

A Study of The New Testament Church

By Rod Himes

Matt 16:18; Eph 5:23-25

Rom 16:16; 1 Thess 1:1

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Acknowledgement: Many brethren have previously prepared material on this important subject, capturing their thoughts into a variety of study guides and periodicals. Their labor is recognized and appreciated (I Cor 16:16; Jn 4:38) and has been used in part to format our overall study. Some used in preparation of this material include:

1. First Principles of Christianity, The Bible Speaks Series, by Robert Harkrider
2. The Church of Christ, Truth In Life Series, by C.G.Caldwell & Larry Ray Hafley
3. The New Testament Church, by Roy E. Cogdill
4. True Worship, by Billy Moore
5. Identifying the New Testament Church, Quest for Truth Series, by Harold Fite
6. The Church, class notes by Steve Fontenot
7. The Church and Its Elders, by J.B.Myers
8. Ephesians, Colossians, & Philemon, The Bible Speaks Series, by Robert Harkrider

Remember, these are only aides in our study. **The Bible is our only true authority! John 17:17, 1 Thess 5:21**

Lesson 1 Intro - A World Divided

“World Christian Encyclopedia: Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions”:

- Approximately 20 Major World Religions
- Subdivided into 270 large religious groups
- Some 34,000 separate “Christian” groups, over half independent churches
- Note the new Reference, BCE-Before Common Era, CE – Common Era
- Cuba & North Korea are primarily atheist
- “Christianity” is losing ground to the world

Religious Affiliation as People Claim				
Religion	Date Founded	Sacred Text	Membership	% of world
Christianity - *	30 CE	Bible	2,015 million	33% and decreasing
Islam	622 CE	Qur'an & Hadith	1,215 million	20% and increasing
Agnostic, freethinkers, humanists, secularists	No date	None	925 million	15% and increasing
Hinduism	1500 BCE	Veda	786 million	13% and stable
Buddhism	523 BCE	Tripitaka	326 million	6% and stable
Atheist	No date	None	211 million	4%
Chinese Folk Religion	270 BCE	None	188 million	4%
New Asian Religion	Various	Various	106 million	2%
Tribal Religions	Pre-history	Oral Traditions	91 million	2%
Other	Various	Various	19 million	<1%
Judaism	No consensus	Torah (5 to 39 books), Talmud	18 million	<1%
Sikhism, Wicca, Spiritism, Shamanists, Confucianism, Baha'i Faith, Jainism, Shinto, Zoroastrianism	Pre-history to 1940 CE	Various	51 million	<1%

* - generic name.

A. OUR SUBJECT

1. The information above should be a strong reminder that today's world is divided religiously. What is God's view about religious confusion and division? I Cor 1:10-13; 14:33

2. Has the world always been so divided religiously? From our study of the Old Testament, we learn that God's people were often guilty of idolatry (one more religion to add to our list). Name some idols commonly referenced in the Old Testament.

3. The Jewish faith during the New Testament was subdivided into "sects"? Using a bible dictionary or similar resource, define the following.
 - a. Pharisees –
 - b. Sadducees –
 - c. Zealots –
 - d. Essenes –

4. What modern day denomination uses the diversity of religion as its reason for coming into existence in the 1800's?

5. You may have heard the following two terms used in religious discussions. Using a dictionary or similar reference, define
 - a. Atheist –
 - b. Agnostic –

6. The name "**Christian**" is applied very specifically in the New Testament (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet 4:16), but used generically by today's world to describe anyone who vaguely recognizes Jesus as the Son of God. What distinguishes a true "Christian" from those who generically wear His name? (Hint: Matt 7)

7. Why do our public schools require classes in government and the constitution? Shouldn't those studies be exclusive to law makers and judges?

8. Research indicates that approximately 3 million people worship with groups calling themselves a "Church of Christ". More will be said about the name that a church can

wear in following lessons. Does wearing the same “religious name” necessarily imply following a similar doctrine? Explain your answer.

9. What are some of the misconceptions about The New Testament Church?

10. To summarize. List at least 4 reasons for studying our subject - The New Testament Church.

- a. –
- b. –
- c. –
- d. –

B. OUR EFFORT

1. What are your intentions and expectations as we begin this study together? Are you...

- e. Looking for something new? Acts 17:21
- f. Wanting to scratch that itch! 2 Tim 4:3
- g. Expecting a Reminder! Phil 1:9-10 (Note: Found 78 times in New Testament – remind, remembrance)
- h. Relatively a new Christian and this will be the first time you’ve studied this subject. Diversity of knowledge and experience is to be expected in the church Heb 5:12-14

2. How will I get the most out of this class? Personalize your answer.

3. When I Hear - I Forget, When I See - I Remember, **When I Do - I Learn!**

Our 3 month study will focus on only one church, the church described in the New Testament. The Church our Lord built. The church He died for. The church that mankind desperately needs to find. May God bless us in our study of this important subject!

Lesson 2 The Church – Where It All Began

A. CHURCH

- Classical Greek – the regular legislative assembly of a people
- Hebrew (LXX) – “kahal”, the congregation united into one society and forming one...
- Used by Jesus and apostles - Gr. Ekklesia “that which is called out”, Matt 16:18; 18:17
 - mentioned approximately 120 times in the New Testament
 - Commonly used to denote The Church
- New Testament times, a “called out body of people”
- Two Biblical senses – Universal calling, and local calling (Lesson 5)
- “Church” is actually from a Middle English word which meant “household, family”
- Today, there are many common uses of the word – a building, religious body, body of believers, congregation, or a religious service.
- A collection of people with a common purpose. **Acts 19:32, 39**

B. UNIQUE COLLECTION OF PEOPLE

1. Give examples of where you are a part of a called out body or assembly, but not of a “church”.

2. Does The Church resemble other organizations or bodies? If so, specify which organizations and why.

3. What makes The Church’s identity unique, and not like other collective bodies of people? Heb 8:5; 1 Cor 3:8-9 Matt 15:7-9 Gal 1:6-10

4. How does God describe this group of people with its unique identity? Exodus 19:5; Duet 4:20; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9

C. A CHANGE IS COMING!

1. Why is it important to know when the church began? Does it really matter?

2. The Old Testament prophesied that a kingdom would be established. What do the following passages indicate as to a time or place? Isaiah 2:2-3; Micah 4:1-2 What does the New Testament describe as “these last days”? Acts 2:16-17; Heb 1:1-2

3. What timeframe can be determined from Dan 2:36-45?

4. From the following verses, what phrases indicated that the kingdom/church was coming soon, but was not yet there? Mark 1:15; 15:43; Matt 3:1-2; 10:7; Luke 10:9

5. The word “church” is used only twice in the 4 gospels. When and how is it used?

D. JESUS, A MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT

1. Who acted as mediator and spokesman for the Israelites? Exod 20

2. What changed and when? Heb 7:12; 18-22; 9:15-17; 10:1-10

3. When did God replace Moses as lawgiver and prophet? John 1:17; Heb 1:1-2; Matt 11:27; Acts 3:24

4. Are the Father and Jesus aligned? 17:1-8

5. What unique title is attributed to Christ in John 5:26-27?

6. Who was present at the transfiguration, and what is implied by God’s statement about Jesus? Mark 9:2-8

7. If the Old Testament has been done away, what value is there in studying it? Heb 11; 12:1-2; 1 Cor 10:1-13

8. What is the responsibility of the executor of a will? Be specific!

9. What boundaries did Jesus include in His commission of Matt 28:18-20?

10. How were the apostles guided? John 14:16-17, 26

E. PENTECOST

1. While Christ's crucifixion marks an end to the Mosaic Law, Col 2:14, Pentecost marks a beginning! What beginning took place at Jerusalem? Acts 2:1-4, 37; 11:15 Luke 24:47-49

2. Acts 2:47 – “And the Lord _____ to their number day by day those who were being _____.”

3. After Pentecost, the Church is **always** spoken of as “in existence” Acts 5:11; 8:1; 11:22; 13:1; 14:27 What terms or phrases are used to show that it is no longer “in the future”? How is the kingdom referred to following Pentecost? Col 1:13; Rev 1:9

F. WHAT'S IN A NAME?

1. What names are used to describe:
 - a. individuals (Acts 11:26; Phil 4:21; Acts 16:1; 20:1,7; Col 1:2) in the church?

 - b. general collective (1 Cor 1:2; Rom 16:16) called the Church?

2. What name should be important to us? Acts 4:11-12; Phil 2:9, 11

3. Should we mandate the name on the building? Why or why not? If so, what name should that be?

4. Note: Luther, Wesley and Campbell all condemned using “party” names but men desire to do so anyway? Why?

Lesson 3 Nature of the Church

Parable: A group of blind men were asked to describe an elephant, using only the sense of touch to gather information. One explained it was like a snake, another described it as a wall, and yet another as a tree.

- Does each blind man’s description “accurately” describe an elephant?
- Does each blind man’s description “completely” describe an elephant?

Like the elephant in the example above, the church can be described using a variety of relationships. Each emphasizes unique aspects of the church.

Household/Family	Protection, guidance, companionship, name
Kingdom	Citizenship and subjection
Body	Head and many members. Unity/diversity.
Temple	Worship
Vineyard	Place of work - planting/sowing, harvesting

A. HOUSEHOLD/FAMILY

1. Describe a typical family. Does God’s description of the church as a “family” provide the complete picture? Eph 2:19-22 Explain you answer.

2. As the Father of this household/family, what should you expect from God? Rom 8:32, 38-39; James 1:17; Matt 7:7-11; Phil 4:5-7

3. What other blessing does the Father provide? Heb 12:4-11 How does vs. 8 describe children without this blessing?

4. What does a parent often leave for their children after they have passed away? Gal 3:29; 1 Pet 1:4; Eph 1:11 Can a child lose this blessing?

5. What distinguishes those in this family from other families? Acts 4:11-12; Col 3:17 Contrast being born into a Jewish family with being born into God’s family. John 3

6. Describe our relationship to Christ in this family. Heb 2:11-12; 3:6; Matt 23:8; 25:40

B. KINGDOM

7. What were some of those during the time of Christ going to witness? Mk 9:1; Luke 9:27
8. What aspect of the church is emphasized in its being called a kingdom? Matt 16:18-19; 19:28 Note phrases in Heb 12:22-28, “coming to the church”, “receiving the kingdom”?
9. What kind of kingdom did the Jews wait for? Did the King or His Kingdom satisfy that search? Matt 27:37,42; 1 Pet 3:22
10. To what kind of kingdom did Jesus claim being king? Luke 13:1-3; John 18:36-38
11. Who else is credited with having kingdoms? Matt 12:24-29; Luke 4:5-8; Rev 1:5-9
12. If Jesus is the King, then what are we? What determines success in this kingdom? Matt 20:20-28

C. TEMPLE

13. What were some of the places where God called His people to worship in the Old Testament? Gen 8:20; Exod 25:8-9; 2 Chron 7:12-16
14. Describe the spiritual building/temple described in 1 Cor 3:9-11; Isaiah 28:16; Eph 2:20
15. How are Christians described in this “spiritual house”? 1 Pet 2:5-6 Does the builder place any qualifications on these materials (see vs. 7)?
16. Since these passages don’t refer to brick, mortar, and wood, then why do people place so much emphasis on the physical building? Matt 24:1 Were Jesus apostles wrong in pointing out the temple buildings?

D. VINEYARD

17. In the parables of Matt 20:1-16; 21:28-32, what is the vineyard?
18. Which descriptions of the church can be found in the parable of the landowner? Matt 21:33-43

Lesson 4 Local vs. Universal

The term “church” is used primarily in two ways in the New Testament:

Local sense – a group of Christians working together in a locality. Examples are Humble, Kleinwood, or New Caney. Phil 4:15; 1 Cor 1:2

Universal sense – all of those called out of the world by the gospel into the fellowship of Christ. All times/dispensations, all places. Heb 12:23; 1 Pet 2:5

A few contexts imply a variation of the two above, such as a group of local churches in a common area or **district** (Acts 9:31) or in an **assembly** (1Cor 11, 14) of a local church. The term **congregation** is often used today to refer to the local church.

	Universal Church	Local Church
Entrance	God adds Acts 2:41,47	Men receive Acts 9:26; 18:27
Removal	God removes apostate Rev. 3:16; Jn 15:1,6; Rom 11:22	Men remove 1 Cor 5:2,7,13; 3 Jn 9-10
Fellowship	Father, Son & Holy Spirit Acts 2:47;5:14, Matt 28:19; 1 Cor 1:9; Acts 8:38, 39	With men Phil 1:27; Acts 2:42; 9:26,28
Membership & Salvation	Membership equals salvation Acts 2:47; Eph 5:23	Membership doesn't equal salvation. Can be saved & NOT a member Acts 8:38,39; Rev 1:9; or a member but not saved 1 Cor 5
Scope	All the saved Acts 2:47	Limited to a time and place Phil 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 1 Cor 1:2
Beginning	Approx. AD 30 Matt 16:18; Acts 2:36, 41	Any time since Pentecost Acts 11:19, 26
Duration	Never be destroyed Phil 1:23; Rev 6:9-11	Can be destroyed Acts 8:1; Rev 2:5
Number	One Eph 4:4	Many Rom 16:16
Oversight	None earthly John 10:16; Eph 1:22, John 20:21-23; Acts 2:42	Earthly 1 Pet 5:2 Elders/overseers/shepherds Acts 20:17,28
Treasury	None	Through which to work 1 Cor 16:1-2; Phil 4:15-16

Refer to the table on the previous page for passages related to the following questions.

1. When a person is scripturally baptized, he thereby becomes a member of
 - a. the universal church
 - b. the local church where he was baptized
 - c. both
 - d. neither

2. Do you believe that only members of the church of Christ are going to heaven? Explain. Give scripture for your answer.

3. A sign outside the building reads:

Church of Christ
1234 Your St.
Yankeetown, USA 012345
Established 30 AD – Visitors welcome

How is the word “church” used here - Local or universal sense?

4. What work has God given the universal church to do?

5. God has provided a plan whereby Christians all over the earth may pool their resources in a common treasury to further the work of Christ. True False

6. Elders have oversight over the _____ church.

7. Is it proper to refer to other churches as “sister” churches? Explain

8. In the following passages is the church referred to in the local or universal sense? Explain your answer.
 - a. Acts 20:28 -
 - b. 1 Cor 12:28 -
 - c. Eph 1:22 -
 - d. 1 Tim 5:16 -

9. Match: Vertical fellowship (man with God) Local Church
 Horizontal fellowship (man with man) Universal Church

10. In what sense (universal or local) is it true that:

- a. There is only one church
- b. One must be a member of the church of Christ to be saved
- c. Being a member of the church will help one stay saved

11. Sometimes we find a person who years after they were first baptized realizes that their baptism was not scriptural.

- a. Were they members of the universal church all those years?
- b. Were they members of the local church where they worked all those years?

12. Sometimes a person is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, but due to ignorance or other reasons he joins the fellowship of a group of people who teach and practice error. If, at a later date, this person realizes his error and repents, does he need to be baptized again to join the fellowship of a local church of Christ? Why?

13. The terms “universal” or “local” church” cannot be found in the Bible. Even so,

- a. Do they describe Bible concepts?
- b. Can you think of better terms to describe these?
- c. How do we distinguish between one and the other?

14. Can we “join the church”? If yes, is it the universal or local church, and how do you join it?

15. If membership in a local church doesn’t equal salvation, why is local membership important?

In preparation for the next lesson, please read the Book of Ephesians...

Lesson 5 Ephesians - Christ and His Body

For background of the Church at Ephesus and Paul’s visits, read Acts 18:19 to 20:38

- Author - Paul, a prisoner in Rome 3:1; 4:1; 6:20
- Twin letter to Colossians, whose theme is the deity and preeminence of Christ
- The Book of Ephesians emphasizes Christ and His Body
- The Ephesian Church didn’t heed Paul’s warnings of Acts 20, and left its first love Rev 2:1-7
- Timothy, Aquilla, Priscilla, and Apollos were fellow workers with Paul at Ephesus

The terms “church” and “body” are used extensively throughout this book.
Which church – Universal or Local?

Church – 9 times	Body – 9 times
1:22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church ,	1:23 which is His body , the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
3:10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.	2:16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.
3:21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.	4:4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church , He Himself being the Savior of the body.	4:12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;
5:24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.	4:16 from whom the whole body , being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.
5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church , and gave Himself for her,	5:5 no immoral, or impure or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God
5:27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she would be holy and blameless.	5:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household ,
5:29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church .	5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body
5:32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church .	5:30 because we are members of His body

1. Distinguish Christ being head “**of**” the church and head “**to**” the church in Eph 1:22. Which emphasizes ownership? What does the other emphasize?

2. Can there be any confusion as to Christ’s body and His church being the same thing? Col 1:18, 24.

3. How do we access God’s eternal purpose? Eph 3:10-11; 21 Is the church an “afterthought” or “parenthesis/place holder” as premillennialists teach?

4. What did angels know the details of God’s eternal purpose? 1 Pet 1:10-12 What term is often used to describe God’s eternal plan? Eph 1:9; 3:3-4

5. From Matt 16:18 and Eph 4:4, how many churches did Christ promise to build, and how many were established?

6. So, how many bodies are there, and how many members? Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 12:12-20

7. Who is glorified when the head and body work together as designed? Which body parts are unimportant? 1 Cor 12:14-23 Does each part have a responsibility? Eph 4:16

11. What gives Christ the right to judge “those who deliberately and persistently live in sin cannot inherit the kingdom” 1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21

12. If the husband and wife both correctly fulfill respective roles as outlined in Eph 5, which is threatened by the other’s role? Is either the church or Christ threatened by the other? Explain.

13. Medically speaking, what do you call a body without a head?

Lesson 6 The Local Church's Government

Our focus in this lesson and following will be the local church. Refer back to lesson 4 for a distinction between universal and local church. What are the significant differences?

Organization of the local church – an independent, self governing unit. Acts 20:28 There is no New Testament pattern for an coordinated organization of local churches - no popes or cardinals, no archbishops, no church councils, synods, or conventions. 1 Cor 1:10-13

A. GENERAL

1. Define autonomous. How does it fit/relate to this lesson?

2. Why do men typically want to organize their faith (denomination) with a mix of both global and local standpoint? Do any biblical examples come to mind?

3. Note the local church's involvement in commissioning the following work.
 - a. Preaching missions Acts 13:1-3;14:25-28
 - b. Works of benevolence Acts 11:29-30

4. What are the primary components making up the organization of the local church
 - a. Acts 14:23; 1 Pet 5:1-4
 - b. Phil 1:1 ; 1 Tim 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-6
 - c. Acts 2:41-47; Rom 12:4; 16:1-2; 1 Cor 12:27 (note different terms)

5. Different individuals with different roles. Explain the difference of function/role from value/worth? 1 Cor 11:3; 12:15-19 What practical examples can we apply this today?

B. ELDERS

6. How is the term elder used in the Old Testament? Gen 50:7; Exod 3:16; 17:6; 2 Sam 17:4-15; Ezek 14:1

7. How is the term elder used in the following passages? Does it always refer to the local church? Mark 8:31; Matt 16:21; Acts 4:23

8. How many elders are in the universal church? How many in each local church? Acts 14:23; 15:4; 20:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14

9. Match the following. Note: All three ideas are presented in Acts 20:17 and 28

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| a. Elders | Shepherd – rules/feeding a flock |
| b. Bishop | Presbyter – older, experience, maturity |
| c. Pastor | Overseer – superintendent, watchman |

10. Who outlined the qualifications of elders as described in 1 Tim 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9? Distinguish the negative from positive qualifications. Should any of these qualifications be dismissed today? Can a man be “perfectly” qualified in any of these?

Positive -

Negative -

11. Do elders self appoint? Why or why not? Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23

12. Should men “desire” to be elders? 1 Tim 1:3 Does this imply “control freaks” or “power hungry” attitudes? 1 Pet 5:2

13. What duties are elders charged with?

- Acts 20:28-31
- 1 Tim 5:17; Rom 12:8 (note warning! 1 Pet 5:3)
- Heb 13:7, 17 (note our duties toward them)

14. What warning is given in 1 Tim 5:17-19 regarding local member’s action and attitude regarding the local eldership? Do deacons share in this responsibility?

15. Referring back to Acts 13-14, there was a time in which congregations didn’t have elders. Why? List some reasons churches don’t have elders today? Are any of these valid?

16. How should we be preparing as younger men/women to be elder’s/elder’s wives, deacons/deacon’s wives? Does it take planning, effort? What if I obey the gospel later in life?

C. DEACONS

17. Deacon is derived from the root word which means “to run or hasten”. Deacon, from a general sense, includes any servant of Christ. John 12:26; Eph 6:21; 1 Tim 4:6. From a special sense, it describes an official and established office related to service. Do you know of any deacons mentioned by name? Specify general or special sense of the term.
18. Assuming Acts 6:1-6 refer to deacons, what general work were these men selected to do, and why? Is there any distinction of duty from those appointing them? Should we imply that a deacon’s work is always of a temporal/physical nature?
19. Compare the elder’s qualifications from the previous question with those qualifications charged to deacons. Any differences? 1 Tim 3:8-13 Are deacons “elders in training”?

D. EVANGELISTS

20. Evangelists are listed as a gift to the church in Eph 4:11-16. For what purpose are evangelists and the other gifts provided (note vs.12-13) ?
21. Evangelist is defined as “one who announces good tidings” Who are some specific evangelists named in the New Testament? Acts 21:8; 1 Tim 4:5 Can you think of others?
22. To summarize, what is the general work of an evangelist?
- a. 2 Tim 4:2
 - b. 1 Tim 6:20-21
 - c. 2 Tim 2:15
23. An evangelist’s work can be impacted by at least the following. Can you think of others?
- a. Personal integrity 1 Tim 4:12; 5:22
 - b. Method of teaching 2 Tim 2:22-26
 - c. What is taught 1 Tim 4:16; 3:14-17
24. On the opposite page, draw one organization chart which includes both the universal church and a typical local congregation.

Lesson 7 Local Church – Unity, Purity & Division

As studied in previous lessons, membership in the local church is based on human judgment. Recognizing the need to keep the local church pure, unified, and undivided require decisions based on biblical wisdom. The local church must use judgment in deciding...

- When to add, when to remove
 - When and how to tolerate differences
 - When and how to discipline
1. “Different roads leading to the same place” is a popular religious theme today. Will everyone be saved? What determines salvation? Matt 7:13-14

 2. Once one is baptized for remission of sins, they typically join the local church. What are some common misunderstandings they bring with them?

 3. How do different maturity levels challenge the local church?

 4. Does God expect unity? John 17:20-21; Complete 1 Cor 1:10 “... that there be _____ divisions among you... _____ mind, _____ judgment. Note the questions asked in 1 Cor 1:13

 5. Denomination implies a “fraction or part”. Is there any aspect of Eph 4:3-6 implying anything other than unity, completeness, oneness? If each local church is “autonomous”, then what is it a fraction of?

 6. God hates division. Prov 6:19 What is the source of division, faction, sects?
 - a. 1 Cor 11:17-18 _____
 - b. 2 Pet 2:1-2 _____
 - c. James 3:13-14 _____

 7. Should the local church allow sin in its attempt to be unified and undivided? Can a group be unified, but misdirected? Explain.

 8. What criteria should be used in judging others? Luke 6:43, 44

9. God includes “outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions” in the same context of what men often classify as serious sins like “immorality, impurity, and sensuality”. Gal 5:19-20 Should men prioritize or classify sin? Rev 22:14 - 15
10. Uncontrolled tongues James 3:5-12 and selfishness Phil 2:3-5 are two root causes of division and impurity. Can you think of any others?
11. Formal discipline by a local church should not be the first step of the process. What do the following passages teach us about the processes to use?
- a. Phil 2:3 _____
 - b. Matt 18:15-18 _____
 - c. Eph 4:3 _____
 - d. James 5:19-20; Gal 6:1-2 _____
 - e. Jude 22 - 23 _____
 - f. 1 Cor 5:12-15; Rom 16:17 _____
 - g. 1 Tim 5:20 _____
 - h. Titus 3:10-11 _____
12. Why have many churches disciplined members for poor attendance, but not for other sins?
13. From Heb 12:4-11, what does a loving father do. Note vs. 8 “illegitimate”.
14. What attitude can be lost in the discipline process of the local church? 2 Thess 3:6, 14-15
15. Who was charged to “remove the wicked man” at Corinth? 1 Cor 1:2; 5:13 Elders typically take the lead regarding formal discipline. What should our response be?
16. Consider this a checklist to use regarding personal purity, which impacts the purity of the local church:
- a. 2 Cor 6:14-18; 7:1; Rom 12:1-2 _____
 - b. Rom 14:23 _____
 - c. Matt 18:6-7; 1 Cor 10:23-33; 8:7-13; 15:33 _____
 - d. 2 Tim 2:4 _____

Lesson 8 It's Work – Attending to Spiritual Needs

Our Mission/Purpose is to glorify God.

1 Pet 4:11; 1 Cor 10:31; Eph 3:21

Work of the local church:

Worship God in Spirit & Truth John 4:24

Equip and Edify the Saints Eph 4:12

Take the Gospel to the World Mark 15:15

Ministering to Saints Eph 4:12; Heb 6:10-12

In general, what is the purpose of a mission statement?

The primary work of the church is attending to man's spiritual needs via **evangelism** and **edification**. Define these terms below.

- To Evangelize Acts 21:8; Eph 4:11; 2 Tim 4:5 _____
- To Edify 1 Cor 14:26; 1 Thess 5:11; Acts 9:31; Rom 14:19; 15:2 _____

In addition to its spiritual work, the church has the supporting responsibility of attending to the physical needs of saints. This physical **ministry, or benevolence** is limited to the saints and restricted in application – this will be addressed in the following lesson.

1. Why was man made, and what is his purpose? What is the common view of man?
2. What is man's overwhelming need? Without evangelism or edification, is this need satisfied? Rom 3:9-10, 23 What hope is spoken of in Eph 2:12?
3. Define the following relationships that are associated with Jesus. How do these suggest more than simply an "intellectual understanding"?
 - Ambassador 2 Cor 5:19-20
 - Disciple Matt 28:19; John 8:31
4. Which local church is mentioned and what was the work being done.
 - Acts 13:1-3; 14:26-26 _____
 - 2 Cor 11:8-9 _____
 - Phil 1:3-5; 4:14-15 _____

5. Complete the following from Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the _____, for it is the _____ of God for _____ to everyone who believes.”

6. In every example of conversion, a message is first shared which is then followed by an obedient faith which includes baptism. What is that message called in the following passages. Were the messages different?

- a. Acts 11:14 _____
- b. 1 Cor 15:1-4 _____
- c. Acts 8:35 _____
- d. 1 Pet 1:23 _____

7. Reference lesson 3. What term associated with the church is used in the following parables. Matt 13:19; 20:1-16 What do these say about the kingdom and evangelism?

8. Complete the following:

- 2 Pet 3:18 “Grow in the grace and _____ of our Lord and Savior”
- Eph 4:15 “But speaking the truth in love, we are to _____ up in all aspects into Him, who is the Head, even _____”
- Eph 3:10 “so that the manifold _____ of God might now be made known _____ the church”

9. Explain the different applications of spiritual “milk”. 1 Pet 2:2; Heb 5:11-14 When is a full diet of milk appropriate, and when is the opposite true?

10. What do the following verses imply about the local church and how it encourages growth?

- Heb 10:24-25; Col 3:16 _____
- Phil 2:1-4, 19-21 _____
- 1 Thess 5:12-14 _____
- Heb 3:12-14 _____

11. Is all study profitable? 2 Tim 2:23

12. What treasure is spoken of in Col 2:2-3 and who gave it?

13. Some distinguish the work of elders from evangelists by saying that evangelists only focus on the “lost” and those “outside the church”. What do the following passages suggest about the duties of an evangelist? Note the audience of their efforts and subject of their work.

- a. 1 Tim 4:1-6 _____
- b. 2 Tim 2:2 _____
- c. 1 Tim 1:3 _____
- d. Titus 1:5 _____

14. Is edification or evangelism typically a public or private thing? Give examples from the scriptures of both.

- Jesus, teaching privately _____
- Jesus publicly teaching _____
- Apostles, house to house _____
- Disciples teaching privately _____

15. The church – Is it “Origin of” or “Support of “ Truth?

- Catholicism - the church is “**a** source of truth, **in addition to** the holy scriptures. Apostolic succession via today’s bishops, etc. reveals an evolving truth”.
- Generally accepted by most “Protestant” faiths. **Sola Scriptura**, the authority of scripture alone.
- 1 Tim 3:14-15 “I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, **the pillar and support** of the truth.”

- Does Eph 3:10 support the idea of the church as a source of truth? Hint - Distinguish “origin” from “vehicle”.

- Is the Lord’s church diminished in any way by NOT being the source of truth?

16. Name examples of fundamental Catholic doctrine which have changed in recent years? What about other denominations?

17. Is the concept of a “constantly progressing church doctrine” supported by scripture? Rev 22:18-19; Jude 3; 2 Pet 1:3

18. Does truth contradict truth? Is truth relative? Is it situational?

Lesson 9 It's Work – Attending to Physical Needs

1. Christians are commanded to give on the 1st day of the week. 1 Cor 16:1-2 This collection funds the local church's work – edification, evangelism, and benevolence. What are some of the practices used by denominations to fund work?
2. Does God want us to ignore the physical needs of life, and focus entirely on worship and his return? What example do we learn from the Thessalonians?
3. How does obedience to the gospel change our physical needs? Acts 2:44-45
4. Define stewardship. How does stewardship impact our giving?
5. If everything is God's anyway, why is He interested in our giving?
6. What specifics are mentioned in the following passages which refer to Paul's having a "financial" relationship with congregations? What did those finances ultimately provide?
 - a. 2 Cor 11:8 _____
 - b. Phil 1:3-5; 4:15-17 _____
 - c. 1 Cor 9:14 _____
7. Is financial support by the church limited to evangelists/preachers? Could a deacon or elder be supported in the same way? Justify your answer. 1 Tim 5:18; 1 Cor 9:9
8. Fill in the blanks. What is always common about those assisting and those assisted?
 - a. Acts 4:32 "congregation of them that _____"
 - b. Acts 11:29 "relief unto the _____ living in Judea"
 - c. Rom 12:13 "contributing to needs of the _____"
 - d. Rom 15:25-26 "among the _____ in Jerusalem...the poor among the _____" (vs. 27 ... shared in their spiritual things... minister to them also in material things)
 - e. 1 Cor 16:1 "collection for the _____"

- f. 1 Cor 16:15 “ministry to the _____”
- g. 1 Tim 5:16 “if any woman who is a _____ has widows”

9. The Corinthians responded favorably to the commands given in 1 Cor 16:1-2, and were commended by Paul in his second letter. What specifics do we learn about giving in these passages?

- a. 2 Cor 8:13-15 _____
- b. 2 Cor 9:7 _____
- c. 2 Cor 8:2, 6-7 _____

10. Patterns of alms/benevolence & wage provision found in the New Testament. What is common to these two examples? Who retained control of the funds? Was local autonomy lost? Did Barnabas/Saul become sponsors when they delivered relief in Acts 11:30?

- a. Local church → Individual Christians Give NT Example
- b. Local church(es) → Local church(es) Give NT Example

11. Patterns of alms/benevolence and wage provision suggested by man, but NOT FOUND in the New Testament.

- a. Local church → Individual (sponsor) → Individuals
- b. Local church → Local church (sponsor) → Individuals or Local churches
- c. Local church → Human agency (sponsor) → Individual or Local churches

12. Did the church in Acts 6:1-7 hand over its responsibility for physical needs to another organization? Explain your answer.

13. What is meant by the statement of the church being “all sufficient”? Eph 4:11-12

14. Explain a situation when a human organization should assist the church in its mission?

Lesson 10 Worship in the Local Church

Worship – “the act of paying reverence, adoration, or homage”. In the New Testament, at least 4 different Greek words are used:

- John 4:24 – to kiss the hand towards
- Matt 15:9 – to revere, stressing feeling of awe
- Phil 3:3 – to serve, to render religious service, homage
- Acts 17:23 – to act piously towards

A. GENERAL

1. Describe an event in which many are typically spectators. Is worship a spectator event?

2. Some challenges in our worship
 - a. Matt 15:7-9 _____
 - b. Heb 13:15 _____
 - c. Luke 14:16-24 _____

3. What acts of worship are mentioned in Acts 2:42. Which (if any) of these are no longer required of us, since apostles are no longer alive?

4. What should our attitude regarding worship be? Psalm 95:1-6; 112:1

5. Worship described as “in spirit” and “in truth” according to John 4:24 implies a balance. Rom 10:2 describes an imbalance- how?

B. ATTENDANCE

6. Faithful attendance is encouraged. What reasons are given Heb 10:23-25 for attending? Who benefits from my attending?

7. What are common excuses given for forsaking the assembly of saints?

8. Does God benefit from worship? How do we benefit from worship?
 - a. Prayer Acts 4:24, 31; 1 Tim 2:1, 8

- b. Lord's Supper 1 Cor 11:17-30
- c. Giving 2 Cor 8:1; 9:2
- d. Singing Acts 16:25; Col 3:16; Eph 5:19
- e. Bible Study 1 Cor 14:26

C. PRAYER

9. Identify from the following scriptures the occasion or reason for prayer.
- a. Acts 1:14, 24 _____
 - b. Acts 2:42 _____
 - c. Acts 6:4, 6 _____
 - d. Acts 12:5 _____
 - e. Acts 14:23 _____
 - f. Acts 16:16 _____
 - g. Acts 16:25 _____
 - h. Acts 20:36; 21:5 _____
 - i. 1 Tim 2:1-8 _____
 - j. James 5:16 _____

D. LORD'S SUPPER

10. Communion = In Common = Sharing. With whom do we share, and what is shared? 1 Cor 10:16-17
11. What do we proclaim while partaking of the Lord's Supper? 1 Cor 11:23-30
12. Why "unleavened bread" and "fruit of the vine"? Luke 22:1, 17-19 Exod 12:11-20 Does it really matter what elements are used to represent the body and blood of Jesus?
13. Caution – what adverb addresses the manner of participation, not the quality of the participant. 1 Cor 11:27
14. What are some common misconceptions associated with the Lord's supper
- a. Bread literally becomes the body
 - b. Cup is contents and not the container
 - c. Others?

E. BIBLE STUDY & COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS – studied in previous lessons

F. A TIME TO WORSHIP

15. Why worship only on the first day of the week? Our practice is to also assemble on Wednesday. Are these the same?
- Acts 2:42, 46 No specific times or days mentioned
 - Acts 20:7 Disciples' purpose for gathering together was "to break bread"
 - Approved examples should be initiated, Phil 4:9
 - Corinthian church commanded to contribute on the Lord's day, so this day was a regular day of assembly 1 Cor 16:1-2
 - What other day would you suggest we observe the supper on?
 - Which "First Day of the Week"?
16. The **first day of the week's** significance in the New Testament.
- Although the Sabbath remained important to the Jews, it's significance to Christians after the cross was limited to opportunities to preach
 - Sabbath no longer an issue Col 2:13-17
 - Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week Mark 16:9
 - Pentecost (Acts 2) always came on the first day of the week. Lev 23:15-16
 - The "Lord's Day" Rev 1:10 – if not the first day of the week, then what day?

G. MUSIC

17. Secular/church history - "Instrumental Music" in the worship assembly was introduced in 660 A.D. The only music included in New Testament worship was "vocal" music. What kind of music is specified in the following:
- Matt 26:30
 - Acts 16:25
 - Rom 15:9
 - 1 Cor 14:15
 - Eph 5:19
 - Col 3:16
 - Heb 2:12
 - Heb 13:15
 - James 5:13
18. How would you respond to these popular justifications for using instruments?
- It's an aid, not an addition, just like a song book.
 - Scripture doesn't forbid it - 2 John 9-11; 1 Cor 4:6
 - Old law included instruments in worship - 2 Chron 29:25
 - Instruments are mentioned as being in heaven - Rev 5:8; 14:2; 15:2 (hint – what other kinds of sounds does 14:2 indicate?)

Lesson 11 Privileges & Duties “To One Another”

Membership of the Lord’s local church includes **duties**:

- Joint participation with other saints in worship
- Fellowship in the local work of evangelism, edification, and benevolence
- Subjection to the local church’s leadership
- Ministering to the needs of others
- Preserving the purity of the church

1. All successful relationships, secular and spiritual, require some contribution of resources (time, energy, money) on the part of its membership. Can you think of any exceptions?

2. Complete the following table in describing the “one another” responsibility of each verse.

Fellowship – Saint to Saint	
Eph 6:18-19	Pray for one another
James 5:16	
Rom 12:15	
1 Thess 5:11	
Gal 6:2	
Rom 15:14	
1 Pet 5:14	
Rom 12:10; 1 Pet 4:9	
Eph 5:19; Col 3:16	
Gal 5:13; 1 Pet 4:10	
1 Thess 4:18	
Others ???	
What Not To Do – Saint to Saint	
Gal 5:15	
Gal 5:26	
1 Tim 5:1-2	
Others ???	

Lesson 12 The Individual vs. The Local Church Is Action by one the same as the other?

Some brethren have said...

“Any good work which the individual, as a Christian, is obligated to support financially, the church is equally obligated to support financially” Batsell Barrett Baxter, “Questions and Issues of the Day”, [1963] p.23

“The church is composed of Christians; what the church does, Christians do; what Christians do, the church does, generally speaking. We cannot separate the Christian’s work from the work of the church... Actually, we may say that whatever is the duty of a Christian is the duty of a congregation of Christians.” V.E. Howard, “Institutionalism, Orphan Homes, and Church Cooperation,” [1958] pp.6-7

“They make a difference between Christian duties and church duties, Christian responsibilities and church responsibilities, Christian work and church work, all of which is absurd on its face.” G.C.Brewer, [1948] The Harding College Lectures, p.113

“A local congregation is just simply a group of individuals banded together to serve the Lord, and the command, given to each individual, to which each is equally related, is a command to the church.” Ruel Lemmons, “Individual Action vs. Church Action”, [1968] The Arlington Meeting, p. 147

But others have said...

“The gospel teaches Christians how to properly behave themselves in every relation to life. It teaches how they should conduct themselves at home. Husbands and wives, and parents and children are taught their respective duties in the home, but the home is not the local church and the local church is not the home. They were established at different times and for different purposes, and the duties of one are not duties of the other....The gospel teaches Christians how to properly conduct their “affairs” as citizens in their relation to the civil power, but their duties in this area of life are not local church functions....Whether in civil affairs, home relations, business activities, or social and recreational functions, a Christians duties in these relations are not local church duties or fulfilled through local church action...To turn the church into a kind of social club and recreational gymnasium is a perversion of the divine pattern and for it there is no excuse...Local church duty and action has to do with the function of the local church, as Christ has specified in the scriptures. May we all think of these things.” Franklin T. Puckett, “Individual vs. Church Action”, [1968] The Arlington Meeting, pp. 157-158,160.

What does God say?

1. How do the following passages differentiate individual duty from the local church's duty?
- Matt 18:15-17. _____
 - 1 Tim 5:8, 16 _____
 - 1 Cor 11:20-22, 33-34 _____

2. Gal 6:10 and James 1:27 are sometimes used to justify church action. Is this a correct application of these two passages? Explain in detail.

4. Which of these activities can a Christian engage in? Which is the activity of the church?
- Raise money for the March of Dimes
 - Start a business to provide marriage counseling
 - Contribute to the University of Alabama's football program
 - Fund a political action group to stop abortion

Two Treasuries – Acts 5:4			
Individual		Local Church	
Method of Raising			
Honest labor	Eph 4:28	Voluntary offering	1 Cor 16:1-2 2 Cor 9:6-7
Oversight			
The individual	Acts 5:4	Local Elders	Titus 1:7; Acts 11:30
Use of Treasury			
Liberal Contribution	1 Cor 16:2	Preach the gospel	Phil 4:15-16 2 Cor 11:8
Pay taxes	Rom 13:7	Relieve needy saints	Acts 4:32-34; 11:29-30
Provide for family	1 Tim 5:8		
Maintain good works	1 Tim 6:18; Gal 6:10 Jas 1:27; Lk 10:30-36		

Lesson 13 Local Churches Have Challenges

Listed below are some of the challenges which some of the early churches faced. Were any churches more challenged than others? If so, why?

Did God warn the early church of problems to come? 2 Pet 2:1; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1 What are they?

1. **Jerusalem** - challenges

- a. Physical Needs Acts 2:32-47
- b. Violence and Threats Acts 4:1-7
- c. Sinful Members Acts 5:1-10
- d. Growth Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7
- e. Complaining members Acts 6:1-7
- f. Others

2. **Jerusalem** – list 3 or 4 virtues

- a. –
- b. –
- c. –
- d. –

3. **Antioch** - challenges

- a. Debate over doctrinal matters Acts 15
- b. Leadership absent for long periods Acts 11:20-26; 13:2;15:36-41
- c. Others?

4. **Antioch** – list 3 or 4 virtues

- a. –
- b. –
- c. –
- d. –

5. **Corinth** - challenges

- a. Division 1 Cor 3:1-3
- b. Strife over preachers 1 Cor 3:4-9; 1:13
- c. Tolerance regarding immorality 1 Cor 5:1-6
- d. Internal lawsuit 1 Cor 6:1-8
- e. Indifference toward conscience of others, Christian liberty 1 Cor 8:7-13; 10:23-33
- f. Disorder in worship 1 Cor 11:17-34
- g. Correct use of spiritual gifts 1 Cor 12-14
- h. Seeking precedence 1 Cor 12:18-31;14:12,26
- i. Lost identity/different from world 2 Cor 6:14-7:1
- j. Others?

6. **Corinth** – list 3 or 4 virtues
 - a. –
 - b. –
 - c. –
 - d. –

7. **Philippi** - challenges
 - a. Dis-harmony among brethren Phil 4:2
 - b. Others?

8. **Philippi** – list 3 or 4 virtues
 - a. –
 - b. –
 - c. –
 - d. –

9. Complete the following table, related to information about the 7 churches of Asia in Revelation 2 & 3.

Church of Asia	Virtues or Complimentary comments about the church	Rebukes & challenges to the church
Ephesus – Rev 2:1-7		
Smyrna – Rev 2:8-11		
Pergamum – Rev 2:12-17		
Thyatira – Rev 2:18-29		
Sardis – Rev 3:1-6		
Philadelphia – Rev 3:7-13		
Laodicea – Rev 3:14-22		

“A lazy do-nothing church may well be free of problems, but an active working church can expect certain problems. A church that succeeds in converting alcoholics, addicts, divorcees, that seeks Samaritan women of our day, a Simon the sorcerer, or a Mary Magdalene can anticipate some problems. But, that church which chooses the alternative, preaching to and converting only the morally good who fit well into their own social and economic circles, while avoiding problems, faces the greatest problem of all in their failure to obey the commandments of the Lord (Mark 16:15) and to follow His own personal example. A church that develops thinking people who objectively study every Bible question for themselves can expect some differences to arise in their earnest search for the truth. A hospitable church must be prepared for charges of neglect in their show of hospitality. True zeal for the Lord will beget problems but woe to that church which neglects the Lord’s work in order to avoid problems. The Lord’s anathema is upon that church.

It’s not the existence or non-existence of problems, then that determines the strength of a church, but how the church deals with its problems. Love for one another, mutual concern, long suffering, humility, love for truth, determination to do God’s will – these are the qualities that make for a strong church. They cannot stop problems from developing, but they can enable a church to bring its problems to God-approved solutions.”

Good Churches Have Problems, by Bill Hall