

THE HOLY SPIRIT & THE CHURCH



**CORE
CLASS**

Part of the *Bible Doctrine Series*

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Session 1: The Person of the Holy Spirit

God is Triune — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory (Westminster Shorter Catechism).

2 Corinthians 13:14 -

Luke 4:21-23 -

1 Peter 1:2 -

What did it look like for God to exist in community in the eternal state?

A. In Community

- The three persons of the Trinity are co-eternal, co-equal, co-existent, and one in essence (yet distinct in person and office), dwelling in perfect harmonious unity being three in one.
- God lives in perfect community and fellowship. "The fact that God is three persons yet one God means that there was in loneliness or lack of personal fellowship on God's part before creation" (Grudem, 161).
- Personal, relational, giving, receiving, and sharing glory, abounding in Love. "In fact, the love and interpersonal fellowship and the sharing of glory, have always been and will always be far more perfect than any communion we as finite human beings will ever have with God" (Grudem, 161).
- God exists without need, lack, or loneliness (Acts 17:24-25)
- God dwells with an abundance of joy, love, and happiness.

B. In Function

- Each person of the Trinity is co-existent, co-eternal, co-equal, co-infinite with the others
- Genesis 1:26 - Let us make man in our image, after our likeness
- The Trinity is inseparable in operation as all three work together in harmony and common purpose making their work ultimately indivisible. Yet, there seems to some emphasis and distinction.
- Different roles, relations, and responsibilities. Distinct by paternity, generation, and procession (Allison, 91).
- "God the Father is the person who ordains, establishes, judges and appoints; he is also the person to whom worship is chiefly directed. The Son Jesus Christ appears as the Redeemer, the sacrificial victim and the mediator; he is the guarantor of our salvation and the person whose likeness we are being molded. The Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier, the first fruits of the inheritance of the glory to come. He dwells in our hearts by faith, although not to the exclusion of Christ and is responsible both for giving us access to the Father and for producing the image of Christ in us" (Bray, 147).

The Spirit is God

- Matt. 3:16-17 - The Father, Son, and Spirit present in the Son's baptism
- Matt. 28:18-20 - All three are named in our baptism
- 1 Peter 1:2 - The Father elects, the Spirit sanctifies, and Christ cleanses them (Allison, 91).
- The Holy Spirit is sent (proceeds) from the Father and the Son (John 14:26; 15:26).

As far as we can understand, each person of the Trinity has had the same roles and relationships throughout eternity.

- The Father is eternally parental, the Son is eternally generated or begotten of the Father (though not created or dependent on Him for deity) and the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from both the Father and Son.

John 14:26 -

John 15:26 -

Procession -

"In terms of eternal relation, the Spirit eternally proceeds from both the Father and the Son. This eternal double procession does not mean that the Father and the Son created the Holy Spirit. Nor does it mean that the Father and the Son give him his deity, as the Spirit is God-of-Himself. Rather, the Father and the Son together grant him his person-of-the Spirit. In this way, he is distinct from them: The Third Person of the Triune God" (Allison, 180).

- The Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, the Articles of the English Church, the Westminster Confession all state and describe the procession of the Holy Spirit.

- "The word for 'proceedeth' (*ekporeuetai*) is in the present tense in the original, which has been accepted without much opposition as indicating the eternal and continuous relation of the Spirit to the First Person" (Walvoord, 14).
- Psalm 104:30 is similar - "You send forth your spirit"
- "Among the several conclusions which form a part of the doctrine of procession is the fact that the procession of the Holy Spirit is eternal" (Walvoord, 14).
- "As Christ became an obedient Son in doing the Father's will, so the Holy Spirit in procession became obedient to the Father and the Son" (Walvoord, 16).

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

God's presence was seen and experienced throughout the Old Testament. Highlighted at Mt. Sinai, the angel of the Lord appearances, and the filling of the Temple. The presence of the Lord in the Old Testament is often equated to the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 63:9-14 -

The Old Testament points to a future day with a powerful renewal of God's presence. Ezekiel 37:27 - "My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God and they will be my people."

"When we turn to Paul from these Old Testament antecedents, it is clear that he understands the Spirit's coming as fulfilling three related expectations: 1) the association of the Spirit with the new covenant: 2) the language of 'indwelling': and 3) the association of the Spirit with the imagery of the temple... the Spirit becomes the way God himself is now present on planet earth" (Ferguson, 15).

"A very definite relation of the Holy Spirit to creation is revealed in Scripture, however, with sufficient detail to include creation as one of the great undertakings of the Spirit of God" (Walvoord, 36).

Genesis 1:2 -

Psalm 33:6 -

Psalm 104:29-30 -

Job 26:13 -

Isaiah 40:13 -

"In the work of creation itself, then, the Holy Spirit is revealed to have a distinct character of operation. He brings order to creation; He is the Giver of life; and shapes creation to achieve its significant purpose of bringing all glory to God" (Walvoord, 42).

The Work and Gifts of the Spirit

A. In the coming and life of Christ

- Luke 1:15 - Filled John in the womb
- Luke 1:35 - Immaculate Conception
- Luke 1:41 - Fills Elizabeth
- Luke 2:25 - Is upon Simeon who recognizes the baby Messiah
- Luke 2:26 - Promised Simeon that he would see the Christ
- Luke 2:27 - Led Simeon into the Temple to see Jesus
- Luke 3:16 - Jesus will baptize with the Spirit
- Luke 3:22 - Descends upon Jesus during His baptism
- Luke 4:1 - Jesus is full of the Holy Spirit and is led by the Spirit into the wilderness.
- Luke 4:14 - After the Temptation Jesus return to Galilee to minister in the power of the Spirit
- Luke 4:18 - Jesus acknowledges to His hometown that He is the fulfillment of Isaiah and He is the one whom the Spirit is resting upon.
- Luke 5:17 - It is by the power of the Spirit that Jesus heals

"The Holy Spirit was Christ's inseparable companion... all the activity of Christ was unfolded in the presence of the Holy Spirit." (Ferguson, 37).

"From womb to tomb to throne, the Spirit was the constant companion of the Son" (Ferguson, 37).

"The Spirit is ideally suited to be the chief witness for Christ because he was the intimate companion of Jesus throughout his ministry" (Ferguson, 37).

B. In the Church

The Holy Spirit comes as the "Spirit of Christ in such a way as that to possess him is to possess Christ himself, just as to lack him is to lack Christ" (Ferguson, 37).

"The Spirit and Christ are virtually interchangeable terms, point in to their economic equivalence while recognizing their personal distinctions" (Ferguson, 37). As seen in Romans 8:9-10.

“You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.”

ROMANS 8:9-10

- Luke 12:12 - The Holy Spirit will intercede and help in times of persecution.
- John 16:7 - Jesus actually says it is better to have the Holy Spirit than Him in their midst.
- Acts 1:8 - The coming of the Holy Spirit is connected to Jesus' mission for the church.
- Acts 2:1-4 - The Holy Spirit comes upon the believers and they speak in other tongues. Tongues used to speak to the crowds from every country that they may speak to them in their native tongue.
- Acts 2:17 - Joel points to the coming of the Spirit in the last days, and indeed this is the day!
- Acts 2:33 - The Spirit has been given in such a way that He was seen and heard - similar to their witness of the risen Christ (Acts 2:32).
- Acts 3:38 - The Holy Spirit is now given to all who repent and believe.
- Acts 4:8 - The Lord is faithful to His promise (Luke 12:12) and Peter full of the Spirit speaks to the rulers and elders.
- Acts 1:16, 4:25 - The Holy Spirit is given credit for the inspiration of the OT.
- Acts 4:31 - In light of persecution, they express faith in Jesus and pray, the place is shaken, they are filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.
- Acts 5:3 - Ananias' sin of lying is said to be directed to the Holy Spirit.
- Acts 5:32 - The Holy Spirit is described as a witness along with the Apostles of the resurrection and ascension of Christ. To deny Christ is to deny the witness of the Spirit.
- Acts 6:3 - Those chosen to serve were to be filled with the Spirit.
- Acts 6:10 - Stephen speaks and is martyred while being filled with the Spirit. He speaks with boldness until his last breath.
- Acts 7:51 - The spiritual leaders were said to be actively resisting the Holy Spirit.
- Acts 20:17-35 - The Holy Spirit leads Paul's travels and testifies to immanent suffering. The Spirit does not lead him away from suffering, but leads him into suffering. He recognizes that it is the Holy Spirit who appoints overseers over the flock.

Session 2: The Work of the Holy Spirit in Salvation

God's Spirit & God's Word

“and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”

EPHESIANS 6:17

The Word is the offensive weapon of the Spirit. The Spirit is active in the sharing and receiving of the God's Word to the accomplishment of the Lord's desire and purpose.

“For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

HEBREWS 4:12

It is through the work of the Spirit that the words jump off the page and are applied to the heart and mind of the believer. The Word of God is always accompanied by the power of God because God the Spirit is present!

Notice the similarities in function between the Word and the Spirit in the list below:

The Spirit convicts (John 16:8),	The word convicts (2 Tim. 4:2, Acts 2:37)
The Spirit calls (Rev. 22:17),	The word calls (2 Thes. 2:14)
The Spirit produces faith (Gal. 5:22,25),	The word produces faith (Rom.10:17)
The Spirit gives life (John 6:63),	The word gives life (John 6:63, Ps. 119:50)
Born again of the Spirit (John 3:5),	Born again of the word (1 Pet. 1:23)
Washed by the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11),	Washed by the word (Eph. 5:26)
Sanctified by the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11),	Sanctified by the word (John 17:17)
Justified by the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11),	Saved from wrath by the word (James 1:21)
Made free by the Spirit (Rom. 8:2),	Made free by the word (John 8:32)
Strengthened by the Spirit (Eph. 3:16),	Strengthened by the word (Acts 20:32)

In Conversion and Sanctification

The Spirit convicts the world of sin (John 16:8). This is true for the non-believer and believer. The Holy Spirit effectively reveals both the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man.



The Holy Spirit plays some role in restraining sin in the world (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

Without intervention, man rejects the things of the Spirit.

“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and cannot understand them because they are spiritually appraised.”

1 CORINTHIANS 2:14

The efficacious work of the Word of God comes through the work of the Spirit and it is the hearing of this Spirit-filled Word that is necessary for salvation.

- Romans 1:16 - “The Gospel is the power of salvation for all who believe.”
- Romans 10:14 - “How shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard?”
- Romans 10:17 - “So belief comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

“The work of the Holy Spirit in revealing the gospel to the unsaved is particularly a ministry of enablement to the understand the way of salvation. As the Word is preached, the Holy Spirit attends with power to make it known to those who naturally are blind to the truth and unable to comprehend it” (Walvoord, 112).

John 3:3-8 - We must be born of the Spirit. And this only comes from the Spirit. It is those who are born of the Spirit that look on Christ and believe (John 3:15).

Titus 3:5 - “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of the regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.”

We are sealed by the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation (Ephesians 1:13, 4:30). Securing our salvation until the “day of redemption.” Every Christian has the Holy Spirit, now and until they see Jesus face to face.

What does this reality mean in our relationships with one another?

Why can we have confidence in our salvation?

Romans 8

Continuing Work of the Spirit in the Life of the Believer

- We walk according to the Spirit (4).
- Our mind should be set on the Spirit and the things of the Spirit (5).
- We are in the Spirit (9).
- We are given life by the Spirit (11).
- We live by and are guided by the Spirit = putting to death the deeds of the flesh (13).
- We are led by the Spirit (14).
- He helps us cry out to our Heavenly Father (15).
- The Spirit gives us confidence and security in Christ (16-17).

“Sanctification can be ours only by means of the resources of Christ, brought to us through the Holy Spirit as he takes what is Christ’s, reveals it to us, and thus conforms us more and more into his likeness, from one degree of glory to another, as we gaze on the glory of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18)” (Ferguson, 143-4).

He Helps Us Pray

Romans 8:26-27 -

Jude 20 -

The Holy Spirit Plays a Primary Role in Inspiration & Illumination

1 Corinthians 2:10-13 -

John 14:16-17; 26 - He is our Counselor.

John 14:26; 15:26 - He continues to illuminate God’s Word in the life of the believer.

John 16:13-14

- The Spirit will testify and He will do it through the disciples - no greater example can be seen than in their writings.
- He guides them and will also disclose truth to them.
- We believe the Holy Spirit played the primary role in the inspiration of Scripture and it is He who helps us understand and apply it.

Unity and Peace in the Spirit

Ephesians 4:1-4 - What do we learn about unity in this verse? Do we need to "create" unity?

Philippians 2:1-2 - What flows from "fellowship with the Spirit?"

2 Corinthians 13:14 - "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

Fruit of the Spirit

The fruit of the Spirit could become an entire core class on their own. For our purposes in this study, we will read over them and wait another day for a deeper discussion.

Galatians 5:22-23 - Should recognize that this is described as a singular fruit, not fruits.

Galatians 5:25 - "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." - What is Paul communicating here to the Galatians?

1 Thessalonians 1:6 - "in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit."

Romans 15:13 - "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Ephesians 5:18 - What is the expectation given in this verse?

Gifts of the Spirit

Lists - Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12-14

Purpose - Ephesians 4:7-16, 1 Peter 4:10-11



Gifts foster the growth of the church in Maturity and Mission.

- Ephesians 4:7-16 - Christ, to whom we are fitted and held together, grows His church (1 Corinthians 3:6).
- We are also called to use our gifts "to the proper working of each individual part" which is designed to cause growth within the body.

- There is always a combination of work done by us and the Spirit. It is a gift given by Him bestowed upon a believer. It is in the power of the Spirit that the person uses this gift (1 Peter 4:11).
- All gifts are useful and needed and distributed with the wisdom and intentionality of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:11). It is improper and foolish to exalt one gift over another (or one individual over another) (1 Corinthians 12:12-16).
- Gifts are to be used in acts of service. Gifts are to always be others-centered to the glory of God (1 Peter 4:10-11).

How do you know what spiritual gifts you may have? Several of these things will be true:

- Others grow in their love for Christ when you use it.
- There is a general consensus from others about your spiritual gifts.
- Some gifts will mature as we mature, making them more obvious as we age.
- You will possibly have a particular passion for this area of service.
- You may also sense God at work in and through you as you serve using your gifts.

How should our spiritual gifts become a source of humility for us?

How can we create an environment that encourages people to use their spiritual gifts?

Once you have determined your spiritual gifts:

- It does not mean that you do not have to work hard to use your gifts.
- It does not mean perfection.
- It does not mean that you will not have "off" days.
- It does not mean that you are the only one with this gift.

Continuationism vs. Cessationism

A. What about the charismatic gifts (tongues, prophecy, and interpretation of tongues)?

- There will be a day when spiritual gifts will cease - 1 Corinthians 13:8-13. The question is timing.

“Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away.”

1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-10

- The issue is often debated over “when perfection comes.”
- Certainly, they will cease at the return of Christ, but what about between now and then?
- Some argue “perfection comes” at the completion of the Scriptures (cessationism), others argue this refers to the return of Christ (continuationism).

B. Continuationism

- The church is still in need of maturation and has not completed her mission, therefore there is still a need for all spiritual gifts.
- “When the perfect comes” most naturally refers to the coming of Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 13:11-12 – “When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now, we see in a mirror dimly, but **then** face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.” When “then” happens, we will be “face to face.” This seems to be a better description of the return of Christ than it is of the completion of the Scriptures.
- The New Testament was written during the time of the apostles, but many who were not apostles were using the gifts of the Spirit.
- Today, on the edges of the Kingdom where the Gospel is being heard and received for the first time, it is not unusual to hear of extraordinary demonstrations and spiritual gifts (including dreams and visions).
- 1 Corinthians 1:7 – “so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ”. This verse connects having gifts while waiting for the return of Christ.
- The completion of Scripture feels like a forced and unnatural interpretation of this passage.

C. Cessationism

- This group would suggest that the more charismatic gifts ceased shortly at the end of the apostolic era.
- The gifts were given only for a time to authenticate the apostolic message.
- “Perfection,” from this point of view, is considered the closing of the canon of Scripture.

- Prophecy, tongues, and knowledge are all incomplete forms of revelation. When the Bible is fully given, it replaces the need for these gifts.
- If it does not mean at the close of the canon, it may mean soon thereafter. "Those who make this second objection argue that 'when the perfect comes' means one of several different things such as 'when the church is mature' or 'when Scripture is complete' or 'when the Gentiles are included in the church'" (Grudem, 1036).

D. Undecided

- Among evangelicals, many are undecided. They would certainly not fit into a Pentecostal or charismatic church, but would also not definitively say the more miraculous gifts have ceased.
- 1 Corinthians 13:9-10 – Perfection is directly compared to the imperfection of prophecy. It is possible that the "perfection" discussion is only about prophecy and not about all the charismatic gifts.
- It is also difficult to say that missionaries having experiences extreme works of the Spirit as well as all brothers and sisters in Christ who believe they have and are using these gifts are lying or are deceived.

Speaking in Tongues

- There are clear examples of the early church speaking in languages other than their own to spread the Gospel to onlookers in their native language (Acts 2).
- "Tongues" in 1 Corinthians 14 seem a little different. Even in this chapter, prophecy is more desirable because it is for the edification of the whole church (1 Corinthians 14:1, 4).
- "Tongues" here are described not as a language spoken to others, but a language spoken to God for the edification of the individual (1 Corinthians 14:2-4).
- It seems that this is an act of the Spirit where the individual's mind is not fully involved (1 Corinthians 14:14).
- Paul speaks of his fondness of tongues and his desire for all to speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:5), yet he desires prophecy more.
- If these tongues are spoken within the church, they are to be interpreted (1 Corinthians 14:5) for the sake of the edification of the church. Paul asserts that this is the only context for the public use of tongues (1 Corinthians 14:13).
- We are told not to prohibit speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:39).

So how do we describe what is happening in many charismatic churches?

- "In my judgment, it is not possible to determine with any certainty whether the contemporary charismatic phenomena are indeed gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Erickson, 880).
- "This does not mean that we are to sit in judgment on the spiritual experience or the

spiritual life of other professing Christians" (Erickson, 881).

- "What we must do, then, is to evaluate each case on its own merits" (Erickson, 881).

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Do Christians experience a second experience after salvation that increases their sanctification or bestows upon them a new set of spiritual gifts?

- 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 - We are one body, baptized, and all believers drink of the same Spirit.
- Ephesians 1:3 - "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ." How can we be lacking based upon this description of every believer?
- At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit comes at a time distinct from the moment of belief.
- This also occurred with a group of Jews in Acts 2, Samaritans in Acts 8, and to the Gentiles in Acts 10. Each time it was during the breaking of new ethnic ground for the Gospel.

Why would God work in this way?

Are we awaiting a second experience? A deeper filling of the Holy Spirit?

- We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), this is available for all Christians. We must be careful to think that only second tier Christians are able to live out a basic biblical command.
- It may be better understood that the Spirit wants us to give Him more of ourselves rather than we needing more of Him.
- The surest sign that we are walking in the Spirit is an increase in love, joy, and peace (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).
- "Baptism by the Spirit appears to be, if not equivalent to conversion and new birth, at least simultaneous with them" (Erickson, 880).

Session 3: The Church

The Church Universal

Broadly and universally, the church plays a particular role in the world.

*Jesus' church consists of believers who stand as the **pillar of truth** in the world with **diverse** members **unified** around Scripture's call to **purity** and **mission** with His power and presence.*

A. The Pillar of Truth

The church teaches and lives out the teaching of Jesus regardless of the values and teachings of the world.

“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.”

1 TIMOTHY 3:15

Jesus prays to the Father:

“Sanctify them in the truth; Your Word is truth.”

JOHN 17:17

At any point in history regardless of society, culture, leaders, or world events, the church proclaims, preaches and teaches the Word of God. As opinions, perspectives and values change with every generation, the church continues to stand firm in the face of winds of change.

What would happen if the church forgot it was the pillar of truth or stopped functioning as the pillar of truth?

As the pillar of truth, we must know how to engage culture by knowing when to adapt, when to challenge, and when to confront. Can you give an example of each?

B. Diversity

“And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.’”

REVELATION 5:9-10

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

GALATIANS 3:28

“For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him.”

ROMANS 10:12

“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing [spiritual gifts] to each one individually just as He wills.”

1 CORINTHIANS 12:11

The church is the most diverse movement/organization on the planet. There are (or will be) members from every ethnic group, from every economic group, and from every political group. Inevitably, as we meet brothers and sisters from different parts of the world, we will have different points of view on the world, politics, and on some perspectives on ethics. What happens if we judge people by their backgrounds and perspectives instead of by their faith and love for Jesus?

For a period of time, Southern Baptist missionaries would build small, white buildings wherever they did missionary work, mimicking many of the chapels found in the U.S. What do you think of this practice?

C. Unity

John 17 - Jesus teaches and prays that the church would be unified so that it represents, demonstrates, and communicates the love of Jesus to a watching world.

“The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.”

JOHN 17:22-23

Ephesians 4:2-3 – What role does the Spirit play in our unity?

“You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

REVELATION 5:10

“...you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood.”

1 PETER 2:5

Together, we are a spiritual house.

“For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free man we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-13

Revelation 19:7-9 – And one day we will together be the Bride of Christ, given to Him forever.

D. The Purity of the Church – Church Discipline

The church is made up of believers only. The Lord alone fully knows each and every person who has truly believed and is included in the church. The Lord's Supper is for those who have believed. Baptism is in response to those who have placed their faith in Christ. If someone consistently lives a life that denies their profession of faith, then church discipline is to be considered.

Galatians 6:1 – What is our first step when someone is struggling with sin?

What are the steps given in Matthew 18:15-20?

1 Timothy 5:19 – “Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.” Why would Paul make this expectation?

1 Corinthians 5:5 – “I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” Even in this incredibly sinful situation, what is Paul's hope for him in the end?

Corporately, church discipline keeps the church pure. For the individual, it seeks to give them multiple opportunities to repent of their sin and truly place their faith in Christ. What happens when the church does not take church discipline seriously?

What happens when the church performs discipline without the desire and hope for repentance?

Discipline is taking place all the time in an unofficial way throughout the church as believers help one another grow in holiness thought grace and truth over time in intentional relationships.

E. Mission

The Kingdom of God always advances and grows as more people hear and receive the Gospel and live under the rule and reign of Jesus.

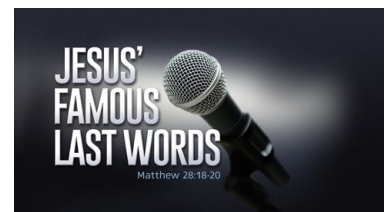
Jesus outlines the expectation (Matthew 28:18-20) and the strategy (Acts 1:8) for saturating the world with the Gospel.

To be a church or an individual not living on mission, is to be a disobedient Christian not living out the Jesus' command to make more disciples.

We are to be separate from the world (pure) and at the same time we are Salt, Light, Ambassadors, & the Aroma of Christ (on mission) in the world.

We are not to take on the perspective, passions, desires, and morals of the world, yet we are to be faithful to Jesus' commission by demonstrating and sharing the Gospel resulting in the growth of His kingdom.

God requires "feet and the Good News" for others to believe. It is a beautiful thing when those who love Jesus share the message of His love with those who need to hear (Romans 10:15). Entire future Core Classes will be written teaching and discussing this topic. You can also watch *Jesus Last Words* from December 30, 2018, located under the non-Series Sermons in 2018.



The Church Local

A. Elements and Expectations (Overview)

The universal church meets in smaller environments. What is necessary to consider a group of believers a local church?

What are some things that are not necessary to be considered a church (even if they are really helpful things)?

Biblically, we see small groups of believers in homes considered churches (Romans 16:5, 1 Corinthians 16:19).

The next session will explore the qualities and attributes necessary to consider a group of believers a biblical church. The universal and local church must go to the Bible to determine its leadership structure. We will start by studying what the Bible teaches about leadership.

B. Leadership: Elders & Deacons

The Bible outlines two official church offices: elders and deacons.

The basics of these offices will be covered in the core class. More in-depth discussions over different points of view will be considered and studied in the appendices in the back.

Appendix A: Women in Ministry (pg. 35)

Appendix B: Elders (pg. 41)

Appendix C: Deacons (pg. 46)

Appendix D: Shepherding Principles (pg. 51)

Questions that are considered in the appendices:

- Can a divorced person serve in a church office (discussed in Appx. B)?
- Can a woman serve in the role of elder (Appx. A) or deacon (Appx. C)?

1. Elders

Elders are the chosen leaders and teachers in the local church.

The term "elder" is synonymous with **pastor**, **overseer**, and even **bishop** in the English translations.

Plurality - In individual churches as well as in instructions given, the plural form is always used. It seems that in each local church there is a plurality of elders leading and teaching (Acts 20:17, 1 Peter 5:1, Titus 1:5).

Peter considered himself a fellow elder (1 Peter 5:1).

Elders are called to demonstrate **character, competency, and chemistry** as they perform their role within the church.

a. Character

Expectations – They are listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and additional discussions are in 1 Peter 5:1-4 (thorough discussion in Appx. A).

b. Competency

- An elder must know the Bible and Bible doctrine well enough to both teach it and refute those who stand against it (Titus 1:9).
- He must shepherd the flock (1 Peter 5:2).
- Elders voluntarily exercise oversight according to the will of God with eagerness (1 Peter 1:2).
- They must never lead for their own benefit or self-promotion (1 Peter 1:2-3).
- An elder must manage his own household well including his children (1 Timothy 3:4)
- Elders must show maturity in the faith, not being a new believer (1 Timothy 3:6).

c. Chemistry

Ministry priorities and methods may differ from church to church. It can be very difficult to have a unified direction and ministry plan if the leaders of the church do not agree on many of the whats and hows of the ministry (even if they agree on the whys).

Alignment over church government, church discipline, and the mission of the church will often dictate the ability of the elders to work in harmony and peace while they lead the church.

d. Role

Jesus functioned as our prophet (spoke for God to man), priest (mediated for man to God), and king (He rules and leads). This concept is discussed thoroughly in our Jesus the Messiah core class.

Elders lead in Jesus' likeness as much as possible.

- Elders are called to present and protect God's Word by teaching, upholding, and defending the Bible (similar to Jesus' prophetic role).
- Pastors pray for their people and present their requests, needs, and hurts to God on their behalf (similar to Jesus' priestly role).
- Pastors are also called to shepherd, guide, and lead God's people in the power of the Spirit to the glory of Christ (similar to Jesus' kingly role).

2. Deacons

Deacons are lead servants in the church. They free up the pastors to pray, study God's Word, and teach. They bear the brunt of daily duties, needs, and functions of the church. They have rightly been described as "shock absorbers" for the church.

a. Character

Deacons are to live up to the qualities listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 (discussed in detail in Appx. C).

In Acts 6, the apostles told the church to select from among themselves men to serve food to widows so that they could devote themselves to prayer and the Word of God. These men were to be "of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6:3).

- These men are not called deacons.
- The official role of deacon had not yet been described or delineated.
- Yet, they function in a very similar role to what will be called deacons.
- The expectations listed in Acts 6 are similar to expectations for all believers (Ephesians 5:18, 1 Timothy 3:7, and Proverbs), but these are to be individuals who are clearly and actively living out these ideals.

b. Competence

Deacons simply need to be competent to serve with the gifts that God has given them.

Deacons will often have a particular area of gifting and preference. There are many areas in which a deacon may serve:



- The physical needs of the church members (James 1:27).
- Any area of service necessary to free up the pastors to pray and preach.
- Serving the children and families of the church.
- The physical needs of the church building and facilities.
- Biblical references attempting to connect the role of deacon to "money tables" is awkward and weak. These references (Acts 6:1-2, 4:34-35) are often used to describe either serving a meal or the collecting of money in order to provide for the poor. This is a very different role than ruling over the collecting and spending of money within the church.
- Regardless, it may be of great value to the church to have fiscally gifted deacons serve by helping with collecting money and financial oversight. This service may indeed free up the elders for prayer and the Word.
- It can be particularly dangerous if we think this is the only role of the deacons. This leaves service vacancies all over the church and places individuals with non-financially related gifts into the wrong places of service.

c. Chemistry

- On a macro-level, there must be a biblical preeminence of service in the office of deacon within the church. Deacons do not biblically hold a position of power, sway, voting, or shepherding.
- Without this biblical perspective, a church can function like a government with multiple branches of power. It is not the U.S. Constitution that dictates church governance, but the Word of God.
- Checks and balances are provided by the expectation of a plurality of elders and a congregational element to decision making.
- “Even more troublesome is the fact that deacons are often placed into a competitive role with the shepherds of the local church. This practice is a proven formula for prolonged church warfare” (Strauch, 9).
- “In their zeal for deacon renewal, many churches have gone too far, beyond the bounds of Scripture. They have placed too much authority and diverse responsibilities into the hands of deacons” (Strauch, 10).
- On an individual level, the same issues apply to the deacons as listed earlier with elder chemistry.

d. Role

- Jesus was the greatest of all servants.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many”

MARK 10:45

- On a daily basis, Jesus gave of His time, energy, and resources to help those around Him. He gave up possessions, prestige, and power for the sake of preaching and teaching.
- Even in His last moments, Jesus, with an impending crucifixion, gets on His knees and washes the feet of the disciples (John 13:5-17).
- All Christians are called to be servants, but deacons will live out and demonstrate these qualities in such a way that they can lead others to serve.

Session 4: The Local Church – Worship, Belong, Serve

The necessary elements of the local church can be categorized under the titles, worship, belong, and serve.

Worship - We gather together under the preaching and singing of God's Word and respond with giving, prayer, and participating in the ordinances.

Belong - We live life together in smaller environments as the church throughout the week, caring and praying for one another in ever expanding circles, faithfully making disciples.

Serve - Everyone serves. The congregation is elder led and deacon served while each believer is using their gifts, skills, and resources for the growth and maturity of the church as it accomplishes its mission of saturating the world with the Gospel.

Worship

We gather together under the **preaching** and **singing of God's Word** and respond with **giving, prayer,** and participating in the **ordinances**.

The church gathers to meet together, just like the early church in Acts 2 to pray and sit under the preaching of the Word.

A. Preaching of the Word

- The church centers itself around the Word and gathers to hear the preaching of the Word.
- Jesus calls us to do all that He commanded - Matthew 28:18-20.
- To properly understand and apply the Bible, we must know the large overarching themes as well as the details.
- Therefore, to understand the whole, at times it is helpful to preach topics or themes that run throughout the Bible (topical or thematic sermons).
- It is also important to take times work through some of the details of a particular book over time (exegetical sermons).
- If a church ever drifts, it must course correct and re-center itself around the Word.
- The church also scatters throughout the week, but continues to be the church living out the Word together in homes, neighborhoods, schools, and places of work, just like the early church - Acts 2:46.

B. Singing the Word

The Psalms function as the worship hymnal and prayer guide of the Old Testament people of God.

“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

COLOSSIANS 3:16

What happens if our worship songs stray from the clear teachings of Scripture?

How can we make sure that we are “Word-led” people?

C. Giving

In the Old Testament, tithing was a part of their law and expectations. A tithe was considered 10%. Though above and beyond their tithe, they were to give additional offerings and special gifts (Amos 4:4-5). Altogether, an Israelite would give up to 24% of his/her money to the house of God.

- Numbers 18:21 – “I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the tent of meeting.”
- Proverbs 3:9 – “Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops.” How is this different than having tithes as an afterthought? How can we tell if we are giving of our first fruits or out of our leftovers?
- 2 Chronicles 31:4-5 – “He ordered the people living in Jerusalem to give the portion due the priests and Levites so they could devote themselves to the Law of the Lord. As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the first fruits of their grain, new wine, olive oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything.”
- Deuteronomy 12:5-6 – “But you are to seek the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes to put His Name there for His dwelling. To that place you must go; there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give and your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks.”
- Malachi 3:8-10 – “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. ‘But you ask, how are we robbing you? In tithes and offerings.’ You are under a curse – your whole nation because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.” This verse reminds us that everything we have is the Lord’s. When we don’t generously give a portion back to God, how does He respond?

In the New Testament, a specific "tithe" is not mentioned. Jesus seems to focus on the heart of the giver more than the specific percentage given by the giver.

Matthew 6:1-4 – What does this teach us about giving?

Mark 12:41-44 – What does Jesus want us to learn from the widow?

2 Corinthians 8:2: "Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints."

Does this sound like a commitment to 10% or a commitment to providing as much as possible? Would you guess that this may mean more or less than 10%?

1 Corinthians 16:2: "On every Lord's Day each of you should put aside something from what you have earned during the week, and use it for this offering. The amount depends on how much the Lord has helped you earn."

Acts 2:44-45 - "All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need."

Acts 4:34-35 - "There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need."

The community was very aware of needs. They would use their own possessions as opportunities to bless others. The Old Testament expectation of 10% seems to be swallowed up by a greater desire to give as much as possible. What might this look like for you?

Romans 12:13 – "Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

MATTHEW 6:21

If someone else saw your checkbook and credit card statements, where would they assess your treasure (and heart) to be?

What are your next steps for giving? More frequently? A larger amount? With a different heart?

D. Prayer

Prayers are to be made for one another—for spiritual growth (Ephesians), for the sick (James 5), for clarity in sharing the Gospel (Col. 4:2-4, Eph. 6:19-20).

We pray for the harvest and for the Lord to raise up more laborers (Matthew 9:35-38).

Prayer was one of the primary things that the church did as it first started meeting together (Acts 2:42).

Prayer was often connected to the filling and empowering of the Spirit to do ministry (Acts 4:31).

Paul was continually committed to praying for churches, often night and day (Romans 1:9-10, Ephesians 1:16).

Paul prays in the Spirit with perseverance and with petition for the church (Ephesians 6:18).

Prayer is a bedrock part of the church. A church that does not pray will often drift from the Lord, His Word, and the ministry we have been commissioned to do. Jesus spent large quantities of time in prayer, even specifically for the church (John 17).

Prayer is being mentioned here under worship, but it fits into every aspect of the church. God uses it to drive preaching, mission, evangelism and everything within the church.

Our hope is that:

- Prayer fills our Sunday morning services.
- Prayer is a part of every group and small gathering.
- Prayer is being made by each believer in the church for one another, for the church, and for the city.
- Prayer is increasing in every circle within the church.
- Each believer is calling other believers to join them in prayer.
- A commitment is being made to ask God for huge things.
- Prayer is the driving force behind mission, multiplication, and the mobilization of the saints across the valley.

How can you increase prayer in your circles of influence?

What is your next step personally? Corporately?

A larger Core Class, *Praying with Purpose & Perspective*, has been devoted just to prayer. Feel free to check it out on our app or website to go deeper with this subject.



E. The Ordinances

As Christians, we have entered into a Covenant with the Lord. Covenant relationships have both legal and relational aspects. A Covenant is a relationship with a given set of commitments and expectations, like a marriage.

In our Covenant with the Lord, we have been justified and given His righteousness. In a very legal and forensic way, the spiritual gavel has sounded and it has been declared that we are now and forever God's children.

There are both legal and relational aspects to our marriage and our relationship with God. We can be in a covenant relationship with God, with full access to Him, and yet feel emotionally or relationally distant from Him.

There are both binding agreements and relational communion opportunities in our relationship with God. The sacraments remind of us both!

Larger discussions of baptism and the Lord's Supper can be found in Appxs. E and F.

1. Baptism

- » Baptism is for everyone who places their faith in Christ as Lord and Savior. It is an outward demonstration of an inward decision.
- » Baptism declares to the church and the watching world that we have died to our sin and have been raised to new life, but it also shouts, "I am His, and He is mine!"
- » It declares a very real change in legal standing before the Lord, but this new standing points to a new level of intimacy and communion with the Lord.
- » Seeing others baptized reminds us of our own legal and relational standing before the Lord. We celebrate, reflect, and are drawn closer to the Lord and His people through watching and participating in the sacrament of baptism.
- » Questions about infant baptism are covered in Appx E.

2. The Lord's Supper

- » Communion calls us to look back to the work of Jesus, the significance and life change that has occurred because of His work on our behalf.
- » The work of Christ has changed everything and we now have full and free access to the Lord.
- » While participating in the Lord's Supper we are to:
 - **Remember** what Jesus has done for us on the cross.
 - **Examine** our hearts and reconcile broken relationships.
 - **Celebrate** the reality that Jesus will return.
- » The Lord's Supper, like baptism, calls us to **remember** and reflect on both our legal

and relational standing before the Lord.

- » We are also called to **examine** our hearts. During this time, we are to reflect on hurdles we have set up between us and the Lord (sins, doubts, fears, shame, guilt, and lies believed).
- » We will continue to participate in the Lord's Supper until He returns. This meal points to the triumphant return of Christ. This reality causes joy, excitement, and **celebration** in the heart of the believer.
- » The ordinances matter and will always be important as our hearts continue to drift and harden. They call us back to the truths of the Gospel and our intimacy with our Savior! May they never be practiced out of routine, but out of genuine excitement.
- » These practices do not anoint the believer with saving grace or add to our salvation, but it showers us with the Gospel and continues the transforming work of Christ in our hearts. **The church's ordinances lead to a greater love for Jesus!**
- » A much larger discussion is given in Appx. F. Connections to the Old Testament are made, discussions on the details of the Lord's Supper are given. The notes from Appx. F were used in the sermon, *Why Communion?*, from February 17, 2019. The video can be viewed from the Bible Center website or app.



Belong

We **live life together in smaller environments** as the church **throughout the week, caring and praying** for one another in **ever-expanding circles**, while faithfully **making disciples**.

A. Smaller Groups

Acts 2:46 & 20:20 - At the birth of the church and several decades into the life of the church, smaller groups were an essential part of its DNA.

Why would the smaller environment be a necessary environment for the health of the church?

How does Jesus live out this principle during His life and ministry?

Do we see this same value structure in the life of Paul?

B. Caring and Praying for one another

We have been adopted and called into a family. The church is full of brothers and sisters in Christ.

- Family spends time together (Acts 2:42-6).
- They help each other.
- They encourage one another to protect our hearts from unbelief (Hebrews 2:1, 3:13).
- We help each other identify sin in our lives so that our hearts do not harden (Hebrews 3:13).
- In times of need they give of their resources.
- They know one another at a deep level.
- We comfort one another (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).
- Together, we enter into the throne room in times of need to receive grace and help (Hebrews 4:16).

At Bible Center, we desire to see all small groups participate in **care, discipleship, and outreach**. This is played out in groups by:

- **Making Spiritual Friends** – we pray and care for our friends. Everyone needs friends and relational connections. Those who are visiting and those who have been in the church for decades equally need spiritual friendships in their lives. Friends help us grow roots and have a sense of belonging in an ever-changing world and culture.
- **Making Room** – Thankfully Jesus kept the door open for us when we came to Him for salvation. Jesus always makes room for us, we must make room for others. Healthy families grow. The love of Christ compels us to keep inviting others to join us in following Him in **ever-expanding circles**.
- **Making Disciples** – Followers of Christ make more maturing disciples. We actively

demonstrate and share the Gospel with those who do not know Christ. Together we continue to go deeper into God's Word to both know and live out His commands. Jesus clearly commanded, "Make disciples!" Anything less is disobedience and less than the life Jesus has called us to live.

C. We live life together throughout the week

We often view life in silos—school, politics, work, family, friends, church...

The church is not simply one of many silos of the week. We must view it as horizontally impacting everything we do and everywhere we go. As the family of God, we influence every part of culture with the love and words of Christ.

Serve

Everyone serves. The congregation is **elder-led** and **deacon-served** while each believer is using his or her gifts, skills, and resources for the growth and maturity of the church as it accomplishes its mission of saturating the world with the Gospel.

Grudem summarizes the purpose of the church around ministry and service: "We can understand the purposes of the church in terms of ministry to God, ministry to believers, and ministry to the world" (Grudem, 867).

A. Everyone serves

"But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift."

EPHESIANS 4:7

"But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

1 CORINTHIANS 12:7

What is your spiritual **gift**? How can you know it?

Churches are **elder-led** - Ephesians 4:11-12 - "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers. Of the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ."

What is the role of the leaders of the church?

Do only **deacons** serve?

What is the role of each believer?

We are more than just leaders and lead servants, the individuals that make up the church form the body of Christ. Each person makes up a different part of the body as they use their unique gifts to serve and grow the body as a whole.

B. Using their gifts

Ephesians 4:15-16 – “We are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 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.”

What is the role of each “part”?

What if each part is not “working properly?”

How can we make sure that we are fulfilling our role in the church?

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: Women in Ministry

Instructions to Women about Ministry - 1 Timothy 2:11-15

These next several pages address a very hard passage. To do so with integrity and thoroughness it was necessary to resource and quote many commentaries and points of view. Some will love this section, others will not enjoy going through the details of this argument.

2:11-15 – Perhaps one of the most difficult passages in the New Testament to interpret and apply. It is hard to tell which (or all) parts reflect a cultural standard and which (or all) reflect an eternal standard? There are multiple suggested interpretations and there are solid Christians, who love Jesus, that graciously disagree over several of these issues. Let's look at two of the primary points of view – **the first perspective leans towards an eternal and universal rule and the second perspective leans towards a point in time contextual command that may change based upon personal context.**

In this passage, Paul calls the women in the Ephesian church to:

- Learn in "quietness and full submission"
- He does not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man
- She must be silent (better translated "have a quiet demeanor")

1st point of view – universal rule

2:11 - *"A woman should learn in full quietness and full submission"*

- "Women should not be put in positions of ultimate leadership over the church and serve as elders or pastor-teachers" (Kostenberger, 112).

2:12 - *"I do not want a woman to teach"*

- Some suggest that the addition of the personal "I" reduces the authoritative nature of this statement to an opinion of Paul's. Other uses of this verb and Paul's use of the first-person singular present active indicative tense (Rom. 12:1, 1 Cor. 2:4, 2 Cor. 5:20...) shows the authoritative nature of this verb and tense. Paul's is speaking with God's authority, not a personal preference (Knight, 140).
- Women are to teach women (Tit 2:3-5), their children and sons (2 Tim. 1:5, 3:14, 15; Acts 16:1), and Paul also approves of the team effort of Priscilla and Aquila in teaching the Gospel to Apollos (Acts 18:25-26) (Knight, 140).
- This restriction seems to only be within the context of the assembled people of God.

"or have authority over a man"

- "Paul means that a woman may not exercise authority in the church over men and this includes teaching" (Mounce, 120).
- The context given to us by Paul emphasizes that men are the ones spreading the heresy (1:20, 2 Tim. 2:17; 3:6), and explicitly pictures women as being influenced by the heresy, though they may also be responsible for spreading it in non-authoritative ways (Mounce,

120). Mounce's point lands a hammer on the idea that Paul is merely responding to a feminist movement trying to gain traction within the church as emphasized in the 2nd view.

"she must be silent"

- Both views agree that silence does not mean absolute silence, but rather corresponds to the "quiet," peaceful life mentioned in v. 2 and parallels 1 Pet. 3:4 which commends a 'gentle and quite spirit' (Kostenberger, 113)

2nd point of view – contextual command

A book called *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities*, by Bruce W. Winter, highlights a unique situation happening within Roman culture during the 1st century, A.D. Women of wealth in the Roman Empire were breaking out of their traditional roles and exerting authority and power in many arenas of society. They were doing it in a brash and sometimes unprepared (speaking without knowledge) way. This movement included a flaunting of wealth and sexuality through dress and promiscuity. It was a strong growing, sexually charged, feminist movement which may have been influencing women within the Ephesian church. Possible references in 1 Timothy include:

- Call to modest dress 2:9-10
- Call to repent of greed 6:3-10
- Recognition of women inappropriately spreading rumors from house to house 5:13
- And this point of view would include Paul's instruction to quietness and submission as well.
- The use of this context is designed to build the case that Paul is speaking to a particular situation and not to a universal truth.

2:11 - *"A woman should learn in full quietness and full submission"*

- All of us should treat our teachers with respect.
- "Osborne says that the normative principle from 1 Tim. 2:8-15 is the idea of submissiveness by women. He asserts that at the time of Paul's writing a woman who taught a group of men would be 'lording' it over them. He feels that Western society today does not accord the same position of authority to the teacher as in the NT era" (Lea, 105). Therefore, a woman serving in a teaching position would not violate this demand.

2:12 - *"I do not want a woman to teach"*

- "The personal language 'I do not want' seems to express either a new command that does not relay on tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 14:34) or an ad hoc solution to a newly encountered situation" (Towner, 217). Meaning, Paul is speaking not universally as much as to a particular issue at a particular time.
- Women are called to teach women, so there is no moral imperative against women teaching in general.
- Contextually it seems that she should not teach because of her lack of knowledge, not necessarily because of her gender.

"or have authority over a man"

- Teaching does not necessitate authority.
- Even in this book, Timothy speaks on behalf of Paul's authority.
- Priscilla plays a major role in teaching Apollos the Gospel (Acts 18:26 – notice her name is listed first before Aquila). She is praised as a co-laborer of Paul (Romans 16:3), not as a woman stepping out of her role.
- Ephesians 5:21 – Each of us are called to submission to one another regardless of gender. Distinction is made in the marriage relationship only (Eph. 5:22-33).
- The verb translated 'to have authority' can also be rendered 'to assume authority' or 'to domineer, to usurp authority, or to abuse authority'. This speaks to the Roman wives who are trying to dominate (Towner, 221). It also moves the point from having authority to a command to not inappropriately seize authority.

"she must be silent"

- Contextually we see women going from house to house (possible refers to church to church, like Paul in Ephesus in Acts 20:20) gossiping and talking about improper things (1 Tim. 5:13). The outcome is the same as the false teachers; 'following Satan' (1 Tim. 1:20 / 5:15).
- Paul's intention is to stop these women from spreading this false teaching. The easiest way is to silence them until they learn. This is a temporary situation until they learn proper doctrine, not an eternal standard.
- "First, in the immediate literary context, 'in quietness' describes the posture and attitude of appropriate deference to the teacher. It does not exclude wives from participation in certain speaking activities such as praying, prophesying, or speaking in tongues" (Towner, 214).

Relation of 2:13-15 to 2:11-12

2:13 – "For" – The way one uses this word dramatically changes their point of view on the nature and purpose of verses 2:13-15.

1st view – universal rule

- Background research of the historical context does not override the literary context grounded in God's creation order. The background info is subject to error and slant, the literary context and connection to creation is clear.
- "The references to the divine order of creation and its violation at the fall in vv. 13-14 ground vv. 11-12 in universal rather than merely cultural norms" (Kostenberger, 114).
- The most frequent use of 'for' is to express cause or reason." "All of this evidence is overwhelming in support of reading 'for' of 1 Tim. 2:13 as introducing **a reason** for Paul's previous statement. (Mounce, 131-2).

2nd view - contextual command

- Towner argues that "for" is not functioning as a ground (the reason for the argument) but rather as an explanation in the form of illustration simply linking the OT story to church's present dilemma. This removes the universal power away from the argument and places verses 13-15 into a position of examples instead of universal principles (225).

- Mounce explains the more feminist leaning, "there is a rather infrequent use of this word in which the clause introduced by 'for' gives not a reason for preceding statement (illative use) but an illustration or example. If this is the use of 'for' here, then Paul has not grounded his demand in the order of creation but has appealed to Gen. 2 as an illustration of what happens when women teach men" (Mounce, 131).

1st view – universal rule

2:13-15 – *"For Adam was formed first, then Eve."*

- It is not clearly stated that the order of creation is the primary point, but it does set up the roles given in Gen. 2. Adam is the subject of the verb in both verse 13 and 14 clarifying that he was formed first and he was not the one who was deceived.
- Eve then was formed after Adam and was the one deceived.
- This OT reference had to have some reflection on the present situation of the Ephesians as well as provide direction for God's intent and eternal purpose.

"And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner."

- The first sin is a result of a complete role reversal of God's created order of authority. From: God → man → woman → animal To: animal → woman → man → God (Kostenberger, 117)
- Rooting this command in the creation order, also contradicts the argument that female submission is a result of the fall (Kostenberger, 118).

"But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety."

- "Paul points out that Eve brought herself into transgression by abandoning her role and taking on that of the man. But by fulfilling her role, difficult as it may be as a result of sin (Gen. 3:16), she gives birth to the Messiah, and thereby 'she' (ultimately fulfilled in Mary) brings salvation into the world" (Knight, 146).
- The passage is difficult, but the focus is that we remain in the roles ordained to us by God.
- "Saved" here can also be rendered "preserved" moving the focus from spiritual salvation (which is by Christ alone) to how believers are to continue to function to remain in God's desired order.

2nd view - contextual

2:13-15 – *"For Adam was formed first, then Eve."*

- Paul is responding to the role reversal that is taking place because of the 'new Roman woman' movement.
- There is a potential mutiny that is taking place within the church from these women seeking not to learn, but to lead. This action goes against God's call to a quiet and peaceful life (2:3) and His expectations for those in authority (3:2).

"And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner."

- This illustrates the consequences of anyone who seizes authority but is not prepared to lead.
- The response is to learn, receive training, and then lead appropriately (male or female).

"But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety."

- Paul encourages childbearing because the false teachers are prohibiting marriage (4:3) (Towner, 219).
- If this is not a response to a historical situation. Are we prepared to say that women's salvation is based upon having children? Do we give a different level of authority to verses 13-14 because we like them and sweep 15 under the rug because of its interpretive difficulty?

Areas of Agreement

- The passage does not rule out private instruction of men by women together with their husbands.
- The passage is speaking to the general assembly of the congregation.
- The passage is speaking to teaching and authority in the general assembly. It does not necessarily include praying, announcing, sharing, or singing.
- Women are called to teach other women, children, and even their sons.
- A woman's voice is not limited in small group and social settings.
- There are not clear restrictions given in this passage for women outside of the general assembly.
- Women are a key part of ministry and the growth of the church.
- All of us are called to live 'quite lives in all godliness and holiness' (2:2).
- Outside of the general assembly and the marriage relationship we are all called to submit to one another (Eph. 5:21).

How has this discussion changed or solidified your understanding and interpretation of this passage?

Matthew 28:18-20 – Are women called to be a part of the Great Commission as much as men?

How do we see teaching taking place (Matthew 28:19 – "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded") for women in the process of making disciples?

How can a church follow Scripture and at the same time honor women?

A husband is called to love his wife as Christ loved the church. Men lead by sacrificially serving. Speaking to the dudes – In what ways do we as men lead selfishly or with “our wants and needs” as the priority over the women’s?

Women – What are some ways men can show you more respect and honor in a Biblical way?

How can we (the men) do a better job at putting your needs above our own?

We must recognize how important our interpretive conclusions can be. The way we run our church, teach, and care for one another is based on these interpretations. What is the result of us interpreting this passage too narrowly and restrictively?

What is the result of us interpreting this passage too broadly and freely?

APPENDIX B:
Overseers / Pastors / Elders
1 Timothy 3:1-7

Overseers are also referred to as pastors, elders, and bishops—these words are virtually interchangeable (1 Tim. 5:17, 1 Peter 5:1,2).

It is important to note that churches were led by a **team** of elders. “There is not one passage which describes a church being governed by one pastor” (Strauch, 38). 1 Tim. 5:17, James 5:15, Acts 20:17, 28, Phil. 1:1, Acts 14:34, Titus 1:5, and 1 Peter 5:1 all speak of elders leading a church. Why would God have designed church leadership this way?

Based on what is happening in this church, what will be the benefit of appointing elders?

“The description of the local church as the pillar and foundation of the truth reveals the church’s mission: to safeguard and proclaim the gospel of Christ. Every local church is to be a gospel lighthouse, missionary agency, and gospel school” (Strauch, 185).

3:1 - Why do you suppose being an overseer is considered a “noble (excellent, good, or worthwhile) work”?

“Elders cannot teach and defend the gospel if their lives discredit the gospel” (Strauch, 185).

What would happen if a church did not maintain the biblical qualifications listed for their leaders?

3:2-7 – “*above reproach*” – perhaps the broadest of all the expectations. In many ways, a number of the other descriptions can land under this umbrella expectation. Why would it be important for the watching world to see the church’s leaders as above reproach?

Philippians 2:15 – what is the expectation of all Christians?

“*the husband of but one wife*” – literally translated ‘a one-woman-man’. This is a present expectation for every church leader candidate. Does this verse directly reference divorce?

What would happen if we added “for life” to this expectation? How would we alter the intent and command of Scripture?

Divorce is not directly referenced in this passage. It is not a lifetime expectation. It is a requirement for the person in the moment. If an individual has a divorce in their past, it does not automatically disqualify them (Matthew 5 expectations are addressed in the appendix). If someone has been divorced, what other expectations may disqualify them?

Each situation and circumstance must be handled separately and many questions must be asked. Bible Center will have a discussion with every candidate with a divorce in their past to discuss how and why it happened and to determine if repentance, restitution, and attempts at reconciliation have been made.

Some have suggested that it is easier to simply not open this can of worms. What happens if we make decisions based on convenience or preference (just keeping the can closed) instead of biblical standards?

The divorce may not disqualify an individual, but he may not be above reproach in the community or may not have a good reputation because of how the divorce was handled or because of his current post-divorce situation.

Some have said that we must put our "best" people in our church offices (meaning those with divorce are not considered one of our "best" people). We can never create expectations that add to Christ's expectations. Jesus chose Saul (Paul), a murderer of Christians. He uses objects of mercy to show His grace! Who was the "best" person in Luke 7:36-50—the woman who, using her hair, was worshiping Jesus and anointing His feet with oil or the spiritual elite sitting around the table?

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 – Christ has chosen the weak, foolish, and despised to call His own. Each Christian must be aware of his/her own sin and lack of worthiness if not for the invading grace of a loving Savior. How does a Christian live with both a deep humility and a profound sense of being loved and cherished by God at the same time?

How does the Gospel teach us how to handle sin? What happens if we allow church tradition to shape our decisions instead of the Gospel?

We consider a redeemed and repentant saint, who has made genuine attempts at restitution and reconciliation, and presently stands above reproach in their relationships with a good reputation within the community, as a candidate for church office.

"temperate and self-controlled" / balanced judgment / freedom from debilitating excesses or rash behavior / stable / sensible / self-restrained / clear-headed

- Give a couple of examples of not being temperate and self-controlled:

- 2 Timothy 1:7 – What kind of Spirit has God given us?

- Can a Christian who is known for his quick temper be a candidate for a leadership position?

"respectable" / proper behavior / orderliness

"hospitable" – What do we learn in the verses below?

- Romans 12:13 –

- 1 Peter 4:9 –

- Hebrews 13:2 -

"able to teach" – This qualification is given only to the elders, not the deacons.

- How do we measure if someone is able to teach?

- Would this only include preaching? What are additional environments where teaching occurs?

- How would you describe a bad teacher?

"not given to drunkenness"

- Does this say that an elder is to never have a drink?

- An elder cannot be overly occupied with alcohol. He can't put himself in a position where he loses self-control, temperance, or his reputation with outsiders.

"not violent but gentle" / not pugnacious / able to handle highly emotional interpersonal conflicts and disagreements / forbearing / kind / equitable / gracious

"not quarrelsome" / uncontentious / peaceable / showing consideration for all

- How should an elder handle conflict between members within the church?
- How do they handle disagreements they may have with others?
- How can a leader create peace out of turmoil?

"not a lover of money"

- Greed is a major topic in chapter 6. Greed may have some roots in the false teaching spreading in the church. Paul balances this issue with 1 Tim. 5:18, teaching that the hard-working elder should be paid for his work, but he should not be consumed with wealth or the accumulation of things.
- Proverbs 30:8 – How does this verse summarize the attitude Paul is describing?
- Philippians 4:13 – What is the context of this verse? What is the point Paul is trying to make? How does it fit into this conversation?

"must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect (if anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)"

- Do we expect perfection from pastors' kids? How do we judge if a potential elder meets this expectation?
- How do you think it feels to be a pastor's kid (affectionately known as PKs) who often live under scrutiny and judgment throughout their childhood?
- How can we do a better job loving, supporting, and helping pastor's families?

"not a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil"

- Paul intentionally does not give us a certain number of years and months to determine the right amount of time someone should be a Christian before being considered. His focus is spiritual maturity (which takes time). What happens if a church has no way of assessing maturity?
- How might a church go about creating a process of spiritual development for its people and future leaders?
- What is your church's process?

"must have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap."

- Could a business owner with a reputation of cheating his customers be an elder?
- A good reputation is a broad description and expectation. One of the reasons we choose elders slowly is so that we have time to get to know them, their character, and we get to know their reputation around the community.
- One should not be quick to see a demon behind every bush. There are times when we can blame our sin, choices, and struggles on others, circumstances, or the enemy. Christians need to first check their own hearts. But, the devil is mentioned twice here in these expectations. Why do you suppose the devil is mentioned several times here?

APPENDIX C: Deacons

As you look through this section. How are deacons different than elders?

How are they similar?

How does 1 Tim. 5:17 contribute to the discussion?

Are there any details given here about the work deacons are called to perform? Counting money? Communion? Sitting on a board?

The word itself means 'servant'. Elders are called to teach and rule, deacons are called to serve. What happens when we do not distinguish these roles as Scripture distinguishes them?

What if a church had a ton of elders with very few deacons, what would happen to this church?

Deacons are considered "lead servants." Everyone is called to serve, but only some meet these character qualifications and consistently demonstrate the servant's heart of Christ (Phil. 2:4-10).

- Many are simply labeled deacons after already functioning like a deacon with or without an official title.
- Different needs within the church call for different people with unique skill sets (children's ministries, care, widows...).
- Deacons and elders are not designed to function like American politics. They are not two branches of government intended to balance one another. This is a foreign idea to Scripture and has often been added through tradition.
- Deacons often function as 'shock absorbers' taking over the brunt of the work creating a clear path and environment for the teaching and hearing of God's Word and prayer.
- They are equally as valuable to the church as the elders. Difference in role does not create a difference in value.

8 - *"In the same way, deacons[a] are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain."*

"In the same way" introduces a new office, but shows a continuance of the same theme – church offices. How are these qualifications similar to those for overseers?

9 - *"They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience."*

Verse 8 references character, this verse sets expectations of knowledge and an internal adherence. What would be the "deep truths" Paul is speaking of here?

When would someone not have a "clear conscience?"

10 - *"They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons."*

How could they be tested? How might this be similar to the overseer expectation of not being a new convert?

11 - *"In the same way, the women[b] are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything."*

Let's first look at these expectations. They seem to speak directly against some of the struggles happening in Ephesus as well as corresponding to some of the expectations given to the men.

- This instruction corresponds to Paul's call to modesty (1 Tim. 2:9-10).
- It also gives the expectation that they can't go from house to house gossiping as some were doing (1 Tim. 5:13).
- And they are to share in the expectations given to men showing temperance (1 Tim. 3:2).
- "Trustworthy" or "faithful in all things" holds a large general call to an upright life and character which is at least similar to the 'good reputation' expectation given to men in 1 Tim. 3:7.

Some translate this as "wives" and others as "women." The Greek word can be translated either way—context determines the correct translation. The broader sense of the word (women) should be used unless context demands a narrower translation (wives). How do we make that determination here?

"gune – can mean both 'wife' and 'woman,' it is not clear whether Paul is referring to the wives of deacons or to women workers, 'deaconesses'... Whatever the specific interpretation of this verse may be, it is not related to the issue of women in leadership since the deacon does not

provide authoritative leadership" (Mounce, 202).

Often tradition, denomination, and preference play a big part in translating this verse and interpreting its meaning. As much as possible, we need to see it from Paul and Timothy's point of view in order to understand the Lord's intention for the passage both then and now.

Deacon's Wives - Some view this as speaking to wives of the deacons.

- Verse 11 can be seen as an explanation and expectation given to the husband who is called in the following verse to "manage his children and household well (v. 12)."
 - » Some would argue wives are called to be sacrificially loved and led (Eph. 5:25-32), not managed.
- Argument from silence – Paul would have used the word, 'deaconess,' if that was his intention.
 - » The first use of the female form of the Greek word for deacon (*deakonos*) does not occur until the fourth century in canon 19 of the Council of Nicea (Mounce, 202).
- Women are not to hold positions of authority over a man according to 1 Tim. 2:11-12. Therefore, this cannot be a reference to female deacons.
 - » Deacons do not have a role of authority, but of service. There is no conflict with 1 Tim. 2:11-12.

"Both interpretations have their strong points, and both are possible. However, the unnatural change of topics, twice in two verses without a clear transition, seems awkward. It is preferable to maintain the connection between v. 11 and v. 12 by translating *gune* as 'wife'" (Mounce, 204).

Deaconesses – some view this to be distinct expectations for female deacons.

- The parallel use of "likewise" in verse 8 (transitioning to deacons) and verse 11 shows that there is a transition in category – deacon to deaconess.
 - » Some suggest this is parenthetical and therefore designed only to modify (Warfield).
- The expectation of being "trustworthy" or "faithful in all things" is an expectation that equates to expectations of the male deacons. It would be beyond the typical scope for a wife to attain such a standard as a basic expectation. Thus, this favors the idea of females functioning as deacons in these verses.
- Biblical Reference - Rom. 16:1 – references Phoebe as a deacon. The masculine form of the word, *diakonos*, is used showing that this is a reference to an actual church office.
 - » Some argue that this is a reference to her simply as a servant in the church, not an official position.
- Biblical Implication - Rom. 16:7 – Junias is referred to as an apostle. If a woman can serve in this capacity, it is to be more than expected for her to serve in the role of a deacon.
- Argument from silence – there are no expectations given for the wives of overseers, why would Paul emphasize the wives of deacons over wives of elders? "It seems strange that there are no similar instructions within the section on overseers. One would think that the character of their wives was at least as important as that of the wives of deacons" (Liefeld, 134).
 - » This is an ad hoc list and should not be treated like a formal list with expectations of balance. Perhaps only the wives of the deacons that were struggling.
- Historical argument – the office of deaconess is found very early in church history,

showing the early church's interpretation of this verse.

» This does not necessarily tell us anything about this verse.

- "If 'wives of deacons' were meant, it would have been more common to indicate this either a possessive pronoun or the definite article" (Towner, 266).

Kostenberger summarizes his view and the arguments that persuaded him. "On the whole, 'women deacons' is preferable, for the following reasons:

1. the absence of qualifications for overseers' wives
2. the adverb 'too' / 'likewise' indicating an office similar to that of male deacon
3. the parallel sentence structure and characteristics in v. 8 and v. 11
4. the absence of a qualifier for *gunakas* such as 'their'" (132).

Conclusion – there is not a definitive answer to the proper translation and usage of this word.

- Clear passages should be used to interpret unclear passages. Yet, these are limited. Phoebe listed as a deaconess is pretty clear. Paul is not using Rom. 16:1 as instructive, it merely describes what is happening. But we also know that Paul would not brush aside the misuse of a church office if he recognized a dangerous situation for the church. (another argument out of silence).
- How did the church in our earliest records interpret and apply the verse? This will help us understand what the verse 'meant' so that we know what it presently 'means'. There were female deacons in the early church (a culture that did often did not honor, respect, or promote women), suggesting that the church went against the dominant culture promoting women into this church office based upon their understanding of Paul's instruction.

What a hard subject! What are some of your concluding thoughts?

How can a church negotiate such a difficult topic?

Which arguments stuck out to you as the strongest and most convincing?

12 - *"A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well."*

It has been said, the character of a Christians can be better seen on Saturday mornings with their families than on Sunday mornings within the church. In what ways is our culture waging war against our families?

How can churches do a better job at helping and supporting their elders and deacons so that their family life does not suffer while filling these offices?

Who is an elder or deacon you know that you can better love, support, and pray for? What is your next practical step?

13 - *"Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus."*

Desiring to be an elder is a "noble task", faithful deacons also "gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith". Both offices are desirable and a blessing for those who qualify and are appointed. Can you think of any reasons where a qualified individual would choose not to serve in an office?

APPENDIX D:

A Study on Biblical Shepherding

Learning from our Chief Shepherd

In everything, Jesus is our example. These passages describe His heart, desire and actions as our Chief Shepherd. We serve under Him with the call to reflect Him in the way we care for His flock.

The Heart of the Chief Shepherd: The purpose of this study is not to first seek personal application – but to start by gazing and reflecting upon the Lord and His character...

Go through each passage with the following questions in mind. Write down your thoughts and prayers.

- What do we learn about the Lord's heart as we see Him shepherd in each passage?
- How does the Lord lead and respond to his people as their Shepherd?
- Finally, in what ways are you experiencing the Lord as your shepherd as you reflect on these passages?

Psalm 23

Isaiah 40:10-11

Ezekiel 34:11-16

John 10:1-21

1 Peter 5:1-5

Shepherding Principles - Ez. 34, John 10, 1 Peter 5, Is. 40

1. Shepherds put the needs of the flock before their own. (Ez. 34, John 10, 1 Peter 5)
2. Shepherds are to lead by example, not word. (1 Peter 5)
3. Shepherds are willing, at times, to do the mundane, as opposed to always being in the spotlight. (1 Peter 5)
4. Shepherds are to protect their flock at all costs, even to the point of death. (Ez. 34)
5. Shepherds who are unaware or absent are no shepherds at all. (Ez.34)

6. Shepherds are selfless, willing to sacrifice for the sake of the flock. (Ez. 34, John 10)
7. Shepherds are willing to take the time and energy necessary to restore the wounded, hurting or wandering sheep. (Ez. 34)
8. Shepherds don't sit back and watch from a distance, they jump in, and deeply involve themselves in the life of the flock. (Ez. 34, John 10)
9. Shepherds are initiators. They are constantly stepping out first. (Ez. 34)
10. Shepherds realize that their choices will deeply and profoundly affect the flock. (Ez. 34)
11. Shepherds always point the flock to the Chief Shepherd. (Ez. 34)
12. A Shepherd's voice is distinct, rising above the chorus and when the shepherd speaks, the sheep tune in. (John 10)
13. A Shepherd knows his sheep intimately. (John 10)
14. When taking the flock somewhere, the Shepherd first treads the ground ahead. (John 10)
15. A Shepherd always puts himself between the wolf and the flock (John 10, Acts 20)
16. A Shepherd not only knows his sheep, but allows his sheep to really know him. (John 10)
17. A Shepherd's love for the Chief Shepherd is best expressed through his care and nourishment of the flock. (John 21)
18. A Shepherd's leadership is more than a mechanical exercise, but is heart-felt. (Is. 40, 1 Peter 5)
19. A Shepherd is always on his guard against outside attacks. (Acts 20, Ez. 34)
20. A Shepherd realizes that he didn't apply for this job, but was chosen by God and empowered by His Spirit (1 Peter 5)
21. A Shepherd does not lead for material gain. (Acts 20, 1 Peter 5)
22. Instead, a Shepherd freely gives materially to his flock, as there is need. (Acts 20)
23. A Shepherd is a servant. (1 Peter 5)
24. A Shepherd leads cheerfully and joyfully, not under a sense of compulsion (1 Peter)
25. A Shepherd is not bossy, harsh or insensitive in his leadership. (Ez. 34, 1 Peter 5)
26. A Shepherd is humble- knowing full well the source of his leadership.
27. A Shepherd welcomes the counsel of those who have gone before him and is submissive to their leadership. (1 Peter 5)
28. Shepherds tear off the heavy yoke that others will attempt to put on their shoulders of our flock. (Ez. 34)
29. A Shepherd is aware of the devil's schemes and his plot for the life of the shepherd. Therefore, he is especially on guard, knowing that he will be targeted first. (1 Peter 5)
30. A Shepherd knows that his labors will, one day, reap a reward in heaven. (1 Peter 5)

APPENDIX E: Baptism

What is the purpose of Baptism?

Why do some baptize infants (pedo-baptism)?

The answer to this question starts with a different point of view on the purpose of baptism.

In the Old Testament, circumcision was the sign of covenant for God's covenant people. On the 8th day boys in the nation of Israel were circumcised. Whether they grew up to worship God or to worship idols, they bore the mark of God's covenant people.

Presbyterians and some others would hold that baptism is the New Testament form of circumcision. Christian parents are motivated to baptize their children to demonstrate that they are people of the covenant. These children may grow up and receive Christ and others may not. Those that do receive Christ, have already been identified with God's people, those who don't are considered covenant-breakers.

In the New Testament, everyone is offered salvation. Anyone can become one of God's people. God's New Testament covenant people are only those who place their faith in Jesus, it is no longer an ethnic, genetic, or familial association.

- Jesus, who was already circumcised, was publicly baptized. This action seemed to separate baptism from circumcision.
- Baptisms in the New Testament are done after repentance and faith in Christ (credo-baptism).
- In Acts, it is recorded that a family was baptized. Credo-baptists would suggest that this is because all of them believed. Pedo-baptists would point to this as an example of families baptizing their children before they believed (reflecting the practice of circumcision).
- Neither argument can be proven. Other passages must be used to decide which point of view is biblical and God's intention for baptism.
- The Lord's Supper didn't merely add onto the Passover Meal, it radically changed it into something different with new elements, a new purpose, and under New Covenant.
- Baptism wasn't a new flavor of circumcision, it was also a radical change from an ethnic-based symbol to a faith-based symbol. Both testify to being part of God's people, but baptism also points to the death of the old life and raising of a new life in Christ.

Who should get baptized?

How should baptisms be performed?

- Jesus walked down into the water to be baptized. It does not say if He was immersed or if someone poured water over him. But, it would not be necessary for Him to enter down into the water if water was then simply poured on him. That could certainly (and more easily) be done on dry land.
- Method is not an issue of salvation, but we do seek to follow the biblical model as much as possible.
- Romans 6 gives us a picture of the end of our old life and the raising of our new life in Christ. Many would point to this description as a description of baptism. It is custom in some circles to even repeat the words, "raised to walk in the newness of life" as an individual comes out of the water. This is a great passage describing what happens in salvation - baptism symbolizes what happens in salvation. Therefore, there is a tight connection, but it must be noted that there is no water in this passage. The connection can be appropriately inferred, but not objectively taught in this passage.
- Every church has to decide how they will handle baptism, what method will they use? It would be difficult to have each new believer decide their preference. Pastors must lead their congregation and suggest which method best reflects what God has said in His Word.

APPENDIX F:

The Lord's Supper

The Following Notes were used in the sermon 'Why Communion?' from February 17, 2019 and can be found on the Bible Center website or app.

What can it be called?

- Communion - 1 Corinthians 10:16, often translated as "sharing."
- The Lord's Supper - 1 Corinthians 11:20
- The Breaking of Bread - Acts 2:42
- The Eucharist - which is the transliteration of the Greek word for thanksgiving
- The Mass - this does not have a Biblical basis and is not used in Protestant circles

History of the Lord's Supper

Our God communes with His covenant people. Therefore, it is fitting that He expresses His commitment to His people in the form of meals. The history of the Lord's Supper is a story of meals; The Passover Meal, The Last Supper, The Lord's Supper, and one day The Marriage Feast of the Lamb. The night of Jesus' Last Supper, He instituted the sacrament of Communion (The Lord's Supper). Jesus' Last Supper was held over a Passover meal.

The Passover Meal was eaten on the second evening of the festival of Unleavened Bread. It was designed to remember the great redemptive work of God in Exodus 12 when He killed the firstborn in all of Egypt while passing over and preserving the nation of Israel leading to their redemption out of slavery.

In New Testament times, the Passover Feast included:
Preliminary Course - First Cup of wine and herbs with fruit sauce
Blessing of the festival day spoken - Kiddush

Passover Liturgy - Haggadah
Singing of Psalm 113 - the little hallel
Second cup of wine

Main Meal - Grace spoken over bread
Meal of lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs
Grace spoken over third cup of wine (cup of blessing)

Conclusion - Singing of Psalms 114-118, the great hallel
Grace spoken over fourth cup of wine.

The Last Supper and the Institution of the Lord's Supper

- The Lord's Supper is recorded in Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:15-20
- Jesus eats the Passover with the Disciples, but introduces a new purpose and new elements to the meal.
- In the way that Jesus introduces the elements, we see them flow out of Old Testament narrative of God's redemptive plan.

- Jesus is doing something new, but it is not disconnected from the character, work, purposes, and intentions of God for His people from the beginning.
- Jesus will not partake again until the kingdom of God comes (Luke 22:18).

The Passover Meal	The Lord's Supper
Exodus 12	Matt., Mark, Luke
A Full Meal	Bread & Cup
A Sacrificial Lamb	Sacrificed Messiah
We Participate & Eat	We Participate & Eat
We Remember/Look Forward	We Remember/Look Forward
It Points to the Coming Messiah	It Points to Return of Jesus
Old Covenant	New Covenant

The Elements of the Lord's Supper

The Passover highlighted the death of a lamb for the sake of the people of God. Again, a death is being highlighted. In the Passover, they ate lamb. Now they will partake in the eating of the bread and the drink to remind them of death of Jesus. Jesus Himself introduces this sacrament. He explains the elements and their purpose. Jesus says that there is a day when

The Bread - "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19).

The Cup - "In the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood" (Luke 22:20). "do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me" (1 Corinthians 11:25).

"the fruit of the vine" - not clearly taught to be wine or juice - leaves room for freedom.

- The Bread and the Cup seemed to take place in conjunction with the Passover meal. But these two elements were introduced in a new way with a new significance.
- The Passover pointed not only to the redemptive work of God in the past, but it also pointed to the redemptive work of a future Messiah - that day was now here!
- The Passover was no longer necessary because something greater was here and had taken its place.
- Psalm 22 -
- Isaiah 53 -

The Passover Meal	The Lord's Supper	The Marriage Supper of the Lamb
Exodus 12	Matt., Mark, Luke	Eph. 5, Rev. 19:6-9
A Full Meal	Bread & Cup	Feast
A Sacrificial Lamb	Sacrificed Messiah	Jesus in His Glory
We Participate & Eat	We Participate & Eat	Groom & Bride
We Remember/Look Forward	We Remember/Look Forward	Fellowship & Worship
It Points to the Coming Messiah	It Points to Return of Jesus	Fully Present
Old Covenant	New Covenant	Consummation

The Future of the Lord's Supper - The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Ephesians 5:25-32 – Jesus loves the church like a husband loves his bride.

Revelation 19:6-9 – One day the church no longer must look back to remember Jesus. We will sit and feast with Him in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. His presence will be personal, actual, and eternal with His Bride, the church (including you and me!).

Instructions on the Lord's Supper - 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 11:17-34

It is for the church

1 Corinthians 10:17 - "we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread"

11:17 - "because you come together"

11:18 - "when you come together as a church"

11:20 - "When you meet together"

11:33 - "when you come together to eat"

11:34 - "so that you will not come together for judgment"

- The way we partake should try to represent this unity that we have together as the body of Christ.
- Some take from the same loaf and cup. Others partake at the same time.

Implications

Where can we celebrate the Lord's Supper?

- This is to be done as the church and with the church.
- It does appear that this was done at times in homes. The church in many cities met in homes and in many instances the church gathered together at a particular location and then scattered to homes throughout the week.

- It is possible that a smaller group of believers (who are still the church) may be able to take communion together, but it is certainly appropriate when the church as a whole is gathered.

What kind of meal is this?

- It seems that Jesus performed the Last Supper (the introduction of the sacrament) after a Passover meal.
- The Corinthians were participating in a full meal either with the Lord's Supper or as the Lord's Supper.
- Yet, Paul sees that the Corinthians have used this as an opportunity to display their wealth, over indulge, show favoritism, and lose the purpose of the Lord's Supper all together.
- This is a warning that should be heard by all churches. There is a seriousness to the Lord's Supper that should be balanced with the joy, celebration, and relational nature of this meal.
- The bread and the drink must never take a back seat or be lessened in value. It is possible for a full meal to be had, but the spiritual main course must be honoring, remembering, and celebrating Jesus.
- There is a unifying nature to this meal

How often?

"as often as you drink it" - 1 Corinthians 10:25

- In God's wisdom, there is no set frequency.
- Some churches do it quarterly while others do it weekly. We can't judge others, we should never feel we have it right and everyone else has it wrong.
- We also should not feel bound by our present tradition. There is a freedom to change based upon the needs of the congregation.
- A balance must be struck where the meal receives its appropriate level of honor and value, and simultaneously we must remember how badly we need to consistently be reminded of the work of Jesus.



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