

THE KNOW SERIES

Who, What, When, Where, Why, How of the Christian Experience

LESSON # 30

CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN THE CHURCH



OBJECTIVE: The lesson emphasizes the importance of being part of a local church in the journey of spiritual growth and walking with the Lord. It highlights that the church, established by Christ, provides believers with instruction, worship, support, and opportunities to serve using their unique gifts and abilities. The church's primary purpose is to glorify Christ and be a light to the world, and becoming an active member is a crucial step toward this goal.

The lesson explains the concept of a healthy church and describes its characteristics based on the model of the first-century church. Regular gatherings, Bible study, caring for members, corporate prayer, worship, and sharing the Gospel are among the features of a vibrant church. The article warns against false teachings and cults that deviate from biblical principles.

The lesson concludes by emphasizing the importance of finding the right church where individuals can grow in their love for the Lord, serve Him, and contribute to the life of the church. It encourages believers to seek a church that preaches the Gospel faithfully and practices its beliefs in daily life, guiding readers to trust God's guidance in finding their place in the church.



THE KNOW SERIES

Who, What, When, Where, Why, How of the Christian Experience

(I) THE DOCTRINE (TEACHING) OF THE CHURCH

The church is God's idea. It is where we worship, grow together and accomplish His purposes on earth until he returns. The Bible encourages us to fellowship in the context of the church and Christianity that tries to exist without or outside of the church is both inferior and disobedient.

The church consists of those who are partakers in the blessings and benefits of Christ. The work translated church (Greek - ecclesia) in other places means an assembly or gathering. For our purposes, we will use this definition compounded with the concept of those being in the church as called out of the world by God. In essence, then, our understanding of the church means those "called out and assembled together." The church is always corporate, while Christians are individuals.

There are two common errors in understanding the church. The first error sees the church as being limited to a local concept, organization, denomination, or group. The second error sees the church as being only universal and invisible in nature. To limit our view of the church to either of these concepts will lead to ineffective witness and mission. The church is BOTH universal and local, yet it is important to see ourselves as part of both. The Roman Church was in gross error to think that both concepts could be brought together perfectly on earth. They set up a system of government which would identify and unify the church around the world. This eventually lead to church authority and power superseding that of Christ and the Bible. The other error is to simply see ourselves only as individuals separated from the Body at large.

Another common error is to let the church take priority over the kingdom of God. The church does not exist as an end in itself, but rather a means to an end. Our purpose is the furthering of the Kingdom of God, through the groups of bodies God has raised up to do this in a particular locality. When the kingdom takes precedence, the local body and believers suffer, when the church takes precedence, the Kingdom of God suffers. There is a fine balance somewhere in-between which we need to learn.

(II) DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH



Calvary Chapel Youth Leaders Edition 2022

THE KNOW SERIES

Who, What, When, Where, Why, How of the Christian Experience

- A. Ecclesia
1. Used 111 times in the New Testament
 2. Used for assembly or called out (Mt. 16:18; Acts 19:39; Rom. 8:30, 16:4; I Cor. 1:2; II Cor. 6:17)
- B. The Church Belongs To The Lord
1. He is the Head, He has dominion and authority.
 - a. Therefore, the church, universal or local, can have no other "head."
 2. The church is the Body of Christ.
 - a. Col. 1:18; I Cor. 12:27 - this refers to both universal and local bodies.
 - b. Stresses unity
 - c. We can function together with Christ.
(Eph. 1:22-23)
 - d. No life apart from the Head. (Col. 1:18; 2:19)
- C. Temple of the Holy Spirit of God.
1. I Cor. 3:9-17; 6:19; Eph. 2:20-22; I Pet. 2:5
- D. The Jerusalem that is above
1. Counterpart of the old Jerusalem, dwelling place of God, where the people are brought in communion with God, while on earth belongs in the heavenly sphere.
 2. Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 21:2,9,10



THE KNOW SERIES

Who, What, When, Where, Why, How of the Christian Experience

- E. Pillar and ground of truth
 - 1. The church is the guardian of truth, the citadel of truth.
 - 2. Defender of the truth
 - 3. I Tim. 3:15

- F. The church is the **Bride of Christ**.
 - 1. II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:7; 22:17; 21:2

- G. The church is a **flock**.
 - 1. Acts 10:28

(III) ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH

- A. Foretold in prophecy by Christ
 - 1. Matt. 16:16-18; 18:15-20

- B. Founded by the Apostles (historically speaking)
 - 1. Acts 1 - 2:47; Acts 2:46; 12:12

(IV) CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

- A. **Repentance** and Baptism
 - 1. Acts 2:38-41; Matt. 28:19; Rom. 10:9-10

- B. Faith in Jesus Christ



THE KNOW SERIES

Who, What, When, Where, Why, How of the Christian Experience

1. Matt. 16:16-18; Acts 2:38-39.
- C. Adherence to the Apostles teaching, i.e. the Bible
 1. Acts 2:42; Eph. 2:20
- D. Characteristics of the Early Church
 1. Believers, Acts 4:32
 2. Brethren, equality among believers
 - a. Matt. 23:8-10; Acts 11:29; Rom. 1:13
 3. Saints
 - a. Acts 9:13; I Cor. 1:2; Rev. 13:7
 4. Elect
 - a. Mk. 13:27; Rom. 8:33; Eph. 1:4

(V) THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

- A. Baptism
 1. Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38,41; 8:36-40; 10:47-48
- B. The Lord's Supper
 1. Acts 2:42,46; 20:7; I Cor. 11:20-34

(VI) THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

- A. To **worship God**
 1. Eph. 1:4-6
- B. To **build up the Body**



Calvary Chapel Youth Leaders Edition 2022

THE KNOW SERIES

Who, What, When, Where, Why, How of the Christian Experience

1. Eph. 4:11-15
2. Failure to be part leads to trouble.
 - a. Heb. 10:25-28; I Thes. 5:11; I Cor. 12, 14
- C. To evangelize the world and make disciples
 1. Mat. 28:19-20 - GO!
 2. Acts 5:42; 6:5-8; 13:1-7; Eph 3:8; Acts 15:7; Acts 1:8
- D. To be glorified in Christ in the future
 1. Eph. 3:20,21; Rev. 21:9-27



THE KNOW SERIES

Who, What, When, Where, Why, How of the Christian Experience

**READ THE ARTICLE ON “FINDING YOUR PLACE IN THE CHURCH”
BY DAVID McGEE**

*“An Important First Step in Walking With the Lord:
Your Place in the Church”*

An Important First Step in Walking with the Lord

Now that you have decided to follow Christ and live a life pleasing to Him, you are probably wondering, "What do I do? How do I go from here? Which path will bring spiritual growth?"

One of the essential building blocks of spiritual growth is to become a part of a local church. The church, meaning the entire body of Christians, was established by Christ to provide you with biblically sound instruction, allow you to express genuine worship with other believers, enable you to use your God-given gifts and abilities as He intended, and keep you accountable to spiritual leadership.

But the church is not designed to only benefit the believer. The ultimate goal of the church is to bring attention and glory to the Person who unifies it: Jesus Christ. When the church operates as God intended, it serves as a powerful witness of His love and provision to a watching world.

Your Place in the Church

The first-century church had the reputation of "turning the world upside-down" with Christ's message. It was a place for devoted fellowship and valuable instruction, and it serves today as our model. God wants the church, also called in Scripture "the body of Christ", to stand out and be His light in these ever-darkening days. Any Christian who wants to please God and make a positive impact for Christ must become part of a local church.



Calvary Chapel Youth Leaders Edition 2022

THE KNOW SERIES

Who, What, When, Where, Why, How of the Christian Experience

Christ designed the church to provide you with tremendous blessing and opportunity. Involvement in the local church is necessary for your spiritual growth, and it is something you will never outgrow. God has placed spiritually gifted people in the church to both instruct you and encourage you to lead a holy life. No Christian can endure or prosper long if he lives in isolation without the support of the church. Not only do you need the Church, but the Church needs you! God has given you, as a Christian, unique gifts and abilities that will be a blessing to others.

The Bible instructs us to, "...consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together..." (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Christians need to gather for corporate (united) worship. The benefits you receive from expressing your thanksgiving and praise with other believers, publicly reading and studying the Scriptures and praying in accord cannot be duplicated or replaced. This is one of the ways God has instructed us to worship Him in "spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24).

The church provides an ideal outlet for serving Christ. God has created you with unique spiritual gifts and talents that benefit the rest of the body of Christ. Scripture explains that the Holy Spirit displays God's power through each of us as a means of helping the entire church (1 Corinthians 12:7). No one is "left out" so to speak. If you fail to regularly fellowship in a church with other believers, you are neglecting the opportunity to use what God has given you.

Following Christ's example, the early believers shared food, clothing, and housing with each other. The Bible asks, if you see a fellow Christian who is in need and you say to him "Well, good-bye and God bless you, stay warm and eat hearty," without giving him any food or clothes, what good have you done? (James 2:16). The body of Christ should look out for its own.

Characteristics of a Healthy Church



Calvary Chapel Youth Leaders Edition 2022

THE KNOW SERIES

Who, What, When, Where, Why, How of the Christian Experience

The church is not really an organization so much as an organism. It thrives by keeping its members spiritually active and well fed. The Bible has plenty to say about the characteristics of a healthy, vibrant church, and you can measure its vitality by comparing its qualities to the characteristics of the first-century church (Acts 2:42,44-47).

A healthy church meets together regularly, places a high priority on Bible study and develops caring people who concern themselves with the well-being and spiritual development of each member. It recognizes the power of corporate prayer and worship and demonstrates Christ's love in meaningful ways. Its members desire to minister to others and seek to share God's good news with others.

In any Biblically-sound, God-centered church the following beliefs should be obvious:

The Bible is held as the inspired and only infallible authoritative word of God (2 Timothy 3:16)

God is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (John 14:26, Matthew 28:18, 19)

Salvation is the free gift of God to all who will repent of their sins and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is the only way to come into a relationship with God (John 14:6, Ephesians 2:8-9)

A healthy church is also a growing church. But growth alone should not necessarily be viewed as proof of God's blessing. The first disciples had a "gladness and a singleness of heart" about the early church. Your church home should be a place you look forward to attending not only on Sundays, but throughout the week.

Among other things a feeling of discomfort in a church can be a prompting from the Holy Spirit that the church is unscriptural. The Bible warns of false teachers and only by growing in your understanding of the Scriptures and through prayer will you be able to discern truth from error. Avoid any group that teaches doctrines, beliefs or rituals that



Calvary Chapel Youth Leaders Edition 2022

THE KNOW SERIES

Who, What, When, Where, Why, How of the Christian Experience

deviate from the Bible. Many false teachers speak only parts of the truth and their messages have been aptly described as the "skin of the truth stuffed with a lie." Most cults are identifiable because they refuse to:

Adhere solely to the sixty-six books of the Bible. Instead, they add their "special revelations."

Accept that our relationship to Jesus Christ has been provided by God through His grace and is received through faith alone. Instead they practice salvation by works.

Acknowledge Jesus Christ as the divine Son of God and give Him the full recognition He merits.

Commonly known cults are Jehovah's Witnesses, Latter-Day Saints or Mormons, Unification Church, Worldwide Church of God, Unitarians, Spiritists, and Scientologists.

Finding Your Place

It has been wisely said, "The church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints." Regular fellowship and participation in the church for a disciple cannot be overemphasized. As you come to church and find your place in it, you will then be in a position to give to others what God has given to us.

The church that is right for you will be a place where you can grow in your love for the Lord and serve Him by contributing to the life of the church. Remember we are all sinners doing our best to follow God's teaching. Rely on Him to show you the way.

Billy Graham offers this advice, "First, . . . I would select a church which preaches the Gospel faithfully. However, it is not enough to be sound theologically. I would choose a church which endeavors to practice what it preaches, translating its beliefs into everyday life. . . ."



Calvary Chapel Youth Leaders Edition 2022

THE KNOW SERIES

Who, What, When, Where, Why, How of the Christian Experience

Remember that the model for a God-honoring church is in the Scriptures. Study God's design and pray to be led to the place He has prepared for you. God bless you as you grow in your faithfulness.



Calvary Chapel Youth Leaders Edition 2022