of **them**, clearly referring to this body as the church at Colosse.

COL 3:15-17 “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also **ye** are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him”.

COL 4:9 “With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, **who is one of you**. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.”

COL 4:12 “Epaphras, **who is one of you**, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”



SECTION TWO

BIBLICAL REFERENCES OF THE WORD CHURCH OR CHURCHES (CONDENSED).

Strong's Concordance number (1577) “ekklesia” - called out - popular meeting - a religious congregation - translated **assembly or church or churches**.

Strong's number (2417) “hierosulos” only used one time in the Bible - Act 19:37 “robber of churches” - a destroyer of a sacred place (temple).

- The word **church** only appears twice in the four gospels: Matthew 16:18, “upon this rock I will build my church,” and Matthew 18:17, “tell it to the church.”
- In the book of Acts, the church at Jerusalem is referred to 8 times; churches 5 times; a specific church (Antioch, Ephesus) 7 times; the church in the wilderness 1 Time; general address 1 time. Total: 22 times.
- Romans: churches 2 times and specific churches 3 times. Total: 5 times.
- I Corinthians: churches 5 times; the church at Corinth 13 times; church at Jerusalem 1 time; all churches 2 times. Total: 21 times.
- 2 Corinthians: church at Corinth 1 time; churches 8 times. Total: 9 times.
- Galatians: church at Jerusalem 1 time; churches 2 times. Total: 3 times.
- Ephesians - The church 8 times.
- Philippians: church at Jerusalem 1 time and no church 1 time. Total: 2 times.
- Colossians: the church 3 times; church of Laodiceans 1 time. Total: 4 times.
- I Thessalonians: church at Thessalonica 1 time; churches 1 time. Total: 2 times.
- 2 Thessalonians: church at Thessalonica 1 time; churches 1 time. Total: 2 times.
- 1 Timothy: the church 3 times. Total: 3 times.
- Philemon: church in house 1 time.
- Hebrews: church of the firstborn 1 time; the church 1 time. Total: 2 times.
- James: elders of the church 1 time
- I Peter: church of Babylon 1 time
- 3 John: the church 3 times
- Revelation: churches 13 times; specific churches 7 times. Total: 20 times.

I. THE USE OF THE TERM “THE CHURCH” IN THE BIBLE. Those who adhere to the doctrine of the universal church say when the Bible uses the words “the church” it is making reference to a

universal church. But when a comprehensive study is done looking at the use of the term “the church” in the Bible, it always makes reference to one specific church.

- A. The term “the church” is only used in two places in the gospels. It was used two times in the same verse in Matthew eighteen. In this verse, the word clearly cannot be used for a universal church because people were instructed to “tell it” to the church and they were to “hear” the church.

MAT 16:18 “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my “church”; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

MAT 18:17 “And if he shall neglect to hear them, “tell it unto the church”: but if he neglect to “hear the church”, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

- B. In the book of Acts “the church” was used 16 times.

1. The church was used eight times referring to the **church at Jerusalem**.

ACT 2:47 “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to **the church** daily such as should be saved.”

ACT 5:11 “And great fear came upon all **the church**, and upon as many as heard these things.”

ACT 8:1 “And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against **the church which was at Jerusalem**; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.”

ACT 8:3 “As for Saul, he made havock of **the church**, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.”

ACT 11:22 “Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of **the church which was in Jerusalem**: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.”

ACT 12:1 “Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of **the church**.”

ACT 12:5 “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of **the church** unto God for him.”

ACT 15:4 “And when they were **come to Jerusalem**, they were received of **the church**, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.”

2. The church was used four times referring to the **church at Antioch**.

ACT 11:26 “And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with **the church**, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”

ACT 13:1 “Now there were in **the church that was at Antioch** certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.”

ACT 14:26-27 “And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had **gathered the church together**, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.”

ACT 15:2-3 “When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. And being brought on their way by **the church**, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.”

3. The church at Caesarea.

ACT 18:22 “And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted **the church**, he went down to Antioch.”

4. The church at Ephesus.

ACT 20:17 “And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of **the church**.”

5. The church used to designate one specific church in which elders are given the responsibility to oversee.

ACT 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed **the church** of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”

6. **The church in the wilderness**. The Bible uses the word “ekklesia” here when making reference to the assembly when Christ met with Moses in the book of Exodus.

ACT 7:38 “This is he, that was in **the church** in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:”

C. In the book of Romans **the church** was used 2 times.

1. The church at Cenchrea.

ROM 16:1 “I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of **the church** which is at Cenchrea:”

2. The church that was in Priscilla and Aquila's home.

ROM 16:5 “Likewise greet **the church** that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.”

D. In the book of First Corinthians **the church** was used 14 times.

1. The church was used 13 times referring to the church at Corinth.

1COR 1:2 “Unto **the church** of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:”

1COR 6:4 “If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in **the church.**”

1COR 10:32 “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to **the church** of God:”

1COR 11:18 “For first of all, when **ye come together in the church**, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.” (come together IN the church-has to be local, cannot be universal.)

1COR 11:22 “What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye **the church** of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.”

I COR 12:28 - Questionable verse: it is one of the hardest verses until you look at verse twenty-seven where the Bible says “Now **ye** are the body of Christ and members in particular.” Then verse twenty-eight starts with the conjunction “and” clearly attaching this verse to the church at Corinth.

1COR 12:28 “And God hath set some in **the church**, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”

Questionable verse - **Please take note that speaking or prophesying requires an assembly of people** (local church).

1COR 14:4 “He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth **the church.**”

Questionable verse - The church in this verse is where the speaking takes place, requiring it to be the local church.

1COR 14:5 “I would that ye all spake with tongues but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that **the church** may receive edifying.”

1COR 14:12 “Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of **the church.**”

Questionable verse – “Speak five words” in the church requires a local assembly.

1COR 14:19 “Yet in **the church** I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”

Questionable verse – “Keep silence in the church” again identifies the local church in which the person is a member.

1COR 14:28 “But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in **the church**; and let him speak to himself, and to God.”

Questionable verse – “Speak in the church” clearly identifies the local church in which a woman is a member.

1COR 14:35 “And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in **the church.**”

2. The church was used 1 time referring to the church at Jerusalem.

Questionable verse - Remember in the book of Acts Paul said he **persecuted the church at Jerusalem.**

1COR 15:9 “For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted **the church** of God.”

3. The church was used 1 time making reference to the church in Aquila and Priscilla's house.

1COR 16:19 “The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with **the church** that is in their house.”

E. In the book of Second Corinthians **the church** was used one time.

2COR 1:1 “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto **the church** of God **which is at Corinth**, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:”

F. In the book of Galatians **the church** was used one time. Once again making reference to the church at Jerusalem as stated in Acts.

GAL 1:13 “For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted **the church** of God, and wasted it:”

G. The church at Ephesus was unique in several ways. The city of Ephesus was renowned as a religious center with the temple to Diana, which was reputed to be the grandest in the world. It was a trade center for the Greek traders. History records many conflicts between the traders and the devout idolatrous worshippers and their magical arts.

In Revelation chapter two God commended the church at Ephesus for their works, labor, and patience for Christ's name sake.

REV 2:2-3 “I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.”

God also commended them for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which God said He hated also. The Nicolaitans were a party of church members who were trying to establish a “priestly order.” The word **Nicolaitans** comes from the Latin words “nico” which means, “to conquer or overthrow”, and “laos” which means “laity or people”. They wanted to establish a “holy order of men” that would be over the members of the church and separate “clergy” from “laity”, a thing which God hates. The church at Ephesus was not deceived by “clergy power”, nor of the men who tried to start the “Apostolic Succession” of authority.

REV 2: 6 “But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”

When the church at Ephesus is looked at in the book of Revelation, it was clearly a local church with problems within that church.

In the book of Ephesians **the church** was used 8 times. The book of Ephesians is the most questionable book about the universal church since all eight

times the term **the church** is used, it does not make reference to one specific church. However, it is clear the book of Ephesians is written to one local church, and when the term “the church” is used, it is making reference to **the local church at Ephesus**. Pay special attention to the pronouns **ye** and **you** in Ephesians. Both pronouns are **exclusive** of the one doing the writing, which was Paul. When Paul makes reference to **all** Christians, he used the pronouns **we** or **us**.

EPH 1:1-2 “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, **to the saints which are at Ephesus**, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

EPH 1:13 “In whom **ye** also trusted, after that **ye** heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that **ye** believed, **ye** were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,”

EPH 1:16-18 “Cease not to give thanks for **you**, making mention of **you** in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto **you** the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of **your** understanding being enlightened; that **ye** may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,”

EPH 2:11-14 “Wherefore remember, that **ye** being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time **ye** were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus **ye** who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;”

EPH 2:22 “In whom **ye also are builded together** for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

EPH 6:21-22 “But that **ye** also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to **you** all things: Whom I have sent unto **you** for the same purpose, that **ye** might know our affairs, and that he might comfort **your** hearts.”

1. The church was used to show that Christ is head of each local church.

EPH 1:22 “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to **the church**,”

2. The church was used in understanding the heavenly on the earth. A local church is how the wisdom of God can be seen.

EPH 3:10 “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by **the church** the manifold wisdom of God,”

3. The church was used to show the maintaining of the glory of Jesus Christ throughout all ages. Again to be able to see the glory of Christ, it would have to be in physical local churches.

EPH 3:21 “Unto him be glory in **the church** by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

4. The church was used to illustrate the relationship of a husband and wife. To be able to see the illustration, a local church would have to be compared.

EPH 5:23 “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of **the church**: and he is the saviour of the body.”

EPH 5:24 “Therefore as **the church** is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.”

EPH 5:25 “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also *loved the church*, and gave himself for it;”

EPH 5:29 “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord **the church**:”

5. The church was used to explain the mystery of Christ being joined to the Christians, as a husband to a wife.

EPH 5:32 “This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and **the church**.”

6. When Paul talked about this in Second Corinthians, he clearly is talking about a single church.

2COR 11:2, 8 “For I am jealous over **you** with godly jealousy: for I have espoused **you** to one husband, that I may present **you** as a chaste virgin to Christ. ... I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do **you** service.”

H. In the book of Philippians **the church** was used one time. Paul persecuted the **church at Jerusalem**.

PHI 3:6 “Concerning zeal, persecuting **the church**; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”

I. In the book of Colossians, **the church** was used 4 times.

1. Questionable verse - The church was used to make reference to Christ being the head of the body, the church:

- Paul specifically addresses one local church. Col. 1:7 “As **ye** also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for **you** a faithful minister of Christ;”
- Paul makes it clear that Christ is over all things. Col. 1:17 “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”
- Paul clearly applies these verses to the one local church at Colosse.
COL 1:22 “In the body of his flesh through death, to present **you** holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:”
- It is evident that Paul is addressing the local church at Colosse.
COL 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

2. Questionable verse - The church was used as the local church at Colosse as we saw from Col. 1:22 “In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:”

COL 1:24 “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is **the church:**”

3. The church was used for the church in Nymphas's house.

COL 4:15 “Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and **the church which is in his house.**”

4. The church was used for the church of the Laodiceans (the same church written to in Rev. 3:14-22).

COL 4:16 “And when this epistle is read among **you**, cause that it be read also in **the church** of the Laodiceans; and that **ye** likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.”

J. In the book of Philemon, **the church** was used one time for the church in Archippus's house.

PHM 1:2 “And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to **the church in thy house:**”

K In the book of Hebrews, **the church** was used one time noting the place he would sing. This had to be a local church.

HEB 2:12 “Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, **in the midst of the church** will I sing praise unto thee.”

- L. In the book of James, **the church** was used one time when they were to call the elders of their local church.

JAM 5:14 “Is any sick among you? 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:”

- M. In the book of First Peter **the church** was used one time for the church at Babylon.

1PE 5:13 “**The church** that is at **Babylon**, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.”

- N. In the book of Third John **the church** was used three times.

1. The church was used when charity was shown before it. It had to be a local church.

3JO 6 “Which have borne witness of thy charity before **the church:** whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:”

2. The church was used regarding the place where Diotrephes loved to have the preeminence. It had to be a local church.

3JO 9 “I wrote unto **the church:** but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.”

3. The church was used as the place where Diotrephes talked against John and cast the brethren out. It had to be a local church.

3JO 10 “Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and **casteth them** out of **the church.**”

- O. In the book of Revelation **the church** was used 7 times, each time making reference to one of the seven churches.

- II. When the Bible writes **to churches** (plural), the instruction would have a direct application to all churches.

- A. Churches are to be established in the faith.

ACT 15:41 “And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the **churches.**”

ACT 16:5 “And so were **the churches established in the faith**, and increased in number daily.”

B. There should be no contention in a church.

1COR 11:16 “But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the **churches** of God.”

C. God is not the author of confusion in a church.

1COR 14:33-34 “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in **all churches** of the saints. Let your women keep silence in **the churches**: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law.”

D. Churches should take up collections.

1COR 16:1 “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to **the churches** of Galatia, even so do ye.”

E. Churches choose who the messengers are going to be.

2COR 8:18-24 “And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches; And not that only, but who was also **chosen of the churches** to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of **the churches**, and the glory of Christ. Wherefore shew ye to them, and before **the churches**, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.”

F. Christians should be followers of their church.

1TH 2:14 “For ye, brethren, became followers of **the churches** of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:”

G. Glory should be given in churches for those who have patience and faith.

2TH 1:4 “So that we ourselves glory in you in **the churches** of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:”

III. GOD'S MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA. At the end of each message, God says for **all** to hear what He says to **the churches**.

REV 1:1-10 “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. John to **the seven churches which are in Asia**: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,”

REV 1:11-20 “Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto **the seven churches which are in Asia**; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the

things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of **the seven churches**: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are **the seven churches**.”

- A. First church - Ephesus. Also referred to in Acts 20:17, book of Ephesians, First Timothy 1:3, Second Timothy 1:18, and Second Timothy 4:12.

REV 2:1-7 “Unto the angel of the **church of Ephesus write**; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit **saith unto the churches**; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

- B. Second church - Smyrna.

REV 2:8-11 “And unto the angel of **the church in Smyrna write**; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit **saith unto the churches**; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”

- C. Third church - Pergamos.

REV 2:12-17 “And to the angel of the **church in Pergamos write**; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and

hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit **saith unto the churches**; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”

D. Forth church - Thyatira. Also see Acts 16:14.

REV 2:18-29 “And unto the angel of the **church in Thyatira write**; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and *all the churches* shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit **saith unto the churches**.”

E. Fifth church - Sardis.

REV 3:1-6 “And unto the angel of the **church in Sardis write**; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that

thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit **saith unto the churches.**”

F. Sixth church - Philadelphia.

REV 3:7-13 “And to the angel of **the church in Philadelphia write**; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit **saith unto the churches.**”

G. Seventh church - Laodicea. See also Colossians 2:1, 4:13, 4:15-16.

REV 3:14-22 “And unto the angel of **the church of the Laodiceans write**; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and

poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit **saith unto the churches.**”



SECTION THREE:

DANGERS OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH DOCTRINE

The greatest danger in believing the false doctrine of the universal church is that it establishes anarchy or individualized Christianity. Instead of establishing unity among believers, it allows Christians to make individual decisions, promoting division and even destruction. Christians who have fallen into individualized Christianity can be identified when they use terms like: “You must do what you believe God would have you do!”; “I am a Christian, but will not be a part of organized religion!”; “Only God can tell me what to do, not other Christians!”; “It doesn’t make any difference what church I attend”. When people really believe this, how can they explain these following verses in the Bible?

1COR 12:18 “But now hath **God set** the members every one of them in the body, **as it hath pleased him.**”

PHP1:27 “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see **you**, or else be absent, I may hear of **your** affairs, that **ye** stand fast in **one spirit**, with **one mind striving together** for the faith of the gospel;”

HEB13:17 “Obey them that have the **rule over you**, and **submit yourselves**: for they **watch for your souls**, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

Many who believe and promote the universal church discourage Christians from joining and submitting to a local church. Mark Copeland, a Church of Christ pastor in Kissimmee, Florida, is a typical follower of the universal church concept and tries to explain this doctrine. The following is from Mark Copeland's web site regarding the local church verses the universal church:

- A local church is all in one location - The universal church is made up of all Christians.
- There are many local churches - There is only one universal church.
- A local church begins when people choose to join themselves together at different places and times - The universal church is only one that began on the day of Pentecost.
- Christians become members of a local church by choosing to join it and then only if that church is willing to accept them - The Lord Himself adds members to the universal church.
- Members of a local church are enrolled through human judgment and evil men may kick one out of a local church - The Lord determines who stays in the universal church.

- A local church consists of both saved and lost (hypocrites) - Hypocrites do not sneak up on the Lord and become members of the universal church.
- A person can be saved and not be a member of a local church - It is impossible to be saved without being a member of the universal church.
- A local church is an earthly organization with pastors and deacons - The universal church only had the apostles over it and there are no living apostles today.
- The members of a local church can divide it - The universal church can't be divided.
- When a member of a local church dies his membership ends - Membership in the universal church continues after death.
- The local church basically concerns relationships with one another - The universal church in essence concerns Christians' relationships with Christ.

When Christians see and understand how the promoters of the universal church think, the real problem can be seen, which is **authority!** They do not want to be accountable to a local church with its pastors and deacons. They want to be free to make individual decisions based on what they think or what they believe God wants them to do. This philosophy of being able to make individual decisions or getting individualized direction from God elevates young or inexperienced Christians to the same level of judgment of leadership as mature elders. The end result of this belief is that many young Christians go in directions that are contrary to the Scriptures and to the character of God.

INTRODUCTION CONCLUSION:

When the doctrine of the “Universal Church” is studied, it is not found in the Bible. It came from the Catholic (universal) Church and was brought into the Baptist ranks by the Protestants when they left the Catholic Church. Over a period of years, this doctrine has gained acceptance from books and articles written by Protestants. It has been even more propagated by the Charismatics. Their primary control factor is working to produce individualized Christianity so each person has to make individual decisions with little or no biblical foundation. The great danger of the doctrine of the Universal Church is that it produces individualized Christianity and destroys unity between different churches, and often destroys unity even within a local church body.

QUESTION FOR THOUGHT...

Can I be a Christian without joining a church or attending worship?

The answer....Yes, it is possible, and it is something like being:

- A student who will not go to school
- A soldier who will not join the army
- A citizen who does not pay taxes or does not vote
- A salesman who does not believe in customers
- An explorer with no base camp
- A seaman on a ship without a crew
- A businessman on a deserted island
- An author without readers
- A football player without a team
- A politician who is a hermit
- A scientist who does not share his findings
- A bee without a hive

Consider the words from our Lord:

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Hebrews 10:24-25

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

DIVISION ONE

THE LOCAL CHURCH

LESSON ONE

A CHURCH IS A SINGLE BODY WITH MEMBERS ATTACHED TOGETHER

I CORINTHIANS 12:12-28

1CO 12:12-28 “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of **that one body**, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. *Now ye are the body of Christ*, and members in particular. And God

hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”

INTRODUCTION:

In 1CO 12:12 the Bible says “that one body”. In verse 27 Paul excludes himself from this particular body of Christ (church at Corinth) when he says, “Now ye”. (Ye - second person plural pronoun used in addressing in the sacred or solemn style).

In verse 13 Paul states that we - (a plural pronoun including the speaker.) are baptized into one body. Verses are often misused to state that we are all baptized into the **same** body. However, Paul is stating that each saved person is baptized into one single body (a church), not several. God does not recognize dual citizenship in different churches. He then goes on to show what it means to be in one body. (Jews and Gentiles - bond or free - and all are in one Spirit). He makes it clear that every member of one body is connected together.

God uses the human body to explain a church and how it is to function together as one single unit. He makes it clear that each Christian is in one body and members one of another.

ROM 12:4-5 “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: ***So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.***”

The word “members” used in this verse is the same as a human body and every member has to be attached. The word “member” comes from the Greek word “melos” which means “a limb or part of the body”. ***It is impossible for a limb or person to be a member if not connected to a body.***

The Catholic (universal) Church tried to eradicate all churches, which were not joined to them. The Catholic Church established a tribunal to examine and punish heretics. This tribunal was charged to root out, eradicate, and totally destroy anyone ***they deemed*** to be a heretic. They tried to cut them off from all access of even using the name Christian. When the Protestant churches (protesters) were started, they also persecuted churches and individuals and tried to cut off all that did not agree with their universal church philosophy (particularly Baptists). It has only been over the last one hundred years that Catholic and Protestant churches have included Baptists and other like-faith churches into their concept of the universal church.

In the Bible, individual assemblies of believers are “set apart” from the world to Christ as individual churches representing Him. There is no universal church now and will not be one **until** Christ calls every saved person to an *assembly in Heaven*.

There are several things **required** to make an assembly of believers a church. There are some who believe they can assemble in their home, boat, or anyplace and it is a church if they gather in the name of Christ. They quote MAT 18:20 (“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”) and say that this verse is making reference to a church, when in its *context* it is referring *to church discipline*.

This lesson is written to explain from God’s Word what is required for an assembly of believers to be a church.

I. FOR AN ASSEMBLY TO BE A SCRIPTURAL CHURCH, JESUS CHRIST MUST BE ITS **HEAD**. This does not eliminate denominations, but would eliminate them **if** the head of a group of churches were their particular denomination. There are also many churches that make the pastor the head of the church, or sometimes the deacon board, but to be a scriptural church *Christ must be the Head*.

There are more and more churches today that are departing from the doctrine of Christ and establishing their own doctrine, thus eliminating Christ as the Head. When this happens, they are no longer biblical churches. They become religious assemblies but not scriptural bodies of Christ. If the Head is removed, how can there be a body?

A. The Bible makes it clear that each church is a body of Christ. When Paul wrote to the Christians at Colosse he told them that Christ was the head of the body, which is the church. A body is explained in First Corinthians and makes it clear that a single member, or even a group of members, does not make a body. It requires a *completely assembled body. Jesus Christ is the one who assembles a body and makes it His own body*.

COL 1:18-29 “And *he is the head of the body, the church*: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of ***Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church***: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”

- B. The Bible tells Christians that God the Father made Christ the head over all things in a church. A church is a body of Christ and it is His own body that He fills (assembles). Jesus is the one who fills all in all. The words “all in all” signify everything to each person within the total group.

EPH 1:20-23 “Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, ***and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body***, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

Verses twenty-two and twenty-three say that God made Christ the head over the church which is His body, and the church is the fullness of Christ which fills (places) everyone in the total body. It is clear when you look at the other two times this term is used that Christ works on every person in a church, not as individual members, but each one together as a whole body.

1CO 12:6 “And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which *worketh all in all.*”

1CO 15:28 “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may *be all in all.*”

It is an alarming reality that God is dealing with the members of a church as a body, not in accordance with what each individual wants or goes after. Christ uses His bodies (individual churches) as whole single units, not a mass of disorganized members. He deals with each member as part of its body, and *for the benefit of its body*, which is a body of Christ. If part of a human body dies, what usually happens to that part for the sake of the health of the whole body? If part of the body of Christ dies, it becomes necessary for God to amputate that part from the body, for the sake of the health of the whole body (to prune).

- C. The Bible explains that a church should grow up just like a human body and become a perfect (complete) man. A church should grow up in Christ so it can edify itself.

EPH 4:13-16 “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, *may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ*: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

This passage makes it clear that every part (member) of a body has to *work together* to make a body (church) increase.

- II. FOR AN ASSEMBLY TO BE A SCRIPTURAL CHURCH IT MUST BE OF OR FROM CHRIST. There are many churches today that are not scriptural because Christ did not form them. Human beings formed them with human feelings. Many churches are formed by disgruntled

Christians who want their church to be their own body, and not the body of Christ. They fight the work of Christ as He tries to put His presence, power, and work in each and every member of His body.

- A. A scriptural church does the ministry (work) of Christ (the Head) through His body (a church). Jesus died on the cross to do away with the laws that were against Christians. Jesus prevailed over those in positions of power so they could not judge the Christians who are in a body of Christ. Jesus also provides the nourishment for His body (a church) so it can do the ministry, provided it is knit together.

COL 2:14-19 “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; **but the body is of Christ**. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.”

- B. A scriptural church is instructed by God in His Word regarding how each member is to function in a body. Everything a member does is to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and give thanks to God by Jesus.

COL 3:12-17 “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also **ye are called in one body**; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your

hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

III. FOR AN ASSEMBLY TO BE A SCRIPTURAL CHURCH IT MUST BE SOMETHING CHRISTIANS *ARE IN*, NOT WHAT IS IN CHRISTIANS. The Bible tells church members in I Timothy 3:15 how they should behave *in the house of God*.

1TIM 3:15 “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself *in the house of God*, which is the *church of the living God*, the pillar and ground of the truth.” (thou: second person singular pronoun used in addressing in the sacred style). Paul was addressing Timothy in a solemn or sacred way regarding how he should behave in the house of God.

- A. Behave thyself in the house of God. Paul specifically tells Timothy how to behave in the house of God, which is a church. (behave: to govern one's self, to have in command). Behave thyself is clearly making reference to the actions of physical life *inside* the house of God.
- B. The house of God is a church of the living God. This statement is clearly making reference to a *building* in which God dwells. (house of God: an edifice appropriated to the worship of God; a temple; a church). There is no way possible for the word church used in this verse to be anything except a local congregation. *Not only is it the place God is inside of, but Timothy is also inside of it.*
- C. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. (pillar: a post; a supporter, that which sustains or upholds: ground - a support; basis; to settle in first principles, to fix firmly). It is clear that a church is the place where God's truth is firmly fixed and upheld.

IV. FOR A GROUP TO BE A CHURCH, GOD REQUIRES IT TO BE AN ESTABLISHED *ASSEMBLY*.

1CO 14:23-27 “If therefore the whole church be *come together into one place*, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship

God, and report that God is in you of a truth. How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.”

A. The meaning of the word “church”.

The word “church” comes from the Greek work “ekklesia” which means “a called out popular meeting.” The Greek word means “to call out” or “call together”, which denotes an assembly of believers. Some time later, Christians started calling the building in which they assembled a church house, which was shortened to a church. *In every way the word church is used in the Bible, it is referring to a designated group assembling in a specific place.*

It is clear that by the time the book of Hebrews was written there was already a problem with Christians not wanting to assemble together. HEB 10:25 “*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*”

B. A church is not a group of individual Christians.

There are many who profess the name of Christ who try to live and minister “individually”. Many of them do not realize that they are doomed to fail when they operate individually. They usually cause a bad name for Christianity because they cannot accomplish the work of Christ by themselves.

1CO 1:10 “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be *perfectly joined together* in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

C. Some Christians function only in ”para” church organizations.

There are many ministries called “para” church organizations, which try to do the work of the Lord. The word “para” means wax or made of wax. The term para-church means it is not the real thing. Many individuals who profess Christ will become a part of these wax churches, trying to individually fulfill the work of Christ without being attached to other members in a local church. These wax

churches allow people to maintain their individuality while professing to be or to do what Christ instructed, without functioning under the authorized structure of a body of Christ.

V. A CHURCH MUST BE AN ASSEMBLY THAT GOD HAS ESTABLISHED AS A CHURCH.

- A. The members of a church are tempered together by God. (tempered: to melt, combine, or assimilate together as one.)

1COR 12:24 “For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked.”

- B. God establishes a church separated from the lost world.

2COR 6:14-18 “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath *the temple of God* with idols? for *ye are the temple of the living God*; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

VI. A CHURCH MUST BE AN ASSEMBLY THAT GOD ESTABLISHES TO DO THE WORK OF GOD, AS A *COHESIVE GROUP*. Christians are to encourage each other regarding working for the Lord.

A church must be an assembly of members established by God with the purpose of advancing the name of Jesus Christ.

- A. The members of a church are to work together *with God*. (The church at Corinth was referred to as God's building.)

1CO 3:9 “For we are labourers *together with God*: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.”

- B. The members of a church are not to receive the grace of God in vain. If a church is *not willing to work* then the ongoing grace of God is for nothing.

2COR 6:1 “We then, as *workers together* with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”

- C. The members of a church are to *assemble to grow the work* of God.

EPH 2:20-22 “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed *together groweth unto an holy temple* in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

- D. The members of a church are to assemble in the name of Jesus Christ with the power of Jesus Christ.

1COR 5:4 “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,”

- E. The members of a church should be of one heart and one mind, without any divisions in their assembly.

PHI 1:27 “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;”

1COR 11:18 “For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.”

- F. The members of a church are not to assemble for the purpose of condemnation. The word “condemnation” used in this verse means “to distinguish by judging or sentencing of others as wrong or worthless.” Churches are never to see any of its members as lower than others, even if they do not have as good of food to eat as others.

1COR 11:34 “And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.”

- G. The members of a church are to work together for the faith of the gospel.

PHI 1:27 “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;”

H. The members of a church are to comfort and edify each other.

1TH 5:11 “Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

DIVISION ONE

THE LOCAL CHURCH

LESSON TWO

A LOCAL CHURCH IS BUILT BY THE MEMBERS WORKING TOGETHER

EPHESIANS 2:1-22

EPH 2:1-22 "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. ***For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*** Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that ***he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross,*** having

slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; ***In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.***"

INTRODUCTION:

God never intended for Christians to be independent from each other. He has always intended that Christians work and grow together to accomplish His work. God works in the lives of Christians within a local church (a body of Christ) so they all will be equipped to do the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christians are not dependent, nor independent, nor co-dependent. Christians are interdependent.

Dependent: Unable to perform anything without the aid of another.

Independent -Not subject to or under the control of any other, (including God)

Co-dependent: Can only function when in conjunction with another. Can never function alone.

Interdependent: Functioning among or between others while all depend on the same one (God).

I. A LOCAL CHURCH CONSISTS OF MEMBERS THAT GOD HAS PUT TOGETHER IN A SINGLE UNIT SO THE MEMBERS CAN **EDIFY** EACH OTHER.

PSA 127:1 Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

A. God puts members in a local church so they can grow together upon the foundation of Jesus Christ.

1COR 3:1-17 "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is

Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

- B. God puts members in a local church so they can grow together and all the members become *strong in the faith*. When all the members of a church are strong in the faith, the church will do strong work with Christ. A church is only as strong as the total body. One strong Christian in a church (such as a pastor) does not make it strong. *All the members working together* make the whole body strong.

EPH 4:11-16 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which

is the head, even Christ: From whom the *whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth*, according to the effectual working in the *measure of every part*, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

- C. God puts members in a local church so they can grow together through *godly organization and authority*.

1TH 5:11-15 "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."

- D. God puts members in a local church so they can grow together by having the *things of God* in their lives.

ROM 14:19 "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

- E. God puts members in a local church so they can grow together through *godly communications*.

EPH 4:29 "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

- F. God puts members in a local church so they can grow together by being *established in the faith*. Christians are established when they are rooted and built up in Christ.

COL 2:5-7 "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."

II. A LOCAL CHURCH CONSISTS OF MEMBERS THAT GOD KNITS TOGETHER SO THE CHURCH CAN WORK AS ONE SINGLE UNIT. The word “knit” means to link firmly or closely by growing together. There are some examples of being knit together in the Bible that helps us understand the *power* a church can have when the hearts of members are knit together David and Jonathan's souls were knit together.

1SA 18:1-3 "And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that *the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David*, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul."

David told the children of Benjamin that he would knit his heart to theirs if they came in peace.

1CH 12:16-18 "And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David. And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, *If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you*: but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it. Then the spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band."

A. The members of a local church will be knit together when all the members have the same **Head**. God established that Jesus Christ is to be the Head of all churches.

COL 2:18-19 "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

B. The members of a local church will be knit together when all the members use **love** to knit them together.

COL 2:2 "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in

love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;"

- C. The members of a local church will be knit together when all the members are **committed to growing** the church.

EPH 4:16 "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

- D. The members of a local church will be knit together when all the members have the **same mind**.

1CO 1:10 "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

- E. The members of a local church will be knit together when all the members are fitly framed together. (Fitly framed together is from one word in the Greek - to render close-jointed together)

EPH 2:20-22 "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

III. A LOCAL CHURCH CONSISTS OF MEMBERS THAT GOD KNITS TOGETHER SO THE CHURCH CAN ACCOMPLISH THE WORK OF THE LORD.

- A. Church members who are knit together can administer church discipline or, by the grace of God, forgive those who sin.

MAT 18:20-22 "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

- B. Church members who are knit together can report on the work of the Lord.

MAR 6:30 "And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught."

- C. Church members who are knit together can hear from the Lord. When Jesus was on the earth, the disciples would meet with Him and hear what God wanted them to hear. Today, Christians still need to hear the words of God (faith cometh by hearing) and churches speak the word of God.

LUK 5:15 "But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities."

- D. Church members who are knit together can reason out the work of the Lord. (reason means: to investigate, inquire, and discuss together thoughts). Today Christians often reason out the word of God, but many times come to the wrong conclusions. They do not have a church and mature Christians to speak to them explaining what the word of God means. Jesus explained to His disciples what the words of God meant.

LUK 24:15 "And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them."

- E. Church members who are knit together can rejoice in the harvest that is produced when all work together.

JOH 4:36 "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

- F. Church members who are knit together can pray together and bring God's plans and answers into the world.

ACT 12:11-16 "And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou

art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished."

- G. Church members who are knit together can hear and advance the word of God.

ACT 13:43-44 "Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God."

- H. Church members who are knit together can gather as a church and show the reality of God's work on the earth.

ACT 14:27 "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

IV. A LOCAL CHURCH CONSISTS OF MEMBERS THAT GOD KNITS TOGETHER SO THE CHURCH CAN GLORIFY THE LORD.

- A. Church members who are knit together exalt the name of the Lord.

PSA 34:1-3 "I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together."

- B. Church members who are knit together enjoy the good and pleasant unity from God.

PSA 133:1 "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

- C. Church members who are knit together recognize the Builder instead of the building.

HEB 3:3-6 "For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those

things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

- V. A LOCAL CHURCH CONSISTS OF MEMBERS THAT GOD KNITS TOGETHER SO THE MEMBERS CAN BUILD A HOUSE (CHURCH) FOR GOD. Church members are built together for a habitation of God. (Habitation - a place of abode or a dwelling place.)

EPH 2:19-22 "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

- A. Church members must build His house upon the rock (Jesus Christ).

MAT 7:24-28 "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:"

- B. Church members must not build His house upon the world.

MAR 2:21-22 "No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles."

- C. Church members are to do the work of God but it is God that adds to the church as it pleases Him. (added: join in place or number, united, put together)

ACT 2:46-47 "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

1COR 12:18 "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

DIVISION ONE

THE LOCAL CHURCH

LESSON THREE

THE MEMBERS MUST BE JOINED TOGETHER

TO BE A SCRIPTURAL CHURCH

I CORINTHIANS 1:10-13

1CO 1:10-13 "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.* For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

INTRODUCTION:

The Bible says it is *possible* for every member of a church to think the same things. Why does one church member agree with others in his church? How do members settle his in thoughts? Church members are to be joined together.

“Perfectly joined together” was one word in the Greek (katartizo) which means, "to finish or complete so as to leave nothing wanting." “The highest degree of excellence."

Paul challenged the church at Corinth to join together so tightly that nothing was left wanting. God wants the members of a local church to be joined together so tightly that they function as one.

I. A LOCAL CHURCH THAT IS PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER WILL ACCOMPLISH THE WORK OF GOD. God uses a church as a **single unit** and when members go different ways the church is chaotic, disorganized, ineffective, and is weak and useless.

A. God wants local churches to be healthy and grow. When the members of a church are not perfectly joined together it will **not grow**. The church at Corinth was plagued with problems because of the divisions instigated by individualized loyalties. The members were not growing spiritually. They allowed their old flesh nature to control everything, causing contentions and divisions.

1COR 3:1-9 "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto **ye were not able to bear it**, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet **carnal**: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not **carnal, and walk as men**? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

B. God wants members of church to become unified to make things better. When the members of a church are not perfectly joined together, divisions happen and heresies will become present in that church. Heresies are errors of persuasion about fundamental doctrine. This causes confusion and disruption of work. When heresy shows up in a church it will manifest the people who are approved by God and separate the people who are heretics.

1COR 11:17-19 "Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also **heresies among you**, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

- C. God wants members of a church to be one minded to be an example to other believers. When the members of a church are not perfectly joined together the individuals will have different opinions from the leaders of their church. The Bible says those people end up being the enemies of the cross of Christ. Their god will become their own belly (self) and their glory will be in their shame because they mind earthly things.

PHI 3:15-19 "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)"

- II. A strong local church will have a strong united authority. A church that is not perfectly joined together will have **different authorities**. A church with different authorities will divide and eventually be destroyed.
- A. When the members of a church are not united under one authority that church will **fall**. To fall means to be brought to ruin or destruction. Failure to unite is the quickest way for a church to be destroyed.

LUK 11:17 "But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth."

- B. When the members of a church are not united under one authority, the members of that church will be **deceived**. When divisions or splits take place within a church, the members have to choose their authority or leader. Many will follow those whose motive is their own belly (self).

ROM 16:17-18 "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them *which cause divisions and offenses contrary* to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid

them. For they that are such *serve not* our Lord Jesus Christ, but their *own belly*; and by good words and fair speeches *deceive the hearts* of the simple."

- C. When the members of a church try to build a church by their own power, they are not united under one authority. A church will have deceivers come in and cause its members to turn away from the authority of the church to build a church by their own power or by the world's power, but not by God's power.

ROM 16:17-18 "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

COL 2:6-8 "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. ***Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.***"

- III. When church members unite to become one working unit, the church accomplishes the work of the Lord. A church that is not perfectly joined together will suffer the consequences of failing to do the work of the Lord.

A. When the members of a church become one working unit, they will be able to care for each other the way God wants. To the contrary, when members of a church do not participate together to do one work, that church will have schisms and will not be able to care for each other the way God wants. Each member affects each other and the work of God – either positively or negatively.

1CO 12:25-27 "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

B. When the members of a church become one working unit, they will be of one mind thinking godly and correctly of themselves and others. However, when

members of a church do not participate to be one working unit, the members will mind "high things." When they are not of one mind they become arrogant and proud, thinking they are better or smarter than others.

ROM 12:16 "***Be of the same mind one toward another.*** Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. ***Be not wise in your own conceits.***"

- C. When the members of a church become one working unit, that church will have the joy of God and think of others more than themselves. But when the members of a church do not participate to be one working unit, the members will end up having strife and vainglory, making themselves more important than each other.

PHI 2:1-3 "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

- IV. A church that is perfectly joined together will hold to the Bible as **the** authority to teach from. However, a church that is not perfectly joined together and not holding to the authority of the Bible will teach the thoughts of individuals. Those who are taught from worldly thoughts will teach others the same wrong things.

2TI 2:2 "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

- V. A church that is perfectly joined together will have its members build the environment that God desires as a place for Him to inhabit.

EPH 2:10-22 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he

is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the *building fitly framed together groweth* unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are *builded together* for an *habitation* of God through the Spirit."

- VI. When God creates a new life, He provides a healthy environment for His new creation. When God created the first people, Adam and Eve, He created a place for them to dwell. A church that is perfectly joined together will be that healthy environment for its members. However, the members of a church that is not perfectly joined together will mess up the healthy environment that God wants provided for His family. The environment in which a person dwells determines much of what a person becomes. If the environment becomes polluted with sin (gossip, apathy, undermining authority, etc.) it will mess up the people who dwell there.
- A. The environment God created for Adam was the Garden of Eden.
- GEN 2:8 "And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed."
- GEN 2:15 "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."
- B. God created this environment to meet with Adam and Eve. The garden God created, where He could meet with them, was no longer a place of joy and peace. Adam and Eve hid from God, trying to avoid being in the same place where He walked.

GEN 3:8 "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden."

VII. A church that is perfectly joined together will be a place **used** by its members. When the members of a church assemble together, they receive many blessings. However, its members will not use a church that is not perfectly joined together. When the members of a church fail to assemble, it hinders the work of the church and has a major detrimental effect on all members.

A. When the members of a church assemble together, they are surrounded by witnesses who will show them the right way.

HEB 12:1 "Wherefore seeing *we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses*, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,"

B. When the members of a church assemble together, they keep company with God's righteous people.

LUK 6:22 "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall *separate you from their company*, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, *for the Son of man's sake*."

PSA 142:7 "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the *righteous shall compass me about*; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me."

C. When the members of a church assemble together, they are taking part of sweet counsel.

PSA 55:14 "We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company."

D. When the members of a church assemble together they bond with those who keep the precepts of God. (mandates of God)

PSA 119:63 "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts."

VIII. A church that is perfectly joined together will protect its members from hurtful people. There are many people in the world that prey upon weak Christians, wanting to use them for some sinful gain.

A. When the members of a church assemble together, they walk with wise men. Christians who do not have a church do not have access to God's wisdom in action. They make many mistakes, and often these mistakes are so great they destroy lives because they did not know God's ways of doing things.

PRO 13:20 "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

1COR 1:25-31 "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For *ye* see your calling, *brethren*, how that not many wise men *after the flesh*, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But *of him are ye in Christ Jesus*, who of God is made *unto us wisdom*, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

B. When the members of a church assemble together, they are protected from riotous men. (riotous - wanton or unrestricted in festive indulgences) A riotous person is one who just wants to have fun and do not work for the Lord. Christians who do not have a church often get caught up in having fun without seeing the results. (drugs, alcohol, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancies, etc)

PRO 28:7 "Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shamed his father."

C. When the members of a church assemble together, they are protected from destroyers (one who lays waste or ruins someone). There are destroyers who affect Christians by making their lives worthless, while the Christian does not think he/she is doing wrong. Without a church teaching Christians right from

wrong to protect them, many Christians have their lives destroyed. (financial failure, health failure, marriage failure, family failure, etc)

PRO 28:24 "Whoso rabbet his father or his mother, and **saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion** of a destroyer."

- D. When the members of a church assemble together, they are protected from thieves (those who steal through deception). There are thieves who seek the things of a Christian and will take what the Christian has. If a Christian does not have a church to protect him or her from the thieves (money schemes, indulgences, false religions, etc) the Christian will become merchandise for the thieves.

2PET 2:3 "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."

In the book of Isaiah, God told Israel that the leaders of the country had become companions of thieves because they were controlled by "gifts" and "rewards". The result was the neglecting of widows and orphans. If thieves surround Christians, they will lose their purpose and be like the covetous world.

ISA 1:23 "Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them."

- E. When the members of a church assemble together, they are protected from fornicators (a man who has lewd commerce [vulgar exchange] with others). Christians are often innocent of the sins of the world, and without a church there is no protection from those who take advantage of them.

1COR 5:9-11 "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."

- F. When the members of a church assemble together, they are protected from unbelievers (unbelievers - without or refusing the Christian faith.). There are

many who want the innocence or purity of a believer, and when a Christian does not have a church to protect him/her, the Christian often joins unbelievers. (marriage, business partners, social associations, etc.)

2COR 6:14 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

IX. A church that is perfectly joined together works with each other to accomplish the work of the Lord. It takes all the members of a church working together to accomplish the work of God.

A. When the members of a church assemble together, the Word of God will get published. It takes a great number of Christians to get the Word of God to the world.

PSA 68:11 "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it."

B. When the members of a church assemble together, the Christians themselves are built and they labor together with God to build the church. This cannot be done if the members do not meet together.

1COR 3:9 "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

DIVISION TWO

THE BENEFITS OF BEING A CHURCH MEMBER

LESSON FOUR

MEMBERS OF A CHURCH MINISTER TO EACH OTHER

COLOSSIANS 2:13-19

COL 2:13-19 “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands *having nourishment ministered*, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.”

INTRODUCTION:

When a church (a body of Christ) has nourishment, it will minister. Much of ministry is taking care of each other within a church. Every Christian should be involved in caring for others. Many times individual Christians are like the world that cares first and foremost for their own needs. When Christians are in a church body they are attached to each other and care for each other. (Minister - to be an attendant or to wait upon someone.)

When church members care for each other *they are to always minister from the Word of God and with the Word of God*. There are many Christians who minister in earthly things without ever sharing the Word of God.

ACT 6:1-4 “And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily *ministration*. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to *the ministry of the word*.”

God gives every Christian different gifts for the purpose of caring for others. These different gifts are given so a church will be furnished with Christians that care for all the different needs of others.

ROM 12:6-8 “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; *Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering*: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.”

I. CHURCH MEMBERS MINISTER TO EACH OTHER. It is basically impossible for Christians to dwell together in one church without doing something to help others. Every time a church assembles, there will always be some people who need help. It might be helping them to learn the Word of God. It might be helping their emotional needs. It might be helping their physical needs. People have many needs. Every activity of a church is directed to caring for others (singing, preaching, teaching, transportation, keeping children, etc.).

A. Church members minister to each other because they are faithful stewards of the mysteries of God. Christians know things the world will never understand (like love, which is giving expecting nothing in return). Almost everything a Christian does for another cannot be understood by the world.

1COR 4:1-2 “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

B. Church members minister to each other because they are addicted to the ministry. Once a Christian begins to care about others he finds great joy and fulfillment

from helping someone else. Once this joy starts, the Christian wants to do more and more.

1COR 16:15 “I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)”

- C. Church members minister to each other because they live the New Testament. God's New Testament is based on grace and love. Once a Christian becomes a giver of grace and love, he is living the New Testament.

2COR 3:6 “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

II. CHURCH MEMBERS MINISTER TO EACH OTHER THE THINGS OF GOD. God has given Christians so many things to help minister to others (the Bible, the Holy Spirit, the spirit of love, the faith to believe God, etc).

- A. Church members minister to each other the gospel. A person who is lost must hear the gospel to be saved, and those who are saved must have the gospel to live the Christian life. Christians need to minister the gospel to each other every day. The power over sin is the power of the cross.

ROM 15:16 “That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, *ministering the gospel of God*, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.”

- B. Church members minister to each other reconciliation. Christians have times when they turn away from God. It may be for a long period of time, or it may be just a day or an hour. When a saved person is not walking with God, other Christians should minister to that person to bring their brother or sister back to God.

2COR 5:18 “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the *ministry of reconciliation*.”

- C. Church members minister to each other the grace of God. Grace is giving something to another that they have not earned. It is a free gift and Christians should always be giving to others things they cannot repay.

EPH 4:29 “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may *minister grace* unto the hearers.”

- D. Church members minister to each other with the ability that God has given them. God gives Christians the things they need to minister to others, including abilities to help others.

1PET 4:10-11 “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

- E. Church members minister to each other from their substance. God gives earthly things to Christian that they can use to help others. It might be their house, their vehicle, their job, their money, and many other things. God wants Christians to use the things He gives them to help others.

LUK 8:3 “And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.”

III. CHURCH MEMBERS MINISTER TO EACH OTHER WITH THEIR LIVES. It is imperative that the lives of church members be *qualified* to do the work of God. For church members to be able to minister to others, they first must have a life that pleases God. Remember, “You can't give what you don't have.” A person cannot give another person a godly life if he or she does not have one. A church must see a godly life in others to qualify them for ministry.

- A. Church members have a place to be approved for ministry. A church has God's authority to approve or disapprove workers. Individualized Christians approve themselves, which God forbid.

2COR 6:1-4 “We then, as *workers together with him*, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) Giving no offence in any

thing, that the ministry be not blamed: But *in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God*, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,”

- B. Church members have a place to *show* their faithfulness, which is necessary to be qualified to minister. If people cannot see the reality of Christianity in a person’s life, how can people know if a Christian is qualified to minister to others? A church can *see* if a person is faithful by monitoring his attendance, giving, work, life style, etc.

1COR 4:2 “Moreover it is *required* in stewards, that a man be *found faithful*.”

1TIM 1:12 “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he *counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry*;”

2TIM 3:10, 14 “But thou hast ***fully known*** my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,...But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, ***knowing of whom*** thou hast learned them;”

- IV. CHURCH MEMBERS MINISTER TO EACH OTHER BY BEING INVOLVED IN THEIR CHURCH. There are some saved people who do not attend church at all, and there are some who sit in church all the time but never do anything to serve God. God wants *every* saved person to be *active* in a church and *ministering* to others.

- A. Church members have zeal to minister to others. God wants Christians to have zeal to affect others. (zeal: an eagerness of desire to accomplish or obtain an objective).

2COR 9:1-2 “For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and *your zeal hath provoked very many*.”

- B. Church members should understand and remember that God Himself recognizes those who minister. When God recognizes or rewards a Christian, it is based on personal work in the ministry. God will remember every work of love a Christian does.

HEB 6:10 “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”

- C. Church members understand that God elevates those who minister. Members also need to understand that if they want to be like Christ, they must become ministers.

MAT 20:26-28 “But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

- V. CHURCH MEMBERS MINISTER TO EACH OTHER BY FELLOWSHIPPING AROUND THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY. There is no greater fellowship than working together to serve God. (Fellowship – *Partnership, union, participation*, social relations). Christians need to understand that fellowship can be good or dangerous (if with like-minded Christians or with ungodly people).

- A. Church members fellowship with each other around the *work of the ministry*. Ministering to others *together* is one of the greatest joys of the Christian life.

2COR 8:4 “Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us *the fellowship of the ministering to the saints*.”

Church members who fellowship *around ministry* also fellowship with God. God is involved in every act of ministry *when it is done in the Spirit*.

Therefore, when Christians are fellowshiping while ministering, God is fellowshiping with them.

1JO 1:3-7 “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that *ye also may have fellowship with us*: and truly *our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*. And these things write we unto you, that your *joy may be full*. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have *fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth*: But if *we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another*, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

VI. Church members minister to each other like the early Christians, which centered their fellowship on ministry. The early churches included fellowship as an essential part of their Christian lives.

A. Church members are to continue steadfast in fellowship like the apostles did after Christ ascended up to Heaven.

ACT 2:42 “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

B. Church members are to continually fellowship on the first day of the week (Sunday). The early Christians assembled on the first day of the week and churches still do today.

ACTS 20:7 "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."

1COR 16:2 "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

VII. Church members minister to each other through fellowshiping together as God instructed. *God established fellowship as a crucial part of the Christian life.*

A. Church members can fulfill the call to fellowship with Jesus. The church at Corinth was called to fellowship with Jesus. (the word “called” used here means to command or incite by words).

1COR 1:9 “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”

B. Church members can minister to each other when fellowship builds each other's faith. When Christians fellowship, everything they do should help others grow in faith.

1TH 3:2 “And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our *fellowlabourer* in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to *comfort you concerning your faith:*”

VIII. Church members minister to each other by *fellowshipping with righteousness, not with unrighteousness*. God wants Christians to know that they should not fellowship with others who claim to be Christians but incorporate sin into their Christian lives. When sin is brought into a person's Christianity and is accepted as okay or normal, it defiles and makes Christianity impure, restricting and even eliminating ministry to others.

When Christians take God's principles with them in dealing with the lost, they can *easily recognize* that the lost person's actions come from a person without God. When the same actions are seen in so-called Christians, then the understanding of right and wrong is not so clear. This can confuse Christians, especially young Christians, who identify right and wrong by what they observe in other Christians and not by what God says.

Every church member needs to understand the danger of being defiled. Defiled is when a person has mixed sin with God's righteousness, believing the sin action is right. A person who God has classified as unclean or defiled is not going to inherit the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the *spiritual* kingdom in which the saved *now* live. Do not confuse this with the kingdom of Heaven, where the saved *will live* in a physical place with God in the *future*. Those who defile their Christianity and fail to live the Christian life as God instructs, will be *excluded as God's instruments in doing the work of God on the earth*.

EPH 5:5-7 "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of *these things* cometh the wrath of God upon the *children of disobedience*. *Be not ye therefore partakers with them.*"

In the book of Romans, chapter 1, people who turned from God were given over to uncleanness because they became defiled. In this chapter, those who accept homosexuality as right thought what they were doing was okay rather than something vile (hated in the sight of God and mankind).

ROM 1:24-26 “Wherefore God also *gave them up to uncleanness* through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: *Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator*, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause *God gave them up unto vile affections*: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:”

- A. Church members cannot minister if they fellowship with unbelievers because the *union* will contaminate their righteousness. Without righteousness, Christians do not have the power or ability to minister to others.

2COR 6:14 “Be ye not *unequally yoked* together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”

- B. Church members do not minister if they fellowship with things that are unclean because uncleanness will separate them from God. Under the Old Testament law, when a person was unclean he was to go about telling everyone he was unclean to keep them away from him. This was to prevent contamination and an epidemic of the disease. If a saved person becomes contaminated, he infects those he has contact with. When a church member becomes a carrier of sin, including false teachings, his infection will infect those he ministers to.

2COR 6:17 "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"

- C. Church members do not minister if they fellowship with the works of darkness. That unity with darkness will cause the Christian to fail to reprove or rebuke others who participate in the same sin.

EPH 5:11 “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”

- D. Church members do not minister if they fellowship with darkness because it prevents them from showing forth the praises of God to the world. If a Christian abides in darkness, his light is restricted and worthless.

1PE 2:9 “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light;”

- E. Church members do not minister to others if they have yielded their lives to the flesh with its unrighteousness.

ROM 6:19 “I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.”

- F. Church members do not minister to others if they despise authority (government). Christians who do not submit to those in authority, as instructed in Hebrews 13:7, make individual decisions with their own self as the objective. They do what they think is right (self-willed) and do not follow those to whom God has given authority. A Christian is not ministering scripturally unless other people are more important than the Christian’s self.

2PE 2:10 "But chiefly them that walk *after the flesh* in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government." Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

- IX. Church members minister to each other if they separate from the sins that destroy the work of the ministry. If Christians or churches allow sin into their Christianity, with its darkness, they will not minister.

- A. The church at Corinth was plagued with much sin. God gave instructions to this church to remove the leaven so the church would be pure. (leaven: something which corrupts or ruins that with which it is mixed). Christians should remove sin from their own lives, and each church should remove the sin from the church body so the ministry will not be hindered.

1COR 5:7-13 “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I

wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you *not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother* be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore *put away from among yourselves that wicked person. Purge out therefore the old leaven*, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:”

- B. Church members are to avoid being *attached* to unbelievers because the darkness of the unbeliever will overshadow the light that is in the believer. Many times a Christian will attach to a lost person thinking or believing he or she can pull the lost person up to a godly level or change the lost person. This never works! Only God can change a person, and the union with the ungodly person will only pull the believer down.

2COR 6:14 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" and what communion hath light with darkness?"

- X. Church members minister to each other because they have a place where members can be taken care of, especially young Christians.

1COR 12:25-27 “That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

- A. Church members minister to each other by having real godly care for each other. This godly care lasts and is always there for each other.

JOH 10:11-14 “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the

wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling *fleeth*, because he is an hireling, and *careth not* for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.”

- B. Church members minister to each other by keeping their liberty under control. Christians should never allow their liberty to give them reasons to walk in the flesh.

GAL 5:13 “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.”

- C. Church members minister to each other provided there is no confusion to disrupt and destroy God's work. Confusion always causes disruption and distrust. Christians should always avoid confusion.

1COR 14:33 “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

DIVISION TWO

THE BENEFITS OF BEING A CHURCH MEMBER LESSON FIVE

MEMBERS OF A CHURCH ADMONISH EACH OTHER

COLOSSIANS 3:10-17

COL 3:10-17 “And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; *teaching and admonishing one another* in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

Introduction:

Admonish - to make a person think or to challenge another to be cautious. Church members are to be admonished or reproved for something has either been committed or to prevent someone from committing a wrongful act.

The first step in discipling a Christian is to admonish not to do something again, or to give warning before something wrong is committed. One of the greatest blessings of being in a church is for others to warn or point out a fault *before* a wrong action is committed.

- A. God admonished Moses to build the tabernacle correctly. God had a reason for the tabernacle being built the way He instructed and warned Moses to build it just like He told him to.

HEB 8:5 “Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.”

- B. Christians should recognize those whom God places over them and accept their admonishment. One of the biggest dangers a Christian faces in departing from or going against those over him is that he loses the process of being admonished. When this happens, a Christian then lives his Christian life learning from “the school of hard knocks.”

1TH 5:12-13 “And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.”

- C. Church members are to admonish their brothers and sisters in Christ when they do not follow the Word of God. When a brother or sister does wrong, the other church members should not treat him or her as an enemy, but should admonish to do right.

2TH 3:14-15 “And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”

- I. CHURCH MEMBERS HAVE GOD’S KNOWLEDGE SO THEY ARE ABLE TO ADMONISH OTHERS. When Christians do not know what the Bible says or what they should do, they cannot admonish others. It is very important to have God's knowledge so church members can help other members.

Church members are able to admonish others **if** they are filled with God’s knowledge. When Christians are filled with knowledge, they have correct information by which to admonish others. They can caution other Christians and they can help others think about right things. Those who do not have God's knowledge will give wrong advice to Christians, which can lead to injury or even spiritual destruction.

ROM 15:14 “And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.”

- A. Church members who have God's knowledge are enriched and are able to give it to others. God gives grace through Jesus Christ, so Christians are enriched in utterance and knowledge. (enriched: to supply with an abundance of everything desired). God will give everything that is needed to those who desire it so they will be able to help others.

1COR 1:4-6 "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:"

- B. Church members who have God's knowledge are a sweet savor to others, especially those who are saved. To be a godly blessing to others, a Christian must have God's knowledge. There are many who corrupt the Word of God because they are not sincere in following what the Word of God says.

2COR 2:14-17 "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."

- C. Church members who have God's knowledge have God's spirit of wisdom and revelation and are able to help others. A Christian cannot have God's wisdom without godly knowledge. God's power works with God's knowledge, enabling church members to help others.

EPH 1:17-19 "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,"

- D. Church members who have God's knowledge recognize the God-given leaders who provide them with God's knowledge, enabling them to grow to completion. God's knowledge is necessary if a Christian is to grow to the full measure of Christ.

EPH 4:11-13 “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:”

- II. CHURCH MEMBERS HAVE GOD'S WORD WHICH INSTRUCTS THEM REGARDING ADMONISHING OTHERS. All correction should come from the Word of God and followed completely when dealing with others. Church members have God's Word and should trust in its ability to change hearts and lives.

- A. The Word of God instructs church members regarding admonishing others. God's Word is absolute regarding what is right and wrong, and what should be done and what shouldn't.

1COR 10:11 “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

- B. The Word of God instructs church members and gives them a source to learn to have hope. When Christians have patience and comfort from the Scriptures, they will also have hope.

ROM 15:4 “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

- C. The Word of God instructs church members regarding their eternal life and gives absolute assurance that those who are saved can know they have eternal life. When Christians know the Word of God, their faith is increased, giving them the ability to help others, especially with admonishing about salvation and eternal life.

1JO 5:13 “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

III. CHURCH MEMBERS HAVE GODLY MUSIC TO ADMONISH EACH OTHER. Music is a great tool that God can use to help churches. Music can also be used to promote evil and false teachings. Much of the music today comes from Charismatics and brings with it false doctrines such as: calling down the power of God, losing salvation or getting it back, seeking the Holy Spirit, etc. This type of music is designed to reach the *emotions* of carnal man, not the *born again spirit*. Music is a great tool when it is used by church members to help and admonish others.

A. Church members should sing with grace in their hearts. Grace is how God blesses Christians. Church members who sing should know that God has given them grace and should keep it in their hearts, especially when they sing.

COL 3:16 “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

B. Church members should sing their confessions of Christ among the Gentiles. Church members should always sing to the Lord, among each other and in the world.

ROM 15:9 “And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.”

C. Church members should sing with their spirit, not their carnal man. Others are not admonished to live and do right when they hear carnal music. Carnal music only points Christians to their earthly life, whether sung in church or in the world.

1COR 14:15 “What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”

D. Church members should sing to edify others. Some of the greatest teachings shared with others are shared through music. Therefore, it is essential that all

music sung in a church be scriptural and godly. The message in music is transmitted to others and should always build others, not tear them down.

1COR 14:26 “How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.”

- E. Church members should sing in their church to speak the Word of God, with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The easiest way to remember Scripture is to sing it. The message of the music can penetrate a heart quicker than any other way. It is essential that Christians get involved in singing so they can admonish others.

EPH 5:19 “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;”

- F. Church members should sing their praises in their church. Every Christian should sing congregational music no matter how well or how poor they can sing. Church members should recognize that godly singing is praising the Lord Jesus Christ.

HEB 2:12 “Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.”

- G. Church members should sing because they are merry. Many times songs bring depression and discouragement because the singer is not merry (happy looking; cheer in heart). In church, members consider others and seek to communicate the things of God, not the destruction of the world.

JAM 5:13 “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.”

- H. Church members should sing because they desire the godly rebuke of the wise Christians, instead of seeking the songs of fools. Every song carries a message and when fools write or sing music they send out their message of foolishness.

ECC 7:5 “It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.”

IV. CHURCH MEMBERS SHOULD HAVE THE ABILITY TO ADMONISH EACH OTHER WITH MUSIC THAT GLORIFIES THE NAME OF CHRIST. When Christians sing about Jesus Christ and His

wonderful works, they challenge each other to look to Jesus as the answer to every need or difficulty in their lives. Singing about Jesus turns others from the world and turns them back to Christ.

- A. Church members should know that God wants them to come before his presence with singing. God enjoys godly music and listens to hear it. When church members sing together, God listens and understands their message and its meaning.

PSA 100:1-4 “Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.”

- B. Church members should teach each other to sing. Each church should provide instructors in teaching Christians to become skillful with their singing. There are many who do not have the ability to sing solos. However, in every church God gives some who will be able to sing quality music if taught properly.

1CH 15:22 “And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for song: he instructed about the song, because he was skilful.”

- C. Church members recognize those who receive instruction in singing and are able to sing. Those who are able should sing and should be recognized as singers.

1CH 25:7 “So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the LORD, even all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight.”

- D. Church members are to sing to honor the name of the Lord. When a church member honors someone, high esteem is shown that person and also respect is given towards a high distinction. Singing is one of the best ways to show honor to Jesus Christ.

PSA 66:1-2 “Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.”

- E. Church members are to sing to proclaim the name of God. Many times lost people will listen to good music and hear the message of Christ. Every time Christians are gathered in a church, they should sing to proclaim the name of God.

PSA 96:1-3 “O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth. Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.”

- V. CHURCH MEMBERS HAVE LEADERS TO ADMONISH THEM ABOUT SERVING THE LORD. Pastors have been given the responsibility to challenge Christians to get involved in the work of the Lord. Pastors are to explain the benefits of serving God as well as the consequences of not serving Him. Church members have the benefit of having pastors, as well as other church members, to encourage them to serve God.

- A. Church leaders admonish people to fear the Lord so they will turn to Christ. The word “forewarn” is the same as admonish and states who should be feared.

LUK 12:5 “But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.”

- B. Church leaders admonish their church members without ceasing. They continually work to point those in their care to the Word of God so they will grow up and be like Christ.

ACT 20:31-32 “Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”

- C. Church leaders admonish or warn church members like a father to his children. Church leaders also point out those matured Christians the church members can follow and encourage them to submit to the right leaders.

1COR 4:14-16 “I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.”

- D. Church leaders preach the Word of God to admonish church members so their lives can become complete. Church leaders want the church members to have wisdom and understand the benefits of serving Jesus Christ.

COL 1:26-29 “Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”

- E. Church leaders admonish church members to remember that the Lord is the Avenger of all who are defrauded by others. (defraud: tricked, deceived). God called Christians to holiness and also avenges the holy.

1TH 4:6-7 “That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.”

- F. Church leaders admonish church members not to render evil for evil. There are some so-called Christians who are unruly and work to turn Christians away from God. When this happens, those who are following Christ should not stoop to the same low tactics to repay them.

1TH 5:14-16 “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.” See that ***none render evil for evil*** unto any man; but ***ever follow that which is good***, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore.”

- VI. CHURCH MEMBERS HAVE LEADERS TO ADMONISH THEM ABOUT HOW TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. God gave Christians many instructions regarding living the right kind of life. Church leaders work to instruct church members to live right in accordance with the Word of God. When Christians are members of a church, they have the advantage of having Christian leaders who ***care*** and ***want*** them to live right.

- A. Church leaders teach church members to have the mind of Christ so they will be able to admonish (instruct) others. Until Christians think like Christ, their instructions and admonishment will be tainted and often lead others away from Christ instead of closer to God.

1COR 2:16 “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

- B. Church leaders use the Scripture to admonish (correct) church members that they might do right. Christians who want to live the life Christ instructed need someone who will teach them the Scripture.

2TI 3:16-17 “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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

- C. Church leaders admonish (teach) church members to increase their wisdom. When Christians have wise leaders that will instruct them, they will get wiser.

PRO 9:9-10 “Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”

- D. Church leaders give honor to those who accept admonishment (reproof). Church members are warned that poverty and shame will fall upon those who refuse instruction. But those who receive God's instructions are honored.

PRO 13:18-19 “Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured. The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.”

- E. Church leaders admonish (counsel) church members to follow the things of the Lord. There are many teachings in the world and most of them claim to be right. When Christians are a part of a church, they have the advantage of God's wisdom, which enables them to stand.

PRO 19:20-21 “Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end. There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.”

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

DIVISION TWO

THE BENEFITS OF BEING A CHURCH MEMBER

LESSON SIX

MEMBERS OF A CHURCH BEAR

EACH OTHER'S BURDENS

GALATIANS 6:1-7

GAL 6:1-7 “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. ***Bear ye one another's burdens***, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

INTRODUCTION:

Bear: to move while holding up and supporting. The word “bear” is similar to the word “carry” except a person does not pick the other up, but only supports the other to keep upright.

It is important for Christians to note that the Bible says when one is ***alone*** and falls, there is no one to lift him up.

ECC 4:10 “For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but ***woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.***”

I. MEMBERS OF A CHURCH ARE ***TO BEAR OTHERS*** DURING THEIR TIME OF WEAKNESS. There are some church members who are permanently weak, but all church members have temporary times of weakness. Weakness can be in any area of life: physical, mental, spiritual, vocational, family, etc. When a person is weak, he will tend to let down his

guard and become vulnerable to others. Many times another person leads the weak person into danger or sin. It is crucial that godly people be available to help and to guide a person during a time of weakness.

- A. Members of a church who are strong are to bear (support) the infirmities of the weak. Church members should never take their strengths for granted, and if God has given strength to a person, God wants that strength used for the glory and work of God. In Romans fifteen the Bible uses the term “ought to” which means to be held or bound in duty or moral obligation. It also tells the strong Christians that they should not help others to please themselves.

ROM 15:1 “*We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak*, and not to please ourselves.”

- B. Members of a church should labor to bear (support) the weak. God instructs church members to *labor* to help others. The word “labor” means exertion of energy to accomplish a deed. It takes work to bear someone else during their times of weakness. If a saved person becomes selfish and expends his energy only caring for himself, he is disobeying God’s Word and God's plan for church members.

ACT 20:35 “I have shewed you all things, how that *so labouring ye ought to support the weak*, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

- C. Members of a church who have the love of God can bear (support) all things. Love is one of the greatest strengths a saved person has. The ability to love others during difficult or stressful times is a great strength. First Corinthians says that love can bear all things. The King James Bible uses the word “beareth” which is in the continuing tense, which means that love cannot only lift something up but will continue to carry it forever.

1COR 13:4-7 “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; *Beareth all things*, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

D. Members of a church should follow that which is good, and show it by bearing (supporting) the weak. God instructs those who are saved to always follow that which is good, and supporting the weak is one of those good actions. God understands the need for strong Christians to help those in need and to suffer with those who are weak. Don't forget Jesus said that when he was hungry, thirsty, naked, a stranger, sick, or in prison, he should be helped. Jesus is being helped when a church member helps one of God's children.

1TH 5:14-15 “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.”

II. MEMBERS OF A CHURCH ARE GIVEN THE **POWER OF GOD** SO THEY WILL BE ABLE TO BEAR THE BURDENS OF OTHERS. There are many who pray for the power of God, but usually have no direct purpose for it. When God gives His power, it is for the purpose of helping others. There are times in the life of every Christian when someone else is needed to help him or her stand strong. Many times a Christian will maintain his Christianity while standing with others who help him, **but will fall if isolated**. Many do not realize when they pray for the power of God to help them, He might send His power through another Christian who is willing to help.

A. Members of a church should always realize that Jesus has the power to carry the sorrows of Christians. Jesus not only bears others, He is capable of carrying their sorrows. (sorrow: the uneasiness or pain, which is produced by the loss of good; grief; sadness). Most of the time, Jesus will use another Christian to help those who are in sorrow.

ISA 53:4-6 “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and **carried our sorrows**: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

LUK 13:11-13 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.”

- B. Members of a church should know that Israel was the roots on which Christianity was built, and the roots of Israel had the power to bear the work of Christ. Christianity was built upon many things that came from Israel: the faith of Abraham, the love of David, the authority and leadership of Moses, the wisdom of Solomon, the commitment of Hannah, and many more. Israel also brought to Christianity the promise and fulfillment of the Messiah.

ROM 11:7, 15-20 “What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.... For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, *thou bearest not the root, but the root thee*. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:”

- C. Members of a church should know that after receiving the power of God they should not turn back to the weak things of the world. God's power is not to be used for the things of the world. Many times a person who is saved turns back to the world, without realizing the world will put him in bondage. Without the power of God, the Christian's life becomes directed to caring for self and will forget about the responsibility to care for others.

GAL 4:9 “But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?”

III. MEMBERS OF A CHURCH NEED TO **INTERCEDE** FOR OTHERS.

Intercede: to intervene between parties with a view of reconciling differences.

Difference: the state of being unlike or in disagreement.

There are times when the earthly lives of Christians produce differences between them and God. It might be issues of sin, misunderstandings, health, social, or any number of events, which cause a person to be at difference with God. When a Christian is in a difference with God, someone needs to intercede between him and God. Being in a church provides Christians who are ***committed to interceding for others***.

A. Church members should intercede for all, including those who are in authority.

When Paul wrote to Timothy he exhorted him to be an intercessor. All Christians are exhorted to intercede for others, especially those who are members of their same church. (exhort: to excite by words to do good deeds)

1TI 2:1-3 “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, *prayers, intercessions*, and giving of thanks, ***be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*** For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

B. Church members are to stand in the gap between God and mankind. There are times when a Christian will not pray, times when he cannot pray, and times when he just does not pray. Who will stand in the gap? God still looks for Christians who will stand in the gap for others.

EZE 22:30 “And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.”

IV. MEMBERS OF A CHURCH SHOULD SEE THAT GOD IS AMAZED WHEN **NO ONE INTERCEDES** FOR SINFUL MEN. When Israel had turned away from God, no one went to God to intercede for it. God was amazed (wondered) there was not one person who cared enough about the nation to intercede for it.

ISA 59:1-2, 14-16 “Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not

hear....And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and **wondered that there was no intercessor**: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

V. MEMBERS OF A CHURCH SHOULD KNOW THERE IS A TIME WHEN GOD WILL **NOT HEAR INTERCESSIONS**. Intercession is crucial in the lives of Christians, but at the same time, Christians need to know that a person can go too far for prayers of intercession to help. When God removes the burden from a Christian's heart to pray for someone, he or she should pay attention to the circumstance in the life of that person. The Christian might be praying for something that God cannot honor, and the Christian should move on to someone else to pray for or change the intercessory prayer.

A. When those in Israel turned away from God to sin and worshipped other gods, God told Jeremiah the He would not hear intercession for them. God's statement makes it clear that a nation or a person can turn so far away from God that **He will not hear the prayers of intercession** for them.

JER 7:1-3, 13-20 "The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place....And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, *but ye heard not*; and I called you, but *ye answered not*; Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim. **Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee. Seest thou not what they do** in the cities of Judah and in the streets of

Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, *to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.* Do they provoke me to anger? saith the LORD: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces? Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched.”

B. The Bible explains in Hebrews chapter twelve that there was a time when Esau wanted to repent, but there was no place to repent. The Bible even says in Romans chapter nine that God hated Esau. *God cannot change the consequence of a person's sin actions no matter how much anyone prays.* There is a time when people go too far that they cannot come back from their sin *without suffering the consequences of their sin.* Another example of this is when a saved person turns from God and ends up with a terminal disease. No matter how much people pray, he or she cannot turn from the consequence of sins.

Heb 12:15-17 “Looking diligently lest any man *fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;* Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

The Bible also makes it clear in Romans chapter two that some harden their hearts and turn to wrath, which *obligates God to administer to them the penalty for their actions.*

Rom 2:4-6 “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds:”

VI. MEMBERS OF A CHURCH SHOULD KNOW THAT JESUS CHRIST CAME TO BE *THE INTERCESSOR* FOR SINNERS. What would the lost man do if God would never hear his prayers? What would a Christian do if he had no access to pray to a holy God? What would happen to the world if no one could pray? When a person is away from God, who will be his connector to God?

Jesus became **the** intercessor and **the** mediator between a holy God and sinful mankind. There are no heavenly beings or earthly religions that are able to mediate between God and men. He is **the connector** from man to God.

1TI 2:5 “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;”

ISA 53:1-12 “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide

the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and *made intercession for the transgressors.*”

VII. MEMBERS OF A CHURCH SHOULD KNOW THEY HAVE *COMPLETE INTERCESSION IN HEAVEN*.

Jesus is the One who intercedes between God and man. Also, the Spirit of God intercedes for the Christian. Many times a Christian does not know what to do, and some times the Christian does not even know how to ask God about what he should do. The Spirit of God, who gives God's power to Christians to do the work of God, intercedes to connect the Christian to God so he will know what to do.

ROM 8:26-28, 33-34 “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but *the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us* with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, *because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God*. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose....Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, *who also maketh intercession for us.*”

VIII. MEMBERS OF A CHURCH SHOULD KNOW THAT JESUS *CONTINUALLY INTERCEDES*. When

Jesus sat down on the right hand of God and became the King of kings and the Lord of lords, he also assumed the position and authority to connect Christians to God. Jesus works continually to keep Christians connected to God and His will. Jesus lives to make intercession for the saved. Jesus is alive (He rose from the dead) and continues to do the work of His Father.

HEB 7:19-28 “For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better

testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, *seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.*”

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

DIVISION TWO

THE BENEFITS OF BEING A CHURCH MEMBER LESSON SEVEN

MEMBERS OF A CHURCH

PROTECT EACH OTHER FROM LONELINESS

PSALMS 142:1-7

PSA 142:1-7 “ I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was *no man that would know me*: refuge failed me; *no man cared for my soul*. I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. *Bring my soul out of prison*, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.”

INTRODUCTION:

Loneliness: solitude; seclusion from company.

In the above Scripture, David cried out in his loneliness to God asking to be released from what he called his “prison”. David cried unto the Lord because no one cared for his soul. Loneliness was his prison. Today many people, including Christians, are in the prison of loneliness.

Loneliness is often mistaken for or causes depression. Loneliness often comes from seclusion, which is the act of separating from society or shutting others out. There are many things that cause Christians to seclude their life from others, such as sin, rejection, fear, hurt, or even vain imagination.

Loneliness is probably the greatest hindrance there is to living a fulfilled Christian life. When Christians are experiencing loneliness, they often do the very thing that caused the loneliness, which is to isolate their life from others. Many saved people do not participate in church and avoid those who are most capable of helping them. When an active church member goes through the difficulties of life, other Christians in the church will walk with him or her and share the load.

David explained loneliness as having his soul (heart) in prison. The word “prison” means to “fasten or shut up”. There are many like David who feel alone and find their lives shut up in prison because they exclude other people from their life. A Christian’s life without others being in it is the same as being in prison.

There are many who exclude others from their lives because they think they are the only ones who are right. They do not realize what God said was right and still is right. They become prideful in their isolation and their pride destroys them. This attitude also produces anarchy, which leads to even deeper isolation and loneliness. When there is no authority to point a person to what is right and godly, the individual seeks his own right and ends up going away from God.

JDG 17:6 “ In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

PRO 16:18 “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall”.

I. GOD WANTS ALL HIS CHILDREN TO HAVE A CHURCH HOME SO THEY CAN FELLOWSHIP WITH EACH OTHER TO PREVENT LONELINESS WITH ITS GREAT POWER FROM DESTROYING THE CHRISTIAN. God never intended for Christians to work alone, but to work in groups or in teams. God is the one who established the institution of churches because He knew it was unhealthy for His children to function alone.

A. Church members are a part of the life of pastors and share in the work and the burden of ministry. Churches that do not follow God's instructions cause pastors to be lonely in the ministry. They are often destroyed because they have to do all the work alone. When the first church was being formed, the people began to murmur (grumble) against the leaders. The leaders were wise enough to place deacons in the work to do the manual labor. This allowed them to remain united and together in getting the work of God completed.

ACTS 6:1-7 “And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, ***whom we may appoint over this business.*** But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. And the ***word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.***”

B. Moses tried to do all the work of God alone and it nearly destroyed him.

EXO 18:13-24 “ And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God: When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws. And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for ***this thing is too heavy for thee***; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Harken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be

rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace. So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said.”

- C. Church members can prevent loneliness in fellow church members by knowing and recognizing that isolation can hurt or even destroy those who experience this problem and do not have anyone to help them. Every Christian will fall down at some time and will need someone to help him up. Loneliness often enters a person's life when he or she falls and has no one to help.

ECC 4:8-12 “ There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail. ***Two are better than one;*** because they have a good reward for their labour. ***For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.*** Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

- D. Church members prevent loneliness in fellow church members by being there when the victories come. Loneliness often causes a Christian to feel defeated even after a victory. Real victories are not the battles that Christians win in the world. The real victory is having a life that is shared with others.

ROM 11:1-4 “ I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and ***I am left alone***, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to

myself *seven thousand men*, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.”

In I Kings chapters eighteen and nineteen the Bible tells of Elijah's great victory and then his loneliness:

1. It did not rain for three years (18:1).
2. Elijah is to show himself to Ahab to bring rain to the earth (18:1-2).
3. Obadiah met Elijah (18:3)
4. Elijah challenged Ahab and the prophets of Baal (18:17-18).
4. Elijah called down fire (18:36-38).
6. Four Hundred and Fifty people were killed (18:40).
7. His prayers caused it to rain (18:45).
8. Jezebel said she was going to kill Elijah (19:2).
9. He ran and hid and asked God to kill him (19:4).

- E. Church members prevent loneliness in fellow church members by exhorting them to think or to go in another direction. This might stop a fellow Christian from falling into a state of defeat. When a Christian has an infirmity or a difficulty in life and lives alone, the Christian stays defeated. The Christian experiences defeat when he or she has no man to help.

JOH 5:4-8 “ For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, *I have no man*, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.”

- F. Church members prevent loneliness in fellow church members by not being selfish, knowing that selfishness destroys ministry? Selfishness and loneliness go hand in hand because a selfish person does not think about others. He only looks at his own self or his own life and ends up alone. Paul told the church at Philippi

that Timothy was the only one who cared for them. All the others would not do the will of Jesus because they only sought their own things.

PHI 2:19-23 “ But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. ***For all seek their own***, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.”

- G. Church members prevent loneliness in fellow church members by staying loyal to Christ and to each other. Loneliness can be seen in Paul's life by the way he listed many that had left him or had forsaken him. When a Christian has friends or ministry partners that depart, even for good reasons, it can trigger loneliness because their help is gone. This is why Paul told Timothy to come quickly to be with him. ***Church members who stay faithful prevent loneliness.***

2TIM 4:9-11; 16-17 “ Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: For ***Demas hath forsaken me***, having loved this present world, and is ***departed*** unto Thessalonica; Crescens (*is departed*) to Galatia, Titus (*is departed*) unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is ***profitable to me for the ministry***...At my first answer ***no man stood with me, but all men forsook me***: I pray God ***that it may not be laid to their charge.***

Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me;”

- II. GOD WANTS ALL HIS CHILDREN TO WORK TOGETHER AS MEMBERS OF A CHURCH, AND GOD GIVES THEM A SPECIAL STRENGTH WHEN THEY WORK TOGETHER. God never intended for Christians to work alone, and the strength of working as a team is incredible. When working as members of a team (church) Christians can: encourage each other, pray for each other, help each other, provide for ministries of each other, and most of all, love God together. God gives many things to church members that work together, thus preventing loneliness.

- A. God gives church members **comfort** from others in their church. When Christians have mutual faith, they will be comforted together. (comfort: to strengthen the mind when depressed or troubled); (mutual - reciprocal interchange)

ROM 1:12 “ That is, that I may be *comforted together with you* by the *mutual faith* both of you and me.”

- B. God gives church members the ability to have **like minds**. One of the greatest comforts in a person's life is having someone who thinks the same. The way to be perfectly joined together with another is to have the same mind.

1COR 1:10 “ Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

- C. God gives church members **honor**, and especially the parts that are lacking (to be in want, destitute of, do not possess). Where do Christians go when they feel less than others? Church members comfort each other, knowing that they are all equal in the Lord.

1COR 12:24 “ For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more *abundant honour to that part which lacked.*”

- D. God gives **spiritual growth** when church members are together. The greatest way to grow spiritually is to do it with others. Those who are alone will not grow to be what God instructed them to be.

EPH 2:21-22 “ In whom *all* the building fitly framed *together groweth* unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are *builded together* for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

- E. God gives church members **His love**, which causes them to grow together. The love church members have for each other is what causes a church to grow. Love knits church members together, causing them to function as one single unit.

EPH 4:16 “ From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working

in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the *edifying of itself in love.*”

COL 2:2 “ That their hearts might be comforted, *being knit together in love*, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;”

III. GOD WANTS ALL HIS CHILDREN TO WORK TOGETHER AS MEMBERS OF A CHURCH TO PRODUCE ZEALOUSNESS. (zealous: filled with eagerness and warm feeling; interest in pursuit of something). God wants Christians to be zealous *to do* the works of Christ. When church members are working together, they will have a zeal or strong desire to accomplish the results God wants to give. This zeal and focus on doing God’s work prevents loneliness.

A. God wants all His children to have a fervent mind (zeal) toward helping those who do the work of the Lord. The church at Corinth had a great zeal to be clear and approved in all the works they did.

2COR 7:7, 11-16 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, *your fervent mind* toward me; so that I rejoiced the more. ... 11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, *yea, what zeal*, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you. Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and *exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.* For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth. And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.”

- B. God wants all His children to work together as members of a church, which will cause zealous desires. God wants Christians to covet earnestly the best gifts. (covet: to have warm feeling for.) When Christians focus their desires on the things of God, self-focused feelings, such as loneliness, will disappear.

1COR 12:31 “ But *covet earnestly* the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”

- C. God wants all His children to desire spiritual gifts so they will be able to edify their church. Church members, who desire to help build their church by seeking to use God's spiritual gifts, will be protected from loneliness.

1COR 14:1 “ Follow after charity, and *desire* spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.”

1COR 14:12 “ Even so ye, forasmuch as *ye are zealous of spiritual gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.”

- D. God wants His children to covet prophesying (telling forth). Christians should desire to tell others the results of their actions, whether good or bad. This will prevent many Christians from experiencing loneliness when they understand the truth.

1COR 14:39 “ Wherefore, brethren, *covet* to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.”

IV. GOD WANTS ALL HIS CHILDREN TO WORK TOGETHER AS MEMBERS OF A CHURCH SO THEY WILL AFFECT OTHERS THROUGH THEIR ZEAL. Zealousness is contagious and when church members work together, they will catch each other's zeal, which prevents isolation and loneliness.

- A. The zeal of the church at Corinth provoked very many. (Provoked – stimulate; move, incite, induce by motives.) When a church has zeal it causes others, including other churches, to get excited about the work of the Lord. When people feel like they are working together as a team, or for the same cause, it prevents others from pulling away and experiencing loneliness.

2COR 9:1-2 “ For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: For I know the forwardness of your mind, for

which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and *your zeal hath provoked very many.*”

- B. Zealousness is good and it affects others to do good things. Christians are also cautioned to be careful with others who do wrong, so they are not affected by their negative zealousness.

GAL 4:17-18 “ They *zealously affect you*, but *not well*; yea, they would exclude you, that *ye might affect them*. But *it is good to be zealously affected* always in a *good* thing, and not only when I am present with you.”

- C. Zealousness for others is good. Zealousness produces fervent works for others, and will prompt much prayer for others. Fervently thinking about others prevents Christians from being lonely.

COL 4:12-13 “ Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always *labouring fervently for you in prayers*, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that *he hath a great zeal for you*, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.”

- D. Zealousness towards good works causes God's children to work together as members of a church. Christians should have a fervent desire to do the good works of God.

TITUS 2:14 “ Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, *zealous of good works.*”

- V. GOD WANTS ALL HIS CHILDREN TO WORK TOGETHER AS MEMBERS OF A CHURCH TO PREVENT ANY ONE CHRISTIAN FROM BEING ALONE. When a Christian is alone, whether in their physical life, spiritual life, or ministry life, they will suffer and usually fall.

- A. Church members sometimes feel like David because of the oppression and persecutions of the world. David was all alone and hurting because of the false accusations and persecutions of the evil.

PSA 35:11-17 “ False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with

fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother. But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not: With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth. Lord, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.”

- B. Church members who are the children of God are like Adam, and God said it was not good for him to be alone. God never intended for a Christian to be alone and has always provided a place of fellowship.

GEN 2:18 “And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”

- C. Church members that scorn others will bear their burdens alone. (scorn: extreme contempt that springs from a person's opinion that his own superiority or worth is above another) When a Christian thinks he is better than others he will show it by his scorn and end up being rejected by all.

PRO 9:12 “ If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.”

- D. Church members realize that a person who is alone will fall. If a Christian is alone, there will be no one to help him up when he stumbles. God said that it is better for a Christian to have someone with him so the world will not be able to prevail against him.

ECC 4:8-12 “ There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail. Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

- E. Church members realize that faith without works is dead. A Christian who is alone and experiencing loneliness, has a problem with his faith and will not do the works of God. Consequently, that person has no way of showing his faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God. God told Christians that if there is no works, then there is no faith. A person that is isolated and alone is worse off than most people realize.

JAM 2:17 “ Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

DIVISION TWO

THE BENEFITS OF BEING A CHURCH MEMBER

LESSON EIGHT

MEMBERS OF A CHURCH HAVE A PLACE TO SERVE GOD

MATTHEW 25:31-46

MAT 25:31-46 “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, ***Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, ***Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.*** And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

INTRODUCTION:

(Servant: one who serves others; to give attendance and respect due to a superior.)

Jesus told His disciples that when they did something for the brethren they did it to Him. He listed those who were hungry, those who were thirsty, those who were strangers, those who had no clothes, those who were sick, and those who were in prison. (brethren: brothers; kinsmen of the same blood). Jesus clarified who His brethren are in the book of Mark chapter three.

MAR 3:31-35 “There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For *whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.*”

Jesus stated that doing the will of God makes people His brothers and sisters. (will: a determination; choice). The Bible makes it clear that those who do the will of God are those who are transformed and have a life that will abide forever.

ROM 12:1-2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, *will of God.*”

1JO 2:17 “And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but *he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*”

The Bible makes it clear that Christians are to take care of others who are saved. When they do, they are in essence taking care of Christ. Outside of a church, there is very little, if any, opportunity to take care of brothers and sisters in Christ. Inside a church, the members, who are the servants of the Lord, live out their servant hood by caring for others in their congregation.

The Bible has a lot to say regarding the kind of servant a Christian should be. It is clear from the Bible that servants are not just simple people doing simple things.

- A. A good servant is a wise servant. A wise servant is one who walks circumspectly and shows intelligence. It is not enough to just do work for God. A good servant does work with carefulness and with understanding.

PRO 14:35 “The king's favour is toward a wise servant: but his wrath is against him that causeth shame.”

- B. A good servant will become a ruler over others. God will use wise servants to rule instead of those who might be the descendants. For instance, pastors and deacons are chosen because of their wisdom in serving, not because of who their parents are.

PRO 17:2 “A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.”

- C. A good servant is one who has sacrificed his own life. Being a servant requires that a person give up living his own life and live for someone else. A Christian that is a good servant does not live for his own self, but lives for his Lord.

ROM 12:1-2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

- D. A good servant does things that will build the lives of other people. Discipleship and all Christian training are about how to help or to build another person's life. A good servant of Christ spends his life building others.

ROM 14:17-19 “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things *serveth Christ* is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and *things wherewith one may edify another.*”

- I. GOD RECOGNIZES CHURCH MEMBERS FOR THEIR SERVICE TO OTHERS IN THEIR CHURCH. In Romans chapter sixteen Phebe is recognized as being a servant to her church at Cenchrea. Being a servant of the Lord is fulfilled by being a servant to a Christian's church. In these verses we see that other Christians were instructed to receive her and assist her in doing her business. Again, it is important to note that servants are leaders, not just common laborers.

ROM 16:1-4 “I commend unto you Phebe our sister, *which is a servant of the church* which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that *ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you*: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.”

- II. GOD RECOGNIZED JESUS HIMSELF FOR BEING A SERVANT. Jesus is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords and still a servant. This is because he gave up His own life to serve His Father.

PHI 2:5-8 “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

- III. GOD RECOGNIZES CHURCH MEMBERS FOR THEIR SERVICE TO OTHERS, RECOGNIZING THEM AS GREAT BECAUSE THEY MINISTER TO OTHERS. The world thinks to become great requires a person to become a boss (a person who exercises control over workers). God makes it clear that those He says as great are the good servants.

- A. Church members should be like Christ, who made Himself a minister. Jesus told Christians that if they wanted to be great they were to be servants and minister to others.

MAT 20:26-28 “But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be *great among you, let him be your minister*; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him *be your servant*: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but *to minister*, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

- B. Church members should be servants to their master, Jesus Christ. Many religious people will not do any work unless men glorify them. God wants Christians to serve by recognizing that Jesus is the Lord and serve just because they care about Him and His work.

MAT 23:1-12 “Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for *one is your Master, even Christ*; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for *one is your Master, even Christ*. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.”

- C. Church members should be servants like Paul stated he was. He made it clear that he was a servant for the sake of Jesus Christ. He told the church at Corinth that he was a servant to them for Jesus' sake.

2COR 4:5 “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves *your servants for Jesus' sake*.”

- IV. GOD RECOGNIZES CHURCH MEMBERS FOR THEIR SERVICE TO OTHERS AND TO THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH. Paul, who was a servant himself, had others who helped him do the work of the ministry. The work of a church requires many workers who are servants to the Lord as well as servants to the leaders of their church. It is clear that the Lord, and even other churches, recognize those who serve their leaders.

- A. The brethren from Macedonia went to Paul to supply his needs.

2COR 11:7-10 “Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the *brethren which came from Macedonia supplied*: and in all

things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.”

- B. Epaphroditus worked himself nearly to death doing service to Paul.

PHI 2:25-30 “Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that *ministered to my wants*. For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: *Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.*”

- C. Other churches learned of and recognized the servanthood of Priscilla and Aquila.

ROM 16:3-4 “Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also *all the churches of the Gentiles.*”

- V. GOD RECOGNIZES CHURCH MEMBERS FOR THEIR SERVICE TO OTHERS. HE IS THE ONE WHO JUDGES HIS CHRISTIAN SERVANTS, NOT OTHER SERVANTS.

ROM 14:1-4 “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.”

- VI. GOD RECOGNIZES CHURCH MEMBERS FOR THEIR SERVICE TO OTHERS AND DEALS WITH THEM ACCORDING TO THEIR LEADERSHIP OVER OTHER SERVANTS. Jesus made Himself

servant to His Father and at the same time He was over his disciples. Being a good servant requires *both following and leading*. If a Christian does not become a good leader, he is not a good servant.

MAT 8:5-13 “And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For ***I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me***: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.”

VI. GOD RECOGNIZES CHURCH MEMBERS FOR THEIR SERVICE TO OTHERS AND DESCRIBES THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR THEIR SERVANTHOOD.

- A. Church members who are servants are not above their Lord. A servant is not to make his own decisions based on what he thinks, or what his life dictates to him. A good servant always makes his decisions based on what his Master wants.

MAT 10:24-25 “***The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord***. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.”

- B. Church members who are servants desire to be last. If a Christian seeks to be first with earthly motives, he will exalt himself above others instead of lowering himself to last place. God places the humble in leadership positions ***knowing they will submit to Him, and not try to do things their own way***.

MAR 9:33-37 “And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, **If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.** And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.”

- C. Church members who are servants want to minister to others. Good servants always look for ways they can help someone else. They look to minister, which is to attend or wait, on someone else.

MAR 10:42-45 “But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but **whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:** And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

VII. GOD RECOGNIZES CHURCH MEMBERS FOR THEIR SERVICE TO OTHERS AND DIRECTS THEM ACCORDING TO THEIR COMMITMENTS.

- A. God wants church members to be good servants that will serve Him to the end.

MAT 24:44-47 “Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? **Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.** Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.”

- B. God wants church members to be good servants that will serve Him with a committed heart. He asks that His children do not commit their trust to the world and the world’s money, but to trust in God’s riches and serve Him.

LUK 16:10-13 “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. *If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?* And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

- C. God wants church members to be good servants that will serve Him and commit to being where He is. In Ephesians chapter two the Bible makes it clear that churches are places where God is on the earth. If a Christian chooses to be a good servant of the Lord, he must serve where the Lord is.

JOH 12:25-26 “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be:* if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”

VIII. GOD RECOGNIZES CHURCH MEMBERS FOR THEIR SERVICE TO OTHERS, AND GIVES CHRISTIANS EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE WHO WERE SERVANTS. The Bible tells of many good servants as well as many bad servants. There are only four listed here that stand out above all others. If these four men were called servants, then Christians should feel honored when they are called servants.

- A. Abraham is a good example of what a person does who is a servant to God. He wanted to wash the Lord's feet and feed Him. God said that He would bless Isaac because of his father, who was His servant. Abraham referred to himself as a servant, and so did God.

GEN 18:3-5 “And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from *thy servant*: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.”

GEN 26:24 “And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for *my servant Abraham's sake*.”

- B. God stated that Moses was faithful in all his house. Moses called himself a servant, and so did God.

EXO 4:10-13 “And Moses said unto the Lord, O my LORD, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto *thy servant*: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.”

NUM 12:6-8 “And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. *My servant Moses* is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against *my servant Moses*?”

- C. Joshua worshiped God and followed God's instructions. Joshua called himself a servant, and so did God.

JOS 5:14 “And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto *his servant*?”

JOS 24:29 “And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, *the servant of the LORD*, died, being an hundred and ten years old.”

- D. God told Satan that Job was His servant. The whole book of Job is the story of how Satan tried to get Job to turn away from God. Job was so committed to serving the Lord he said that even if God slew him, he would still trust in the Lord. (Job 13:15)

JOB 1:8 “And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered *my servant Job*, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?”

JOB 2:3 “And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered *my servant Job*, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.”

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

DIVISION THREE

THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF A CHURCH

LESSON NINE

MEMBERS OF A CHURCH HAVE A PLACE TO BE APPROVED AS WORKERS OF GOD

II CORINTHIANS 8:16-24

2CO 8:16-24 “But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. And *we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches*; And not that only, but *who was also chosen of the churches* to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. And we have sent with them our brother, *whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things*, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the *messengers of the churches*, and the glory of Christ. Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.”

INTRODUCTION:

Approve: to have or express a favorable opinion of; to give formal or official sanction to; to prove or show to be true; to commend.

There are many today who say “God called me,” “God led me,” “God directed me,” or “God wants me” to do this ministry. How does anyone **know** if God calls or leads a person to a particular ministry? Knowing how a person is approved is the way to determine if God calls a

person or not. The important thing to ask is, “**Who did the approving and by what standard was the person qualified or certified?**”

In the Bible, the apostles and the churches approved the workers and leaders, not the individuals. When God called an individual, He notified their church that did the approving.

ACT 15:22 “Then pleased it the *apostles and elders with the whole church*, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas and Silas, chief men among the brethren:”

I. CHURCH MEMBERS DO NOT APPROVE THEMSELVES FOR MINISTRY. When an individual takes upon himself the right to approve his own ministry, he is not wise or correct. One of the purposes of churches is to determine who is approved for ministry. Individuals are first approved by their lives, which must be *seen to demonstrate Christ*.

A. Church members know to reject self-approved ministers. There are many deceivers, and even militants, that claim to be God's ministers or angels of light. Satan also does this. Inside a church, people can be watched over a period of time to see if someone is truly following Christ.

2COR 11:14 “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”

1TIM 3:10 And let these also first be *proved*; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

B. Church members know to reject those that commend themselves. Christians should know God does not approve those who approve themselves. The main issue that matters to God is not what a person says, but what a person *does* and who he *is*.

2COR 10:18 “For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.”

C. Church members have several examples in the Bible regarding approving ministers. Even the Jews knew what would happen to a man that approves himself. His work will come to nothing and those who follow him will perish with him.

ACT 5:35-39 “And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work *be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it*; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.”

II. CHURCH MEMBERS HAVE AUTHORITY TO APPROVE THE MINISTERS OF GOD. Watchman Nee said that every problem a person has is a problem with authority. God gave churches the responsibility to approve workers, but there are many who do not want to obey or submit to God's authority. There are several things a Christian must have in his life before he is to be approved.

A. Church members must study the Word of God to be approved as ministers of God. If a Christian does not study the Bible and does not have knowledge of God's Word, he or she should not be in authority. A person who does not study the Bible and tries to be in leadership over others will lead people away from God's truth.

2TIM 2:14-19 “Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to shew thyself approved *unto* God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will *increase unto more ungodliness*. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth *have erred*, saying that the resurrection is past already; and *overthrow the faith of some*. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

- B. Church members must serve Christ to be approved as ministers of God. (serve: to bestow the labor of body and mind to another; slave). A person must ***choose to be in service before*** being approved. If a Christian does not participate by serving, he or she is not qualified to be in authority.

ROM 14:17-19 “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he ***that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.*** Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

- C. Church members must demonstrate in their lives the things God said were to be present ***before they are to be approved as leaders.*** God gives a list of things that are to be present in a Christian's life.

2COR 6:1-10 “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: But ***in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God,*** in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”

Before a Christian is approved for leadership, the character traits God gives must be exhibited. The Christian must continue to serve Christ during all kinds of situations and endure:

- 1 in much patience, (does not quit when things do not go right)
- 2 in afflictions, (does not quit when there is physical problems)
- 3 in necessities,(does not quit when there is money or job problems)
- 4 in distresses, (does not quit in times of great strain or difficulties)
- 5 in stripes, (does not quit if wounded - may be soul or physical)
- 6 in imprisonments, (does not quit even if put in prison)
- 7 in tumults, (does not quit in times of disorder or confusion)
- 8 in labours, (does not quit when the work gets hard)
- 9 in watchings, (does not quit when attentiveness and alertness is needed)
- 10 in fastings; (does not quit when sacrificing carnal needs for ministry)

III. CHURCH MEMBERS SHOULD NOT BE APPROVED FOR AUTHORITY UNTIL THEY EXHIBIT STRONG ADHERENCE TO THE TRUTH. When Christians are confronted for false teachings, they will either depart from their church, or they will change and commit their lives to grow in God's Word.

A. Church members are able to recognize those who are not qualified because they do not follow God's doctrine. There are many who follow their own desires or beliefs and depart from sound doctrine. God rejects them and church members know to reject them also.

1COR 11:17-19 "Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For ***there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.***"

Below is a list of some people who rejected churches and started their own type of Christianity ***without approval from any church:***

- Charles Russell 1852-1916 (Jehovah Witness and Seventh-day Adventist). Rejected the Congregational Church because it taught eternal judgment and the reliability of the Bible.
- Joseph Smith 1805-1844 (Mormon). In 1819, at the age of fourteen, he was instructed by two angelic visitors not to join any religion because they were

all contaminated. Supposedly Smith received many revelations from angelic beings and began the work of organizing a new “Christian” church based on Smith's view of Christian theology, which he discovered during his translation of special golden plates. His life proved to be very rebellious and self-authoritative in all areas.

- Mary Baker Eddy 1821-1910 (Christian Science). She was raised a strict Congregationalist, but was plagued with emotional and physical illnesses. In 1866 she said she had an experience that healed her while she was meditating. She started her own religion based on meditation.
- Charles and Myrtle Fillmore 1854-1948 (Unity). They rejected their Methodist church by concluding, “I am a child of God, and therefore I do not inherit sickness.” They promoted the “teachings of the Bible are allegorical lessons (symbolism) from which spirituality is attained.” One of their main principles is, “We create our life experiences through our way of thinking.”

B. Church members are able to recognize those who are not qualified because they follow their own flesh, which can easily be seen. Following the flesh is following earthly things that perish with the world, such as material things, philosophies of men, body pleasures, success based on accomplishment standards, etc.

ROM 8:8 “So then they that are in the flesh *cannot please God.*”

C. Church members are able to understand that just because someone is part of a group does not make them approved. Of those who came out of Egypt, many did not follow the Rock, which was Christ. God was not pleased with many of them. Today, there are many who say they are Christians, but that does not mean God is pleased with them.

1COR 10:1-5 “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that *all* our fathers were under the cloud, and *all* passed through the sea; And were *all* baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did *all* eat the same spiritual meat; And did *all* drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. *But with many of them God was not well pleased:* for they were overthrown in the wilderness.”

D. Church members are able to recognize those who want to restrict the work of the Lord. There are many who do not want Christians to reach the lost. They spend their time persecuting God's workers instead of serving God.

1TH 2:14-16 “For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”

IV. CHURCH MEMBERS HAVE STANDARDS, WHICH QUALIFIES A PERSON TO BE APPROVED AS A LEADER. Church members are around others in their church and **know** the things they do and how they act. Church members know by **observing** a person's life whether or not that person should be recognized as one to represent Christ to others.

A. Church members know that for a person to be approved as a leader, one must **do** the things that glorify and praise God. A church can be identified by the qualifications it uses to approve a minister of God.

PHI 1:10-11 “That ye may *approve things that are excellent*; that ye may be *sincere* and *without offence* till the day of Christ. Being filled with the *fruits of righteousness*, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”

1. Excellent - distinguished for superior attainments.
2. Sincere - tested as genuine; being in reality what it appears to be.
3. Without offence - not having any acts of wickedness or omission of duty.
4. Fruits of righteousness - the products of having a life conformed to God's divine commands.

B. Church members know that for a person to be approved as a leader, one must **manifest** the truth. (manifest: exhibited, made apparent, obvious, or evident). To be approved, a Christian must avoid dishonesty and show forth truth to others.

2COR 4:2 “But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”

3JOHN: 12 “Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.”

- C. Church members know that for a person to be approved as a leader, one must show wisdom. (wisdom: the ability to express and intelligently apply the knowledge of God). To be approved, a Christian is to have the ability to show others the things of God.

PRO 12:8 “A man shall be commended according to his wisdom: but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.”

- D. Church members are not to approve someone by comparing a person with other people. When looking to approve someone for ministry, a person should be compared to what God says, and not compared to what others do or do not do. The world likes to use the saying, “I'm just as good as he is.”

2COR 10:12 “For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or *compare ourselves with some that commend themselves*: but they *measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.*”

- E. Church members are not to approve someone by just looking at their outward appearance. Before a person is to be approved, church members should *know what is in the heart*.

2COR 5:12 “For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.”

- V. CHURCH MEMBERS KNOW THAT JESUS DID NOT APPROVE HIMSELF, BUT HIS FATHER APPROVED HIM. When looking at someone for approval, the criteria should be whether or not God approves that person, or is God pleased with that person. God the Father showed approval of His Son Jesus in many ways.

- A. God the Father approved Jesus at his baptism. God told everyone present that Jesus was His beloved Son and that He was well pleased with Him. (pleased: to approve, to have satisfaction in)

MAT 3:16-17 “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

- B. God the Father stated that He would approve Jesus in His Word, the Old Testament. God had said that God would be pleased with His servant (approved). God had given standards by which His Son would be approved.

MAT 12:17-18 “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.”

ISA 42:1 “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.”

- C. God the Father stated on the Mount of Transfiguration that He was well pleased with His Son.

MAT 17:5-6 “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.”

2PET 1:16-18 “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”

- D. Jesus told His disciples that He always did the things that would please His Father.

JOH 8:28-29 “Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that *I do nothing of myself*; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for *I do always those things that please him.*”

- E. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, he told the people that Jesus was a man approved of God.

ACT 2:21-22 “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, *a man approved of God* among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:”

- F. God the Father was pleased with Jesus and put all fullness on Jesus. (fullness: complete; the state of a thing in which nothing is wanted; perfection). God the Father is pleased that in Jesus nothing is lacking.

COL 1:12-20 “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”

- VI. CHURCH MEMBERS KNOW THE WAY TO BE APPROVED, AS A WORKER BY THEIR CHURCH, IS TO **DO** THE THINGS THAT GOD APPROVES OR IS PLEASED WITH. Church members are to look for the life God said His servants were to live.

- A. Church members know it is God who places members in a church. A church is not built by carnal people reaching carnal people. A church is built by God adding those He wants to a church body.

1COR 12:18 “But now hath *God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*”

- B. Church members know that God's true leaders recognize God's way of approving workers. God gave churches the responsibility to approve workers. Some mystical calling or anointing does not approve them, but a church is to approve qualified workers.

1COR 16:3 “And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.”

- C. Church members know that to be approved as a leader they must walk worthy of the Lord. (worthy: appropriate or deserving). Christians are to walk in a way that pleases God, produces fruit, and increases in the knowledge of God.

COL 1:10 “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;”

- D. Church members know that to be approved as a leader they must please God, not men. Many times Christians live their lives to please others, such as parents, children, pastors, Christian leaders, or just someone they want to impress. True Christians live to please God.

1TH 2:4 “But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; *not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.*”

1TH 4:1 “Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and *to please God*, so ye would abound more and more.”

- E. Church members know they are not to entangle their lives in the affairs of this earthly life. Those who are approved as leaders are to be the soldiers God has chosen them to be.

2TIM 2:4 “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may *please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*”

F. Church members know that God gives to His children who keep His Word and are pleasing to Him. When God is not blessing a person, it shows evidence that he or she should not be approved as a leader.

1JOHN 3:22 “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and *do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*”

VII. CHURCH MEMBERS UNDERSTAND THAT ALL OF GOD'S PLEASURE AND APPROVAL IS ATTACHED TO FAITH. To please God, a person must have faith in God and in His promises. The only way a Christian can please God is to have faith.

HEB 11:5-6 “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, *that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him:* for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

VIII. CHURCH MEMBERS KNOW THAT THEY MUST PRAISE GOD IF THEY ARE GOING TO PLEASE HIM. (praise: a thank offering). A Christian must give because he recognizes what God has given to him and is thankful.

HEB 13:15-16 “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with *such sacrifices God is well pleased.*”

IX. CHURCH MEMBERS TRUST IN GOD'S PROMISE. God says when He is pleased with the ways of a man, even his enemies will be at peace with him. An offensive person is not qualified to be a leader.

PRO 16:7 “When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

DIVISION THREE

THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF A CHURCH

LESSON TEN

MEMBERS OF A CHURCH ARE BLESSED

BY HAVING AUTHORITY

I PETER 5:1-11

1PET 5:1-11 “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

INTRODUCTION:

In the above Scripture, the elders were instructed to take the oversight of those in their flock. The elders were to assume the watchful care of those in their church body. (flock: a body or company of people); (oversight: superintendence or watchful care). They were to take care of

them with a willing heart and mind, not be motivated just for money. Their actions should be as ensamples to the church members, and not act like a lord over them.

God places chosen ones in positions of authority to carry out His instructions to care for God's children. (authority: someone delegated to be in control). The authority should always be someone who has the ability to follow God's instructions. Authority places the elder in the responsibility to rule those under him. (rule: to lead or command with official authority).

1TIM 5:17 "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."

In I Peter 5, Peter is warning those in positions of authority (and all church members) to be sober and vigilant because Satan is seeking to devour them. (sober: able to be serious and temperate; in control; not under the influence of: alcohol, passion, power, anger, etc.); (vigilant: watchful, circumspect, attentive to avoid danger or to provide safety).

I. GOD PLACES CHURCH MEMBERS UNDER THOSE THAT HE PLACES IN AUTHORITY IN THEIR CHURCH. God instructs church members to follow those He places in authority. Those who are rebellious will always reject authority, but those who are close to Christ will understand and submit to authority. Authority is a great blessing from God.

A. Church members are to follow those in authority **if** those in authority follow Christ. God has never commanded a Christian to follow those who are false leaders. The best way to know whom God expects a Christian to follow is by watching to see if the person in authority is following Christ.

1COR 11:1 "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

B. Church members are to follow those in authority if they care for the church members as a father does his children. If the one in authority in a church fails by not acting like a father, he should be dealt with or rejected.

1COR 4:14-21 "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, **be ye followers of me**. For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in

every church. Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?"

II. GOD IDENTIFIES LEADERS HE PLACES IN AUTHORITY AND HE IDENTIFIES THOSE HE *DID NOT* PUT IN AUTHORITY. There are many who are not following Christ but who claim they are. Their actions show they are not godly and they do not follow the instructions God has given.

A. Church members are to follow those in authority and identify those who are not following Christ. False leaders should be identified so church members will know who they should and should not follow.

PHI 3:17 "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."

B. Church members are to follow those in authority and identify those they should be separated from. Those who do not follow Christ should be identified and removed from authority.

2TH 3:6-9, 14 "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. ... And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."

III. GOD HOLDS THOSE IN AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MEMBERS OF THEIR CHURCH. Church members are to follow those in authority because God has given those leaders the *responsibility* to rule over their church members. If God gives leaders authority to rule

and lead Christians, then God works with them and guides them to do their jobs. God then watches over those He places in leadership and holds them accountable for whether or not they follow His instructions. God guides them first and foremost with the Bible, His written Word. Then God guides the leader by directly communicating with them. If God cares enough about the lives of Christians to place leaders over them, then shouldn't Christians trust God enough to follow their leaders? If Christians would simply look and understand God's ways, then following their leaders would be much easier. How many Christian lives have been destroyed by following their *godly* leaders? How many saved people have destroyed or seriously hindered their lives by rejecting or turning away from their *godly* leaders?

- A. Church members are to follow those God has placed in authority over them because God has given them their authority to rule over their church members.

HEB 13:7, 17, 24 "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. ... Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for *they watch for your souls, as they that must give account*, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.... Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you."

God expects leaders to rule with joy and the Christians under their authority are to salute them. The act of saluting is when a person expresses desire for another person to have good health. Christians should express good wishes to those in leadership over them. Every time a Christian wishes harm or shows disrespect to a leader, he or she is disobeying God (which is unprofitable for the Christian). If Christians in general would spend as much time wishing good and praying for their leaders as they do complaining and hoping they will fall, many more leaders would have joy in doing their ministry, and everyone would benefit!

- B. Church members are to follow those in authority because God has given them the authority to edify (build) their members, not tear them down.

2CO 10:8 “For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:”

IV. GOD ENTRUSTS THOSE HE PLACES IN AUTHORITY TO CORRECT THE WRONG CONDUCT OR ACTIONS OF THEIR CHURCH MEMBERS. God gives those in authority the responsibility to deal with the wrong actions of their church members.

A. Church members are to follow those in authority and be thankful when those in authority admonish them. (admonish: call attention to, to caution or reprove gently). It never feels good to a Christian when they are admonished, but church members should be thankful that someone *cares enough about their life to correct them.*

1TH 5:11-13 “Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are *over you in the Lord, and admonish you*; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.”

B. Church members are to follow those in authority and be thankful when those in authority exhort and rebuke them. (exhort: to excite or give strength, spirit or courage). All rebuke delivered by someone in authority should have the purpose of *exhorting, not condemning.*

TITUS 2:15 “These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.”

V. GOD DEALS WITH A CHURCH AS A WHOLE, NOT JUST AS INDIVIDUALS. God dealt with the whole nation of Israel by removing His blessings from the nation because one sinned. A church is a body of Christ. Christians should understand that, just like a disease affects the whole body, *sin brought into the membership by one individual affects the whole church.*

JOS 7:1-13, 19-26 “But the *children of Israel* committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for *Achan*, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the

tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the *children of Israel*. And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai. And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few. So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water. And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to GOD we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name? And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.... And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what *thou hast done*; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed *I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done*: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two

hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then ***I coveted them, and took them***; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, ***Why hast thou troubled us?*** the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.”

VI. GOD WANTS CHRISTIANS TO UNDERSTAND THAT “A LITTLE LEAVEN” IN A CHURCH LEAVENS THE WHOLE CHURCH. (leaven: anything which makes a general change in the mass; it generally means something which corrupts or ruins that with which it is mixed). Most church members do not realize the effect their individual actions have on their church. They usually think only about themselves and do not consider the whole church. Many times children and teens do not think about how their actions affect others in their home. If a church member understands this principle, is a good way to measure the spiritual maturity of that church member. Those who do not know their actions affect the whole church are still children and should not be in authority.

A. Church members are to follow those in authority and realize that if they bring self- glorying (pride) into their church, they bring leaven into the whole church.

1COR 5:1-6 “It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are ***puffed up***, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord

Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. ***Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?***

- B. Church members are to follow those in authority and realize that if they do not obey the truth, they will bring leaven into their church.

GAL 5:6-10 “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.”

- VII. GOD PLACES CHURCH MEMBERS UNDER THOSE HE PLACES IN AUTHORITY TO PREVENT THE WORLD FROM JUDGING INDIVIDUAL CHURCH MEMBERS. When the actions of a church member are bad, it reflects on their whole church, which is seen as bad by the world.

1COR 14:23 “If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?”

- VIII. GOD PLACES CHURCH MEMBERS UNDER THOSE HE PLACES IN AUTHORITY TO PREVENT THE TONGUES OF INDIVIDUAL CHURCH MEMBERS FROM DEFILING THEIR WHOLE CHURCH. The tongue is the primary way that churches get defiled and sometimes destroyed. The tongues of Christians are dangerous because of the times they are uncontrolled. Those in authority are to have their tongues under control and help those in their church to control their tongues.

JAM 3:2-6 “For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the

tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.”

- IX. GOD PLACES CHURCH MEMBERS UNDER THOSE HE PLACES IN AUTHORITY TO PREVENT MEMBERS FROM DESTROYING THEIR OWN CHURCH BY BEING TALEBEARERS. Church members often pierce or wound the very heart of their church by telling tales, whether the tales are true or not. (talebearer: a person who meddles in the business of other people, in which they have no concern, by telling stories, usually with the pretense of doing service or helping). Those in authority are responsible to God to stop those who are telling tales and prevent them from hurting or destroying their church.

PRO 26:22-28 “The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and ***they go down into the innermost parts of the belly***. Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross. He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart. Whose hatred is covered by deceit, ***his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation***. Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him. A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.”

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

DIVISION THREE

THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF A CHURCH

LESSON ELEVEN

MEMBERS OF A CHURCH HAVE A PLACE

TO HEAR PREACHING

GALATIANS 1:1-2:2

GAL 1:1-2:2 “Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, *preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* As we said before, so say I now again, *if any man preach any other gospel* unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that *the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.* For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, *that I might preach him among the heathen;* immediately I conferred not with flesh

and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past ***now preacheth the faith*** which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me. Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and ***communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation***, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.”

INTRODUCTION:

Preach - to proclaim publicly.

ROM 10:8-15 “But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, ***which we preach***; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and ***how shall they hear without a preacher?*** And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*”

- I. GOD WANTS CHURCH MEMBERS TO HEAR PREACHING SO THEY WILL BE STIRRED TO REACH THE LOST FOR CHRIST. God wants Christians to be moved to action to do the things God commanded. God commanded that the gospel be taken to the world and preaching is the primary way Christians are stirred to action.

- A. God wants church members to hear preaching that will give them the courage they need to go to the places where Christ has not been preached.

ROM 15:19-20 “Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:”

- B. God wants church members to hear preaching that will build their trust in Christ so they will have the courage to present the gospel to others.

1TH 2:4 “But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.”

- C. God wants church members to hear preaching that will motivate them to go to the world with the gospel. (motivate: incite to action; move to make choices or activate the will). Christians need preaching to encourage, to challenge, to influence, and to inspire them to assume actions of serving God. The greatest service to God is to take the gospel to the world.

MAR 16:15,20 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. ... And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”

- D. God wants church members to hear preaching that will show them the power that is in the name of Jesus. God's power is distributed to His children on the earth when they function in the name of Jesus.

LUK 24:46-48 “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.”

II. GOD WANTS CHURCH MEMBERS TO HEAR PREACHING SO THEIR LIVES WILL BE BUILT.

(build: to increase and strengthen; to cement and knit together; to settle or establish and preserve). God wants Christians to be strong in the Lord, and preaching is the main way God establishes lives.

- A. God wants church members to hear preaching that will establish their lives by the power of God. When the power of God is present it is evidenced by the lives of Christians being established. Remember that God is not the author of confusion.

ROM 16:25-26 “Now to him that is of *power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ*, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:”

- B. God wants church members to hear preaching that will equip them to present Christ to others. (equip: to furnish with whatever is necessary for an event). Preaching provides the necessary things Christians need to accomplish the works set before them. Things such as wisdom, knowledge, commission, strength, assurance, and, of course, challenge to finish the task.

COL 1:28 “Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:”

- C. God wants church members to hear preaching that will reprove, rebuke, and exhort them to do the things of God. It is essential that Christians hear preaching that will show them what they are doing wrong and motivate them to do what is right.

2TIM 4:1-2 “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

- D. God wants church members to hear preaching to build their faith by the Word of God. Hearing the Word of God preached strengthens the faith of Christians, causing them to know they can trust in the things God promised and do the things God instructed them to do.

ROM 10:17 “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

III. GOD WANTS CHURCH MEMBERS TO HEAR PREACHING SO THEIR CHRISTIAN LIVES WILL GROW. Church leaders have the responsibility to grow the lives of their followers, and preaching is the way God established to feed them.

A. God wants church members to hear preaching that produces the wisdom of God, which is a mystery to the world. God's wisdom is the opposite of the world's wisdom and preaching helps Christians to follow what God says.

1COR 2:4-14 “And my speech and my preaching was *not with enticing words of man's wisdom*, but in demonstration of the Spirit and *of power*: That your *faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*.

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But *we speak the wisdom of God* in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. *Which things also we speak*, not in the words *which man's wisdom teacheth*, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

B. God wants church members to hear preaching that expounds the power of God. The power of God is given to those who will use it to do the works of God. Preaching should point a Christian to the cross of Christ, which is their power, and will strengthen them to do the works which are of God.

1COR 1:17-29 “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none

effect. For *the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God*. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God*. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.”

C. God wants church members to hear preaching that edifies them. All preaching should be to build Christians so they will become adult Christians capable of caring for others.

1. Church members need preachers who speak to edify them.

2COR 12:19 “Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.”

2. Church members need preachers who speak the good things that edify Christians.

EPH 4:29 “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

- D. God wants church members to hear preaching that manifests the Word of God to them. (manifest: to reveal; to make public; to expose to the understanding). God wants His Word understood and shared with His children.

TITUS 1:2-3 “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; But hath in due times *manifested his word through preaching*, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;”

- IV. GOD WANTS CHURCH MEMBERS TO HEAR PREACHING FROM THE WORD OF GOD. God wants Christians to know the things in the Scripture so He established preaching to accomplish this. All godly preaching is based solely on the Word of God and follows what the Scripture says.

- A. God wants church members to hear preaching that proclaims and explains Jesus resurrected from the dead. Christians must live their lives **knowing** that Jesus is alive today and works in the lives of all believers to accomplish the will of His Father.

ACT 4:1-2 “...and the Sadducees came upon them Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.”

- B. God wants church members to hear preaching that Jesus is the Christ. Throughout the Old Testament, God promised that He would send the Messiah (Christ, the anointed one) and every person needs to know and to trust that Jesus is the Christ.

JOH 4:25-26 “The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.”

ACT 5:42 “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

- C. God wants church members to hear preaching that comes from the Word of God. The only way a Christian can know the preaching they hear is correct is that it comes from the scripture.

ACT 8:4 “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.”

- D. God wants church members to hear preaching that shows the things of the kingdom of God. Christians live in the kingdom of God and need to know how their citizenship in God's kingdom functions.

ACT 8:12 “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

- E. God wants church members to hear preaching that the peace of God is through Jesus Christ. Many people preach peace in the world, and Christians often seek after peace, without realizing that God's peace only comes by Jesus Christ.

ACT 10:36 “The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching *peace by Jesus Christ*: (he is Lord of all:)”

John 14:27 Peace *I* leave with you, *my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth*, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

- F. God wants church members to hear preaching that Jesus is the judge of the quick and dead. It is crucial that every Christian knows that Jesus is The One who will judge both the saved and the lost. Everyone will give account to Jesus, so it is essential that every Christian learn to live knowing he will stand before Jesus.

ACT 10:42 “And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.”

- G. God wants church members to hear preaching that through Jesus there is forgiveness of sins. There is only one way to receive forgiveness for sin and that is through Jesus Christ, not through a priest, not through a pastor, not through a church.

ACT 13:38 “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through *this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:*”

- H. God wants church members to hear that salvation came through the gospel. The word “gospel” means “good news” and the good news to all mankind is that Jesus died on the cross to pay for sin.

ACT 14:6-7 “They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: And there they preached the gospel.”

- I. God wants church members to hear that they should turn from their vanities and turn towards the living God. (vanities: empty, want of substance to satisfy desire). Christians can live their whole lives and never accomplish anything for Christ because they live for substances that are empty, and in the end of life, these are worthless.

ACT 14:15 “And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:”

- J. God wants church members to hear preaching that they need to take the gospel to the lost. The only way those who are lost will come to Christ is for a Christian to tell them the good news of salvation.

ACT 16:10 “And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.”

- V. **GOD WANTS CHURCH MEMBERS TO HEAR PREACHING FROM THOSE WHO WILL PREACH BOLDLY.** (boldly: courageous, without timidity or fear). When a leader preaches, he must be sure what he is preaching is right. When he knows what he is preaching is right, then he can boldly preach God's word.

ACT 9:27 “But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.”

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

DIVISION FOUR

HEALTHY CHURCHES PRODUCE

LESSON TWELVE

HEALTHY CHURCHES SEND OUT MISSIONARIES

ACTS 11:19-30

ACT 11:19-30 “Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and **they sent forth Barnabas**, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”

INTRODUCTION:

Send: to commission, authorize, or direct to go and work.

For someone to be sent, it requires someone or something with authority (church) to authorize or commission the person to go. God established churches and gave them the authority to send out chosen ones to take the gospel to the entire world.

JER 25:4 “And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear.”

The word “missionary” is not in the Bible. The word means “a person being sent out to do a specific work (a mission), usually designated to convert the unchurched. Today the word missionary is used to designate someone who has been sent out to do a work for God.

ROM 10:15 “And how shall they preach, *except they be sent*? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

The Great Commission commands that Christianity go into all the world. Jesus made it a point to send His disciples to the whole world. This mandate is still in effect today and all church members are to participate in their church to get this accomplished. Accomplishing the Great Commission will not be done by a small number doing a lot. It will be accomplished by a great number of Christians doing a little, which makes missions work.

MAT 28:18-20 “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Churches are responsible to God to get the gospel to the whole world. For this to happen, all church members need to get involved in giving, in praying, and in encouraging others to support missions.

- I. HEALTHY CHURCHES ARE TO PRACTICE WHAT JESUS DID (Jesus-The Missionary). God was the sending authority that sent Jesus to this earth to bring salvation to mankind. Jesus left heaven because He *chose to accept the mission* given to Him by His Father.

- A. Healthy churches must be patterned after God, who sent His Son to bring redemption to the world. (redeem: to rescue, to recover, to deliver from the bondage of sin). Churches must accept the responsibility of taking redemption to the lost world.

GAL 4:4-6 “But when the fulness of the time was come, ***God sent forth his Son***, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

- B. Healthy churches are to take God's redemption from iniquity to all men. Jesus gave his life to purify people from their iniquity. He gave his life by actually coming to the earth, not just giving up his life. (iniquity: deviation from right principles or practices).

TITUS 2:11-15 “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.”

- C. Healthy churches are to witness and certify that God sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. How will the lost world ever know Christ unless someone goes to them and gives their witness of who Jesus is? Churches must certify, verify, and authenticate Jesus is the Savior.

1JOHN 4:9-15 “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and

do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.”

- II. HEALTHY CHURCHES ARE TO SEND OUT WORKERS, LIKE THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM SENT PETER AND JOHN. The apostles, along with the church at Jerusalem, sent their two key men to take the work of God to Samaria. (Remember who the Samaritans were!)

ACT 8:14-15 “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:”

- III. HEALTHY CHURCHES ARE TO SEND OUT WORKERS, LIKE THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH SENT PAUL AND BARNABAS TO TAKE THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD. When God called Paul and Barnabas, He told the church at Antioch to send them out. God is the one who established sending authorities and did not bypass it Himself. God still does not bypass it today. It is essential that churches recognize the absolute authority and responsibility to send out workers to the world.

ACT 13:1-4 “Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the *Holy Ghost said*, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto *I have called them*. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, *they sent them away*. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.”

- IV. HEALTHY CHURCHES ARE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THOSE THEY SEND OUT SO THEY (THE MISSIONARIES) CAN CONTINUE THE WORK. When churches send support to missionaries, they are assuring that the work of God will continue. Every church member should get involved in giving to missions for Christ’s sake.

PHI 4:16-19 “For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus *the things which were sent*

from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

- V. HEALTHY CHURCHES ARE TO SEND MISSIONARIES AROUND THE WORLD TO EQUIP OTHER CHRISTIANS THAT WILL KEEP SOUND DOCTRINE. There are many doctrines (something designated as true by an instructor) but most are not sound (healthy, whole, safe, without corruption). The primary purpose of missionaries is for them to establish sound doctrine in the lives of Christians around the world.

2TIM 4:1-5 “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when *they will not endure sound doctrine*; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”

- VI. HEALTHY CHURCHES ARE TO SEND MISSIONARIES AROUND THE WORLD TO ESTABLISH FOUNDATIONS OF SOUND DOCTRINE. It is not enough for missionaries to teach sound doctrine. They must also establish churches that will *continue* to propagate God's sound doctrine.

- A. Healthy churches send out missionaries to build more churches that will hold fast to God's faithful word. When churches have God's word, then God will have sound doctrine to deal with the members.

TITUS 1:7-12 “For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be *able by sound doctrine* both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they

ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.”

- B. Healthy churches send out missionaries to build more churches that will identify people who are contrary to sound doctrine. If people in the world are not taught God's doctrines, how will they identify right from wrong by God's standards? Those who go against sound doctrine are like whoremongers, homosexuals, kidnappers, liars, and persons who commit perjury. They work to destroy the soundness of Christianity and need to be identified as the enemies of the cross.

1TIM 1:10 “For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is *contrary to sound doctrine*;”

- C. Healthy churches send out missionaries to build more churches that keep Christians from producing or following the doctrines of men. It is not enough for missionaries to lead people to Christ. They must continually teach them so they will follow the doctrines of Christ, and not turn to the doctrines of men.

COL 2:20-23 “Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body: not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.”

- D. Healthy churches send out missionaries to build more churches that keep Christians from getting caught in the doctrines of devils. Demons work to establish their teachings as truth. Even saved people can be deceived and fall away from God without knowing the absolutes of Christ found in the Bible.

1TIM 4:1-7 “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be

received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.”

VII. HEALTHY CHURCHES ARE TO SEND OUT MISSIONARIES TO BUILD MORE SUPPORTING STRUCTURES OF SOUND FAITH. Missionaries must build peoples' lives so there will be leaders around the world. Churches need to be established, but without leaders that are sound in the faith, the churches will eventually fail.

A. Healthy churches send out missionaries who are responsible to build people to where they are sound in the faith. Faith is believing or trusting in the promises of God. When Christians around the world do not trust in God's promises, then their Christianity is doomed to fail.

TITUS 1:13-2:2 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may *be sound in the faith*; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. But *speak thou the things which become sound doctrine*: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.”

B. Healthy churches send out missionaries to prevent the law from destroying sound faith. Law directs people to trust in the actions of man and not in the promises of God. Today more and more of Christianity is turning to what man can do through good deeds, or works, or man's wisdom, and is not trusting God. Missionaries must be sent out to teach Christians to believe God.

GAL 3:12 “And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.”

C. Healthy churches send out missionaries to bring Christians into the unity of the faith. When one Christian trusts in God, he must multiply that so many people

will trust in God. True unity in a church comes when all Christians in that church trust the same promises. Missionaries must teach the promises and guide Christians in trusting in them.

EPH 4:11-16 “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

- D. Healthy churches send out missionaries to establish Christians in the faith. A Christian is established when he or she believes the promises of God enough to walk in them. Most missionaries went out because they believed God's promises enough to go. And they must teach those they lead to Christ to trust in the same promises.

COL 2:7-8 “Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”

- E. Healthy churches send out missionaries to keep Christians from being destroyed by fables and genealogies. If those who are saved turn from the faith to the doctrines of men, they will not be built into servants of God.

1TIM 1:4 “Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.”

- F. Healthy churches send out missionaries knowing that some will depart from the faith and will follow seducing spirits. Churches are to encourage and strengthen

others when some depart. Everyone who is like Christ does not want any Christian to depart from the faith, but the reality is that some will. Every time someone departs from the faith, they hurt others, and sometimes even destroy others. Missionaries, like all Christians, need others to strengthen them when those who depart hurt them.

1TIM 4:1-6 “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.”

- G. Healthy churches send out missionaries, knowing that the love of money will cause some to err from the faith. Even some missionaries will turn from the faith by desiring money or desiring what money will buy. Church members need to pray for all their missionaries that they will keep strong in the faith. If those in their ministries turn to money, Christians should pray they would have the faith to continue to trust God and turn back to Him.

1TIM 6:10 “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

- VIII. HEALTHY CHURCHES ARE TO SEND OUT MISSIONARIES FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING CHRISTIANS WITH SOUND MINDS THAT WILL SUSTAIN THE WORK OF THE LORD. (sound minds: perfect intellect; not broken or defective; not enfeebled by age or accident not wild or wandering; not deranged). For Christianity to continue, it must have leaders who have sound minds.

- A. Healthy churches send out missionaries to sustain the sound minds that God gave to Christians. God puts in the minds of His children correct doctrines and the ability to understand and act upon God's instructions.

2TIM 1:7 “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of *a sound mind*.”

- B. Healthy churches send out missionaries who recognize that the devil and his demons try to destroy right minds. When Jesus cast the demons out of the naked man, afterwards he was found to have a sound mind. The first and primary way to know a person is controlled by a demon is to observe how their mind works. Missionaries are to work with their converts to help them establish right thinking.

LUK 8:27-28, 35 “And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. ... Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.”

- C. Churches send out missionaries who will teach and preach so that their members will all have the same mind. When church members have sound minds, they will agree with each other about the things of God. The only way a church can have unity is when all the members think with sound minds the same things.

1COR 1:10 “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

- D. Healthy churches send out missionaries who will work to keep their members from being beguiled by the devil. The devil works to corrupt the minds of Christians trying to make Christ and His salvation complicated, causing it to be rejected. (corrupt: debasement, taint or tendency to a worse state). The devil

works on Christians by questioning God's promises, trying to cloud their minds with doubt and fear.

2COR 11:3 “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve *through his subtilty*, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”

IX. HEALTHY CHURCHES SEND OUT MISSIONARIES SO THE WORD OF GOD WILL BE SPOKEN OPENLY. There is great power in the spoken word and a great need for ministers who will speak God's Word.

- A. Healthy churches send out missionaries who will teach Christians to hold tight to the sound words they hear. Faith and love are strengthened when the Word of God is spoken. Missionaries go out to preach God's Word so others will hear and be strengthened.

2TIM 1:13 “*Hold fast the form of sound words*, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

- B. Healthy churches send out missionaries to preach with healthy speech so their members can learn and grow. The Word of God is to be communicated simply in language that those who hear it will understand and apply it to their lives.

TITUS 2:8 “*Sound speech*, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.”

- C. Healthy churches send out missionaries who will not use vain words like mankind does in trying to deceive God's children. Vain words are words that have no proof or substance. There is a continual injection of worthless stories and instructions into Christianity. When Christian leaders look for authentication, the worthless materials crumble. Churches need leaders who do not deceive their members with worthless stories.

EPH 5:6 “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.”

- D. Healthy churches send out missionaries to produce elders that labor in the Word. Elders are worthy of double honor because of their work.

1TIM 5:17 “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.”

- E. Healthy churches send out missionaries to manifest God's Word through sound preaching. To preach is to make proclamation of what is correct. Churches need leaders who know what is right and not afraid to proclaim it.

TITUS 1:3 “But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;”

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

DIVISION FOUR

HEALTHY CHURCHES PRODUCE

LESSON THIRTEEN

HEALTHY CHURCHES PRODUCE OTHER CHURCHES TO REACH THE WORLD WITH THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

PHILIPPIANS 4:9-19

PHI 4:9-19 "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me. Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

INTRODUCTION:

The church at Philippi took care of Paul by sending money for his needs. Paul trusted that God would supply all their needs. Churches should work together with other churches to reach the world.

God's plan is that churches support men of God who will go and start other churches. God's way has always been the establishing of churches to evangelize the world. The churches of Macedonia worked together to raise money to send to Jerusalem. Several times the New Testament mentioned churches that worked together.

2COR 8:1-4 "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."

I. HEALTHY CHURCHES ARE GOD'S WAY TO REACH THE WORLD. Today churches work together less and less. Churches seem to adhere more to member stealing, jealous lambasting of other churches, pride-controlled bragging, and destructive contention in arguing about every minute variance. The end result is failure to reach the world for Jesus Christ. Churches need to work together to get the work of God done.

A. Healthy churches are to be shining lights in this dark world, like the church at Philippi. Churches need to concentrate on showing the world the glory of God. Every church should be more concerned about reaching the world by helping other churches instead of trying to destroy them.

PHI 2:15 "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;"

B. Healthy churches, like the church at Colossi, should work to bring forth fruit by preaching the gospel. Churches are started and built with the gospel, and churches should work to get the gospel around the world by starting more churches.

COL 1:1-6 "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossi: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven,

whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:"

- C. Healthy churches should reveal or manifest the mystery of God, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Churches are built with the gospel and hold it in reverence and praise. To the world it is a mystery, and the way God established for the world to see the mystery is by looking at churches. To reach the world, churches must start more churches.

COL 1:18-29 "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."

II. HEALTHY CHURCHES ARE TO SEND OUT MEN TO BUILD OTHER CHURCHES. Every church should work to prepare Christians to go out and start other churches. The only way God's plan to reach the world can succeed is by starting more and more churches.

A. Healthy churches need to send out preachers. The book of Romans asks the question "how shall they preach except they be sent?" Churches are established by God to send out preachers. They need to continually work to send preachers to spread the gospel and start other churches.

ROM 10:15 "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

B. Healthy churches need to send out men like the church at Jerusalem sent out Barnabas. The first church in the New Testament was the one at Jerusalem. When they heard about people being converted in other cities, they sent Barnabas to them.

ACT 11:19-22 "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch."

C. Healthy churches need to send out men like the church at Antioch sent out Barnabas and Paul. God Himself chose Paul to spread the gospel, **but God still had the church at Antioch to send him out.** The Bible says the Holy Ghost sent them forth but it was **through the church that He worked.** When God told the church at Antioch to send them, the church never hesitated to send them as God instructed.

ACT 13:1-4 "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and

Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus."

- D. Healthy churches need to send out men, just like the Church at Jerusalem sent others out with Paul and Barnabas. The church at Jerusalem did not hoard its workers, but willingly sent them out to do the work of God in other places.

ACT 15:22-28 "Then pleased it the apostles and elders with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas and Silas, chief men among the brethren: And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia. Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: It seemed good unto us, *being assembled with one accord*, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;"

- E. Healthy churches need to send out men so churches can be established in the faith. Faith trusts the promises of God and churches need to be established in trusting God's promises. The way Christians are established in the faith is to be taught by others who are already established. The only way young Christians can be influenced by established leaders is if they are sent to them.

ACT 16:4-5 "And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."

III. HEALTHY CHURCHES, LIKE THE ONES OF MACEDONIA, ARE TO GIVE TO HELP OTHERS.

Churches must be willing to provide support to those they send out. When a church provides support, it fellowships with the ministry they are supporting. The only way to accomplish God's plan is by churches supporting those who go out.

2COR 8:1-5 "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God."

IV. HEALTHY CHURCHES, LIKE THE ONE AT THESSALONICA, ARE TO BE ENSAMPLES TO OTHER CHURCHES BY TAKING THE WORD OF GOD TO THE WORLD. (ensample: a pattern or model to imitate). Like produces like, and churches produce churches like they are. Healthy churches produce other healthy churches.

1TH 1:1, 7-10 "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. ... So that *ye were ensamples* to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. *For from you sounded out the word of the Lord* not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

V. HEALTHY CHURCHES SHOULD WORK TOGETHER TO GET THE WORK OF GOD DONE. A church cannot accomplish the work of reaching the world alone. Every church has to do its part, and every church has a part. When churches work together, much more work will be accomplished for the Lord.

- A. Healthy churches should work together to get the sowing and reaping done. When one church sows and a different church reaps they both should be able to rejoice. The church that did the sowing should not be jealous or resentful that a different church did the reaping. ***If churches would work together, there would be a lot more people saved and disciplined.***

JOH 4:34-38 "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that ***both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.*** And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."

- B. Healthy churches working together produce results. It is God that gives a church its increase and He works in incredible ways to accomplish His plan. Worldly churches defeat or make God's plan incomplete.

COL 2:19 "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands ***having nourishment ministered,*** and knit together, ***increaseth with the increase of God.***"

- VI. HEALTHY CHURCHES SHOULD REJOICE TOGETHER WHEN A LOST SOUL IS FOUND. If churches would work together they could rejoice when another leads a lost soul to Christ. Churches should rejoice together when God does a work.

LUK 15:1-10 "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, ***Rejoice with me;*** for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that

repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, **Rejoice with me**; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

- VII. HEALTHY CHURCHES THAT AGREE TOGETHER WORK WITH GREAT POWER. There are many different kinds of churches with many different doctrines. This hinders the work of the Lord. But almost every church can find some other churches that agree with them so they can work together for the Lord's sake. In this passage it is dealing with church discipline, but God said that if they would agree He would be in the midst of them.

MAT 18:17-20 "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, **That if two of you shall agree** on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. **For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.**"

- VIII. HEALTHY CHURCHES HAVE POWER WHEN THEY PRAY WITH THE SAME OBJECTIVES.

Many times churches pray **against each other instead of with each other**. Once a church finds other churches of like faith, they can pray for each other. How many times does a church face problems and other churches condemn the church with the problem instead of praying for it?

- A. Healthy churches that work together pray with other churches for Jesus Christ's sake. The word "strive" means, "working hard to accomplish something." Paul asked those in the church to pray **with** him, not just **for** him.

ROM 15:30 "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye **strive together with me in your prayers** to God for me;"

- B. Healthy churches that pray for other churches and workers help their work. When churches pray for each other they are helping the other church. Before praying for the other church, the healthy church must have a right heart and willingly pray for the other church.

2COR 1:11 "Ye also *helping together by prayer for us*, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf."

- C. Healthy churches that pray for other churches increase the boldness with which they preach. When a preacher knows he is being prayed for, it gives him more courage because he knows he is not alone.

PHI 1:18-21 "What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation *through your prayer*, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that with all boldness*, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

- IX. HEALTHY CHURCHES SHOULD HELP OTHER CHURCHES TO GET THE WORK OF GOD DONE. Healthy churches can edify others with singing, teaching, revealing the word of God, explaining what the Word says, and, yes, even share in other languages. To do this the healthy church must have a motive of giving, not taking.

- A. Healthy churches should exhort one another. (exhort: to urge strongly; to give warnings or advice; to make urgent appeals). Every pastor will need encouragement at some time in his ministry. Many quit the ministry because they are all alone and no other pastor or church is there for them.

1TH 2:10-14 "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: As ye know how *we exhorted* and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, *That ye would walk worthy of God*, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because,

when *ye received the word of God* which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. For ye, brethren, *became followers of the churches of God* which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:"

- B. Healthy churches should exalt the name of the Lord together. If a large number of churches would work together to exalt the name of the Lord, more people would listen.

PSA 34:3 "O magnify the LORD with me, and *let us exalt his name together.*"

- C. Healthy churches should give each other sweet counsel. When another church needs advice, the healthy church should want to help, which is sweet.

PSA 55:14 "*We took sweet counsel together*, and walked unto the house of God in company."

- D. Healthy churches working together can honor those who are lacking. The Bible says in Romans chapter thirteen to give honor to whom honor is due. Many times a smaller church needs honor with no one to give it. Another church can provide that honor and provide what is lacking.

1TIM 5:17-18 "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward."

- X. HEALTHY CHURCHES ARE TO CARE FOR OTHER CHURCHES AND HELP THEM TO GROW. God gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors for the purpose of bringing unity in a church by correctly joining the church together. When a church is joined together, it is a healthy church and it will increase. When a church is healthy and growing, it should do what it can to help other churches grow. Ephesians makes it clear that God wants every Christian to grow to increase the body of Christ in which they are members.

EPH 4:11-16 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work

of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: ***Till we all come in the unity of the faith,*** and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom ***the whole body fitly joined together*** and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, ***maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.***"

- A. Healthy churches are to instruct and edify each other. Everything one church does to or for another church should be to help the other church grow. It is never glorifying to God to tear down another church that is also doing the work of God.

2COR 12:18-19 "I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps? Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying."

- B. Healthy churches are to comfort each other. The word comfort means to call near. The greatest comfort that can be given is to be close to another. In times of difficulty or problems, the greatest comfort a church can have is knowing another church is close to them.

1TH 5:11 "Wherefore ***comfort yourselves together,*** and edify one another, even as also ye do."

BUILDING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

DIVISION FOUR

HEALTHY CHURCHES PRODUCE

LESSON FOURTEEN

HEALTHY CHURCHES GO INTO THE WORLD

John 17:11-26

JOH 17:11-26 “And now I am no more in the world, but *these are in the world*, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and *the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world*, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.* And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and *that the world may know that thou hast sent me*, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known

thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

INTRODUCTION:

JOH 16:33 “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Jesus knew He was about to be crucified and return to Heaven, but His disciples had to remain on the earth to continue God's work. Just before He went to the garden to be betrayed, He prayed for His disciples, asking His Father to take care of them and bless them. He prayed:”

- A. “these are in the world,” 2000 years later God's disciples still live in the world.
- B. “the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” The world still hates God's disciples because they will not be part of the world.
- C. “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world,” Just as Jesus did not want His Father to take the apostles out of the world, He leaves His disciples on the earth because He loves the world. For God so loved the World, He left His children here.
- D. “As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.” Jesus commissioned His apostles to go into the world and today that commission is still in effect. Churches (the bodies of Christ) hold the responsibility to go into the world to finish what Jesus came to do.
- E. “that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” Churches have the responsibility to let the world know that God the Father sent Jesus into the world to save sinners. The world will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ if the churches **tell** them and **show** them Jesus Christ.
- F. “that the world may know that thou hast sent me,” Jesus gave Christians the Holy Ghost to speak to the saved so the world may know that God the Father sent Jesus to this earth. The way the world knows Jesus came to this world is by what they see when individuals divinely function as one body showing all of Jesus Christ to the world.

I. HEALTHY CHURCHES RECOGNIZE THAT GOD WANTS THE WORLD TO HEAR ABOUT CHRIST. Many of today's religious organizations are self-centered and only want to take care of their own things. They preach *isolation from* the world instead of *influence in* the world. Other religions always find some kind of excuse why they cannot tell the world about Jesus. Every church needs to get busy doing what Jesus left Christians here to do - tell the world about Jesus.

A. Healthy churches tell the world about Jesus by sowing the Word of God **everywhere** (way side, stony places, thorns, good ground). When the Word of God is sown, only God knows the condition of the heart of the one receiving it.

MAT 13:18-23 "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

B. Healthy churches tell the world about Jesus by sowing the Word of God, knowing the devil is going to mix his seed with God's good seed. If a church pulls back or quits because of the work of the devil, churches are doomed to fail. Churches must do the work of God no matter what the devil does.

MAT 13:24-30 "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto

them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.”

- C. Healthy churches tell the world about Jesus by sowing the Word of God realizing how much a little seed can produce when it is God's seed. When the Word of God is sown in a person's heart, it could grow into a great faith that enables that person to reach the world.

MAT 13:31-32 “Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

- D. Healthy churches tell the world about Jesus by sowing the Word of God, realizing that it could spread like leaven spreads in bread. When a little leaven (yeast) is placed in a lump of dough it causes fermentation to spread throughout the whole lump. When the Word of God is placed in a person, it will spread throughout the person's whole life.

MAT 13:33-35 “Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.”

- E. Healthy churches tell the world about Jesus by sowing the Word of God because churches are the bodies of Christ, (“Son of man”). Churches are to sow the good seed, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

MAT 13:36-37 “Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the

tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;”

- F. Healthy churches tell the world about Jesus by sowing the Word of God because they know there is a judgment coming when all those who are not saved are cast into the fire to suffer for eternity. Because churches realize that the lost go to hell, they work to rescue as many as possible.

MAT 13:38-43 “*The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom;* but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; *the harvest is the end of the world;* and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

- G. Healthy churches tell the world about Jesus by sowing the Word of God because they realize that the gospel (good news) of God's kingdom is the most precious treasure there is on this earth. When churches realize the value of the gospel of the kingdom of Heaven, they work to give it to everyone.

MAT 13:44-49 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,”

- II. HEALTHY CHURCHES ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL (GOOD NEWS) OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE WORLD. Jesus loves the world and still wants them to hear

about His death, burial, and resurrection. For the world to hear, Christians must proclaim (preach) to them the Word of God.

- A. Healthy churches are responsible to preach the gospel of Christ to the world. God's instruction to "go ye" still applies to churches. His instruction used a plural pronoun "ye" which was given to all His apostles jointly, not individually. God's instruction to "go ye" applies to all of Christianity from then until now.

MAT 28:18-20 "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

MAR 16:15 "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

- B. Healthy churches are responsible to preach the gospel of Christ just like the early churches, realizing that unless the lost hear the gospel they cannot be saved. Preachers are necessary for God's work to be accomplished.

ROM 10:13-18 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, *their sound went into all the earth*, and their words unto the ends of the world."

- C. Healthy churches are responsible to preach the gospel because it is God's way of taking the gospel to the world. The world works to eliminate Jesus and His gospel through its wisdom. God uses preaching to save the lost, which the world sees as foolishness.

1COR 1:19-21 "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise?"

where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ***For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.***”

III. HEALTHY CHURCHES, WHICH ARE THE BODIES OF JESUS CHRIST, MANIFEST JESUS IN THE WORLD TODAY TO CONTINUE THE WORK OF GOD.

- A. Healthy churches are not (or should not be) blinded by the god of this world. The god of this world uses the wisdom of man to blind the eyes of the lost. When churches realize the lost are blind, then they understand the concept of leading someone to Christ. When the world tries to help the lost understand God, it becomes the “blind leading the blind”.

2COR 4:4 “In whom ***the god of this world hath blinded the minds*** of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

1COR 1:20-21, 27-28 “Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. ... But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:”

- B. Healthy churches are God's earthly proof that Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world. Sin and sinners offend God, and the only way a sinner can gain favor with God is through Jesus Christ. Sinners come to God by Christ, and members of a church are those Jesus Christ has saved and are given a relationship with God. Healthy churches are bodies of the “salvation of Christ” and work to make offenders favorable with God.

Those in the world ***cannot see God, but they can see churches, which represent Christ here on this earth.*** Churches are the representations of God's

propitiation to mankind (propitiation is the process by which one who offends is rendered favorable). Healthy churches recognize that Jesus is the only advocate between God and mankind (advocate: an intercessor who defends the oppressed). Churches (bodies of Christ) carry the message of Christ as the only atonement for sinners.

1JOHN 2:1-2 “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

- C. Healthy Christians and healthy churches are in the world representing Christ so His work will continue. Churches and Christians are to be *like Jesus* so the world will see all aspects of who God really is.

1JOHN 4:16-17 “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because *as he is, so are we in this world.*”

- IV. HEALTHY CHURCHES ARE GOD'S WAYS TO PROCLAIM AND SHOW RECONCILIATION TO THE LOST AND FALLEN WORLD. (Reconcile: to call back into union and friendship with the affections, which had been alienated). Churches have the ability to bring reconciliation to sinners who are alienated from God.

- A. Healthy churches represent Jesus on earth today. God gave churches the ministry of reconciliation and committed His word to the churches to administer reconciliation.

2COR 5:18-21 “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath *given to us the ministry of reconciliation*; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath *committed unto us the word of reconciliation*. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to

be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

- B. Healthy churches were given the ministry of reconciliation and are to carry out this important ministry. Jesus provided the reconciliation and He also gave churches the *ability to reconcile sinners to God*. Churches must get involved in bringing people to God who are separated from Him because of sin.

2COR 5:16-21 “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who *hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation*. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

- C. Healthy churches are *God's tools on earth* to reconcile the world to God. When Jesus died on the cross, His blood established a connector between God and sinful man. It eliminated the enmity of condemnation (law) and opened the door that separated sinners from God. God gave the responsibility to the churches of *getting this message to the whole world*

EPH 2:13-22 “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens

with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

- D. Healthy churches are responsible to God to teach, preach, and practice reconciliation to those whose wicked works have alienated them from God. Christians need to remember that at one time they were alienated from Christ, and even enemies of Christ. But they were made holy and unblameable by the blood of Jesus Christ. Christians should want every person on earth to have this reconciliation, and work to take it to them.

COL 1:18-22 “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him *to reconcile all things unto himself*; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:”

- E. Healthy churches are responsible to God to provide a place where those who seek God can find reconciliation to God. In Luke chapter eighteen, there is the story of the publican (tax collector) who went to the temple to pray and sought mercy from God (mercy: the same Greek word that is translated reconcile in some places). He was deeply humbled and wanted to get into favor with God. Today there are still people who are humbled and seek to get into favor with God. They wonder where they can go to find God’s reconciliation. God gave His churches the responsibility to provide a place where sinners can find reconciliation.

LUK 18:10-14 “Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that

I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

V. HEALTHY CHURCHES ARE GOD'S PLACES WHERE CHRIST CAN BRING RECONCILIATION TO THOSE WHO ARE SAVED BUT SEPARATED FROM GOD BY SIN. (reconcile: to call back into union and friendship with the affections, which had been alienated). God wants every one of His children to live their lives in favor and friendship with Him. But sometimes sin turns saved people away from God, and they need places where they can repent and return to Christ. Churches are to provide places where those, who have become alienated from the affections and friendship with God, can be restored.

A. Healthy churches are to work to restore brothers and sisters to Christ, who have been overtaken in faults. When Christians stray away from God and alienate their lives from God, churches have been given the ability to minister reconciliation to them. God gives churches the mind, the heart, and the spirit of Christ, enabling them to help those who have gone astray. Church members are instructed to consider their own lives and remain meek when helping others, realizing they, too, could have strayed away from God. (meek: gentleness, humility).

GAL 6:1 “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, *ye which are spiritual*, restore such an one in the *spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*”