

MICHIGAN BIBLE SCHOOL

March – April 2006
Revised August 2009

“THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH”

Instructor:
Charles Coats
4514 Grand River East
Webberville, MI 48892

E-Mail: clcoats@cablespeed.com

The information in this book was prepared for a study of the New Testament church as part of the Michigan Bible School, a work of the church of Christ West, 291 Spring Street, Plymouth, Michigan.

This material was prepared by Charles Coats who works with the church of Christ that meets at 340 North Summit Street, Webberville, Michigan. This information is made available in book form to be used in spreading God's word throughout the world.

PERMISSION IS GRANTED TO FREELY REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL TO BE USED IN PRIVATE STUDY, HOME BIBLE STUDIES, BIBLE CLASSES, OR IN ANY OTHER WAY TO HELP IN TEACHING OTHERS THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH
Table of Contents

The prophecy concerning and the establishment of the church	4
The church is a blood-bought institution	5
The organization of the church	6
The worship of the church	20
The work of the church	28
The purity of the church	34

I. THE PROPHECY CONCERNING AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

1. For many, the church is an afterthought of God. It was something put in place until Christ could come back and establish his kingdom on Earth (Premillennialism).
2. They fail to realize that the church was always in the mind of God and it was this that Jesus came to establish.
3. Most will agree that Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost (Lk. 19:10), but they do not understand through what means Jesus would accomplish this salvation.
4. The church in prophecy
 - A. Isa. 2:1-4
 - 1) It would be established in the last days (2; cf. 1 Tim. 4:1).
 - 2) All nations shall flow into it (2; cf. Mk. 16:15; Acts 2).
 - 3) The word of the Lord would be sounded forth from Jerusalem (3; cf. Acts 1,2; Eph. 3:10,11).
 - 4) Peace would reign within it (4; cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; Gal. 3:28).
 - B. Dan. 2:44
 - 1) It would be established in the days of the Roman Empire (cf. Lk. 3:1).
 - 2) It will never be destroyed (cf. Matt. 16:18).
 - 3) It will spread throughout the world (cf. Acts 8:4; Col. 1:23).
 - C. Micah 4:1-3
 - 1) It would be established in the last days (1).
 - 2) People would come to it (1,2; cf. Acts 2:47).
 - 3) The word of the Lord would go forth from Jerusalem (2).
 - 4) Peace would reign within (3).
 - D. Matt. 3:2 – John’s teaching that the kingdom is at hand.
 - E. Matt. 10:7 – Jesus’ instructions to teach that the kingdom is at hand
 - F. Matt. 16:18
 - 1) Jesus would build his church.
 - 2) The gates of Hades will not prevail against it. Thus, it will never be destroyed.
5. The church established
 - A. As we have noted in the prophecies above, the church would be established in Jerusalem.
 - B. In Mk. 9:1, Jesus said the people would see the kingdom come with power in their lifetime.
 - C. In Lk. 24:47, Jesus told the apostles that the preaching of the word would begin in Jerusalem.
 - D. In Lk. 24:49, Jesus told them to go and wait in Jerusalem.
 - E. Acts 1:4 instructs them to wait for the promise of the Father and Acts 1:8 tells them they would receive power after the Holy Ghost came upon them.

- F. On the day of Pentecost, they received the power promised by the Father when the Holy Ghost came upon them (Acts 2:1-4).
 - G. With the preaching of the word here in Jerusalem, those who obeyed the message were saved (Acts 2:41).
 - H. The New Testament clearly teaches us that the saved were added to the church (Acts 2:47). Thus, Acts 2 records the fulfillment of prophecy concerning the church. Not an afterthought, but the fulfillment of the plan of God.
 - I. It would be in the church that men would be saved (Eph. 5:23).
6. Christ (1 Pet. 1:20) and his church (Eph. 3:10,11) were in the mind of God before God created the world.

II. THE CHURCH IS A BLOOD-BOUGHT INSTITUTION

1. The value of any thing is determined by what a person is willing to give for something.
2. The greatest price that can be paid is to give one's life for something. Those who see such a sacrifice understand how valuable this was to that person.
3. Of all the institutions man can be a part of on this Earth, there is none as great as the church. This is true, not only for what the church does for us, but because of what the church cost.
4. To give the possibility of salvation to every person would require a sacrifice for the sins of all people. This sacrifice would have to be acceptable to God in order to accomplish its purpose. God expected a pure and unblemished sacrifice. God would expect a sacrifice that would be adequate for the cleansing of the sins of all mankind.
 - A. The animal sacrifices of the Old Law were good for what they were intended, but were not adequate for the cleansing of the sins of all mankind (Heb. 10:4).
 - B. No human could be an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of all mankind because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).
 - C. Would there be a sacrifice that could accomplish all of this – that is, be both perfect and adequate to cleanse the sins of all mankind?
 - 1) Fortunately, Jesus was that great sacrifice (Heb. 10:10).
 - 2) He was perfect (Heb. 4:15), and adequate (Heb. 10:12; Acts 2:36; Rev. 17:14).
 - 3) Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift (2 Cor. 9:15).
5. Paul stated it so simply: "*which he hath purchased with his own blood*" (Acts 20:28).
6. Jesus died for our sins so we would live for him (2 Cor. 5:15).
7. Blood-bought and precious in the eyes of God.

III. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

1. Because of the many attacks on the organization of the church, especially the work of the elders, it is important for us to look carefully at what God has said on the subject of the organization of the church.
2. We will see how God organized the local church and the work that he put in place for all of those who are members of the church.
3. In this lesson, we will start by looking the work of the elders and deacons and continue by looking at their qualifications.
4. God commissioned elders in every church (congregation).
 - A. In Acts 14:23, Paul and Barnabas, on their return trip during their 1st journey, appointed elders in every church.
 - B. When Paul wrote to Titus, he charged him to “ordain elders in every city” (Tit. 1:5).
 - C. The church at Philippi had elders and deacons (Phil. 1:1).
 - D. God set up some to be elders (“pastors”) (Eph. 4:11).
 - E. In Acts 20:17, Paul speaks with the elders from the congregation at Ephesus.
 - F. James tells the brethren to call for the elders of the church (Jas. 5:14).
 - G. The Hebrew writer reminds us that the elders are over us, that is they specifically rule over a local congregation (Heb. 13:7,17).
 - H. When Peter wrote to the brethren, he exhorted the “elders which are among you” (1 Pet. 5:1).
5. Terms used to describe the elders
 - A. Bishops (“*episcopes*”) – superintendence (1 Tim. 3:1)
 - B. Elders (“*presbuteros*”) – older, senior (1 Pet. 5:1)
 - C. Pastors (“*poimen*”) – shepherd (Eph. 4:11)
6. The work of the elders
 - A. Acts 20:28,29
 - 1) To feed the flock of God
 - 2) To guard the flock of God
 - B. 1 Tim. 5:17 – To rule (“*to stand over in rank, to preside*”) well
 - C. Tit. 1:9-11
 - 1) To hold fast the faithful word
 - 2) To stop the mouths of false teachers
 - D. Heb. 13,7,17
 - 1) To rule (“*to lead, to command*”) over the congregation
 - 2) To be proper examples for the church
 - 3) To watch over the souls of the members as they that must give an account of their overseeing
 - E. 1 Pet. 5:1-4
 - 1) To feed the flock of God
 - 2) To oversee the congregation
 - 3) Be proper examples for the congregation
 - 4) To rule as those who will give an answer to the Chief Shepherd

7. It must always be understood that elders do not make laws for God. God has already set his laws in place and these cannot be changed. Elders work to make certain that the word of God is being practiced by the congregation and rule in areas of expediency (that is, in the areas of how best to carry out God's will). Elders will have to make several decisions on how best to implement God's desires, but they cannot decide not to do those things which God has commanded and set in place for us to do.
8. As elders are those who watch on behalf of our souls, their work is a very serious task. We are commanded to submit to them (Heb. 13:17) and help them in fulfilling the serious responsibilities they have.
9. Elders are **special** people with **special** qualifications for a **special** work.
10. What about Deacons?
 - A. Deacon means "*an attendant, a waiter, minister, servant*".
 - B. The qualifications given in 1 Tim. 3 help us to understand that while we are all to be servants, there is a special office that God has set in place for certain people to fulfill the task of serving.
 - C. The closest parallel to this is that which is seen in Acts 6, when the apostles appointed seven men to look after the work of taking care of the widows that had been neglected.
 - D. In Philippi, the deacons are mentioned with the elders. By implication, one cannot have deacons without elders.
 - E. That this work is also a serious work is seen in 1 Tim. 3:13, where the deacons that use the office well purchase to themselves a good degree ("*step, grade*"). That is, they will be rewarded for their faithfulness in fulfilling this role.
 - F. Since they are mentioned with the elders, it is easy for us to understand that the deacons' work would be to assist the elders in fulfilling the necessary tasks in working with the local congregation.
 - G. While deacons certainly have a responsibility to the souls of all those around (as all Christians do), their particular work is differentiated from the elders as the deacons are never said to have to give an account for the souls of the congregation.
 - H. Certainly, wise elders will give to the deacons the tasks that would allow the elders to have more time in the spiritual side of the church.
11. What does it mean when we see qualifications?
 - A. In 1 Tim. 3 and Tit. 1, we find the qualifications God gives for those who would serve in the positions of elders and deacons.
 - B. To the elders, he says one "must" be (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7). After discussing the qualifications of elders, God says of the deacons "likewise" (1 Tim. 3:8). This helps us to understand that these men are to meet all of these qualifications.
 - C. Over the years, many have worked to reduce these qualifications to "suggestions" rather than requirements. To many, as long as the person is a "good" person, they can be an elder or deacon.

They have applied their own reasoning to these qualifications and have basically eliminated what is said within these passages.

- D. The existence of qualifications automatically tells us that not every man can be an elder or a deacon. God has his own criteria for the person he wants to serve in these capacities.
- E. God, in his word, looked for special people to fulfill his tasks.
 - 1) God took away Saul's right to rule over Israel and "*sought him a man after his own heart*" (1 Sam. 13:14).
 - 2) Not just anyone could be an apostle, but only those who had --
 - a. Been with them all the time Jesus went in and out among them (Acts 1:21)
 - b. Had been with them from the baptism of John until Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:22)
 - 3) When they needed men to take care of the needs of the Grecian widows, they were instructed to find men who were --
 - a. Of honest report (Acts 6:3).
 - b. Full of the Holy Ghost (Acts 6:3).
 - c. Full of wisdom (Acts 6:3).
- F. Because many have ignored the qualifications God has set forth, a great deal of harm has been done to the Lord's church because the wrong men were in the position of guiding the flock. Because they lacked the qualifications God set forth, they did not lead in the direction God wanted the church to go.
- G. While it may be difficult to find men who are qualified, if we want the Lord's church to go in the direction God desires, we must make certain that we only appoint men as elders and deacons who meet the qualifications God has set forth. The qualifications assure us that we will have godly men serving in such important roles.

12. A review of the organization of the church

- A. As we have noted, while there were several offices in the church in the 1st Century, some of these no longer exist.
 - 1) There are no apostles today. These men were chosen by God to perform a special work. The last of these apostles was Paul (1 Cor. 15:8,9).
 - 2) There are no prophets today. These men were chosen by God for the special purpose of instructing others in his word. They spoke to kings (1 Kgs. 13,22) and the nation of Israel (Jeremiah, Isaiah). They spoke to pagan cities (Jonah) and nations (Obadiah). These were special tasks with special messages.
- B. Although these offices no longer exist, there are others that are still in existence.

- 1) While all Christians are to take the word out into the world (Mk. 16:15), there are those who have made this their work. They are called evangelists (Eph. 4:15), ministers (1 Tim. 4:6), and preachers (Rom. 10:14).
- 2) There are also those who teach the gospel. Eph. 4:15 and 1 Tim. 3:1 show these to be different from the rest of the Christians.
- 3) In 1 Tim. 2:7 and 2 Tim. 1:11, we find the words “preacher” and “teacher” used to describe the various work of Paul. The word “preacher” means “*a herald, a public crier*”. The word “teacher” means “*an instructor, master, doctor, teacher*”. The distinction of the preacher is that it is a public proclamation, as opposed to a teacher who instructs in a more private level. Paul described his work as being both public and private (Acts 20:20).
- 4) The New Testament also shows us there are two other offices still in existence in the church. The office of elder (pastor) (Eph. 4:15; 1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1), and the office of deacon (1 Tim. 3).

13. The qualifications of elders

- A. As we have seen, that qualifications exist means that some will not be qualified to serve in this capacity. And, since God will judge us according to his word (Jn. 12:48), it is important for us to understand these qualifications and to make certain that if we are elders (or wanting to be) we meet these qualifications.
- B. It must also be noted that a person desiring to be an elder must meet all of these qualifications, and those who are elders must maintain all of these qualifications. We cannot pick and choose the one’s we want to keep, nor should we work to explain away what God has instructed us in the lists of qualifications. (NOTE: We can no more remove a part of God’s plan of salvation than we can remove a part of God’s qualifications for elders and deacons!)
- C. Those who do not meet and keep the qualifications cannot serve in the position of elder.
- D. What are the qualifications?
 - 1) Desire (1 Tim. 3:1)
 - a. “*To stretch one’s self out in order to grasp something, to reach after or desire something*”
 - b. An elder must want the work and responsibility of this office. Not everyone has the desire to serve in this capacity.

- 2) Blameless (1 Tim. 3:2)
 - a. *“not arrested, inculpable, unrebukable”*
 - b. While some may charge the elder with some sin, this charge cannot be substantiated in this person’s life. That is, an elder is not a person who allows sin to go uncorrected in his life.
- 3) Blameless/blameless as the steward of God (Tit. 1:6,7)
 - a. *“That cannot be called to account, unprovable, unaccused, blameless”*
 - b. Although a different word is used in the text, it carries with it the same meaning as found in the word “blameless” above.
 - c. Beyond that, Paul reminds them that they are the stewards of that which God has given them (the church – Heb. 13:7,17). As stewards, they must be faithful (1 Cor. 4:2).
- 4) Husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6)
 - a. *“husband of one wife”* or *“a one woman man”*
 - b. This qualification covers two areas.
 - i. The elder must be married.
 - ii. The elder must not have more than one wife.
 - c. An elder whose wife dies while he is serving as an elder is no longer qualified to be an elder.
 - d. An elder’s wife is his aide in his work. (See “An Elder’s Wife” at the end of this section)
- 5) Vigilant (1 Tim. 3:2)
 - a. *“sober, temperate, abstaining from wine”*
 - b. An elder must be in control of self and always on guard.
- 6) Sober (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8)
 - a. *“of sound mind, sane, in one’s senses, curbing one’s desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate”*
 - b. Someone once asked about senility or other issues where one is not able to make rational decisions. This qualification helps us to understand that an elder must be of sound mind.
- 7) Of good behavior (1 Tim. 3:2)
 - a. *“well arranged, seemly, modest; of a man living with decorum, a well-ordered life”*
 - b. An elder must live a life that is orderly and upright.
- 8) Given to hospitality/Lover of hospitality (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8)
 - a. *“hospitable, generous to guests”*

- b. An elder must be encouraging in fellowship, open to others, and accessible. People must feel welcome in his house and in his presence.
- 9) Apt to teach (1 Tim. 3:2)
- a. *“apt and skillful in teaching”*
 - b. An elder must not only possess the ability to teach but must teach. One of the ways elders lead is by example. If an elder wants others to teach, then he must teach.
- 10) Not given to wine (1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7)
- a. *“given to wine, drunken”*
 - b. The term “given” used here carries with it the idea of addiction. Under “vigilant”, the elder abstains from wine. Here, he is not under the influence of wine.
 - c. It almost seems redundant to give this qualification, but it helps us to understand that an elder is never to be partaking in alcoholic beverages, regardless of the situation. Some would argue that being sociable makes something acceptable that would normally be wrong. God helps us to understand that this is not so.
- 11) No striker (1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7)
- a. *“bruiser, ready with a blow; a pugnacious, contentious, quarrelsome person”*
 - b. He is a man of a meek and quiet spirit. He is in control of his actions.
- 12) Not greedy of filthy lucre (1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7)
- a. *“not loving money, not avaricious”*
 - b. An elder is not greedy. He understands that the love of money is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10).
- 13) Patient (1 Tim. 3:3)
- a. *“seemly, suitable, equitable, fair, mild, gentle”*
 - b. This speaks a great deal of the character of an elder.
- 14) Not a brawler (1 Tim. 3:3)
- a. *“not contentious”*
 - b. An elder is not one who loses his temper. An elder must listen carefully and make decisions not based on emotion, but what is best for the cause of Christ.
- 15) Not covetous (1 Tim. 3:3)
- a. *“not loving money, not avaricious”*
 - b. Between this qualification and “not greedy of filthy lucre”, an elder understands that money (things) is not that important.

- 16) Ruleth well his own house (1 Tim. 3:4)
- a. *“to be over, to superintend, preside over, to be a protector or guardian, to give aid, to care for, give attention to”*
 - b. Neither an elder’s wife nor his children control the home. He is the one in charge of his home.
 - c. This qualification and the one following it help us to understand how important an elder’s home life is in his work. A home out of control is not a good indicator of a man who we should want overseeing the church.
- 17) Having his children in subjection with all gravity (1 Tim. 3:4,5)
- a. Subjection – *“the act of subjecting, obedience, subjection”*
 - b. Gravity – *“dignity, gravity, majesty, sanctity, honor, probity, purity”*
 - c. The word “children” that is used here is both plural in the English and the Greek. An elder (singular) must have more than one child.
 - d. An elder’s children must live honorably, seriously, and in obedience to their father. Even away from home, these children must stay with the teachings of their father and show that he has brought them up in the *“nurture and admonition of the Lord”* (Eph. 6:4).
 - e. Some would say that this qualification only applies while the children are at home. In all honesty, this leaves us in a quandary when we find that most people considered for the eldership do not have any children at home. Their children have already grown up and, in many cases, have started families of their own. The only way this qualification can be understood is that it applies to the elder’s children regardless of whether they are living at home or not.
 - f. God helps us to understand the seriousness of the faithfulness of an elder’s children when he uses this qualification as a test of how well the elder will do in overseeing the church (1 Tim. 3:5). If he cannot oversee his house, how can he oversee the house of God?
- 18) Not a novice (1 Tim. 3:6)
- a. *“newly planted, new convert, neophyte”*
 - b. An elder cannot be a new Christian, because he will be filled with pride and fall into condemnation.

- 19) Good report of them which are without (1 Tim. 3:7)
- a. Good report – *“a testimony, testifying”*
 - b. In order for one to serve as an elder, the man must be spoken of in a good way by those outside of the body of Christ. He must be a reputable, honest, and upright man in his community.
 - c. Jesus grew in favor with God and man (Lk. 2:52). The early church had favor with all the people (Acts 2:47). We are to provide things that are honest in the sight of all men (Rom. 12:17) and follow that which is good (1 Thess. 5:15).
 - d. We cannot reach those in the world unless our lives are an open book that shows Christ living in us.
- 20) Faithful children not accused of riot or unruly (Tit. 1:6)
- a. Faithful – *“trustworthy, faithful”*
 - b. Riot – *“incorrigibility; an abandoned, dissolute, life; profligacy, prodigality”*
 - c. Unruly – *“that cannot be made subject, disobedient, unruly, refractory”*
 - d. As with the qualification for children in 1 Tim. 3:4,5, Titus is exhorted to look for men who have trained their children to be the children of God.
- 21) Not self-willed (Tit. 1:7)
- a. *“self-pleasing, self-willed, arrogant”*
 - b. An elder is one who is humble, who does not think of himself more than he ought (Rom. 12:3).
- 22) Not soon angry (Tit. 1:7)
- a. *“prone to anger, irascible”*
 - b. An elder is under control. He is not easily provoked.
- 23) Lover of good men (Tit. 1:8)
- a. *“loving goodness”*
 - b. He loves that which is good and those that do good. He is much like Philemon who had a love and faith toward all saints (Phile. 5).
- 24) Just (Tit. 1:8)
- a. *“righteous, observing divine and human laws”*
 - b. He is obedient to God (see Tit. 1:9) and is obedient to the laws of the land (Rom. 13:1-5; Tit. 3:1). He is an example of a godly man.
- 25) Holy (Tit. 1:8)
- a. *“undefiled by sin; free from wickedness; religiously observing every moral obligation; pure; holy; pious”*
 - b. His desire is to be like God (1 Pet. 1:15,16).

26) Temperate (Tit. 1:8)

- a. *“controlling one’s self, temperate, continent”*
- b. He practices self-control (2 Pet. 1:6).

27) Holding fast the faithful word (Tit. 1:9-11)

- a. Holding fast – *“to keep one’s self directly opposite to any one, hold to him firmly, cleave to”*
- b. An elder will possess the ability to use the word of God to convict those in error and stop the work of false teachers. He will defend the word of God (Phil. 1:17).

14. The qualifications of deacons

A. The Bible teaches us that as there are qualifications for elders, there are also qualifications for deacons. And, they are just as serious (*“likewise”* – 1 Tim. 3:8)!

B. These qualifications are:

1) Grave (1 Tim. 3:8)

- a. *“august, venerable, reverend; to be venerated for character; honorable”*
- b. Since we do not worship men or angels (Acts 10:25,26; Rev. 19:10), this qualification is to be understood to talk about his uprightness in life. He is honest and reputable.

2) Not double-tongued (1 Tim. 3:8)

- a. *“double-tongued; double in speech; saying one thing with one person, another with another”*
- b. His speech is the same with all. His speech is always with grace (Col. 4:6).

3) Not given to much wine (1 Tim. 3:8)

- a. Given – *“to turn the mind to, attend to, be attentive”*
- b. Like the elders, deacons are not to be involved with alcoholic beverages.
- c. Much has been said over the years about the “much wine” used here, as though God restricts the elders to no wine, but the deacons can have a little wine. The emphasis here is not on the amount but on the turning to. Question: If we are saying that it is wrong to turn the mind to a lot of wine, are we saying it is acceptable to God to turn the mind to a little wine? Is it not the case that if the deacons have their minds on alcoholic beverages that this is now “much wine”? If the emphasis is on the quantity, how would we define when one has passed the point of “little wine” and has now gone into “much wine”? God does not want his people guessing what he wants. He clearly does not want

deacons or elders to be involved with alcoholic beverages! By the way, is the next qualification dealing with “filthy lucre” saying it is O.K. to be greedy of “good lucre”? The “much” in this qualification is there for emphasis, not for quantity.

- 4) Not greedy of filthy lucre (1 Tim. 3:8)
 - a. *“eager for base gain”*
 - b. Like elders, deacons must be upright in their dealings with mankind. They cannot give themselves over to gains which are evil or brought about by evil.
- 5) Holding mystery of faith in a pure conscience (1 Tim. 3:9)
 - a. Holding – *“to have i.q. to hold; to have (hold) in the hand”*
 - b. God wants his people to hold the faith with a pure conscience (1 Tim. 1:5).
- 6) Be proved (1 Tim. 3:10)
 - a. *“to test, to examine, prove, scrutinize”*
 - b. Deacons must have shown themselves qualified and capable of serving in the office of deacon. They must be examined to make certain they are what God wants.
- 7) Blameless (1 Tim. 3:10)
 - a. *“that cannot be called to account; unprovable, unaccused; blameless”*
 - b. Like elders, deacons must live lives that are open to examination and which correct any error that comes into their lives.
- 8) Husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:12)
 - a. *“husband of one wife”*
 - b. Each deacon must be married.
- 9) Ruling their children and their own houses well (1 Tim. 3:12)
 - a. Ruling – *“to be over, to superintend, preside over; to be a protector or guardian; to give aid, to care for; give attention to”*
 - b. The deacon is in charge of his children and his house. Neither his children nor his wife rule the home.

15. The qualifications of the wives

- A. In 1 Tim. 3:11, God gives us what he wants to be found in the wives of these men. Since the deacons are to be similar to elders in their qualifications, it can be understood that the qualifications for wives would apply to both elders and deacons.

B. What does God want in these women?

1) Grave

- a. *“august, venerable, reverend; to be venerated for character; honorable”*
- b. Again, we cannot worship humans, so we must understand this to be talking about a woman who is godly and is held in high esteem because of her godliness.

2) Not slanderers

- a. *“a calumniator, false accuser, slanderer”*
- b. Calumniator means *“to utter malicious false statements, charges, or imputations about; one who injures another’s reputation by uttering these false charges, intending to do so”*.
- c. Such words as gossip and backbite come to mind when we think of this characteristic. The wives will do none of these things.

3) Sober

- a. *“sober, temperate, abstaining from wine”*
- b. She must also stay away from alcoholic beverages. She must be alert at all times.

4) Faithful in all things

- a. *“trusty, faithful”*
- b. She will be a faithful child of God, ever serving, and not seeking to be served.

(The definitions in the sections above are taken from Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible and Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.)

16. It should not be that hard to find elders

A. There are only three qualifications that elders must have that all Christians do not have to have.

- 1) An elder must be married; a Christian is not required to be married.
- 2) An elder must have faithful children; a Christian may not have children or their children may be unfaithful.
- 3) An elder cannot be a new Christian; obviously, every Christian begins his life for Christ as a new Christian.

17. Consider the chart on the next page that shows what God expects of elders in their lives and of all Christians in their lives.

WHAT GOD EXPECTS OF ELDERS

Desires the office
Blameless
Blameless, as the steward of God
Husband of one wife
Vigilant
Sober
Of good behavior
Give to hospitality
Apt to teach
Not given to wine
Not greedy of filthy lucre
Patient/Not soon angry
Not a brawler
Not covetous
Having faithful children
Not novice
Good report of them that are without
Lover of good men
Just
Holy
Temperate
Not self-willed

WHAT GOD EXPECTS OF CHRISTIANS

Acts 8:36,37
2 Pet. 3:14
1 Cor. 4:2

1 Pet. 5:8
1 Thess. 5:8
1 Cor. 13:5
Rom. 12:13
2 Tim. 2:24
Gal. 5:21
Gal. 5:22
2 Tim. 2:24
2 Tim. 2:24
Eph. 5:5

1 Pet. 2:12
Phile. 5-7
Phil. 4:8
1 Pet. 1:15,16
2 Pet. 1:6
1 Pet. 5:6

AN ELDER'S WIFE

Vital to the smooth operation of any local establishment of the Lord's church is a devoted person who has no title, holds no office, and has no authority save that of an ordinary Christian. Yet this person holds the power to disrupt or to expedite the most carefully laid plans and the most important works of the church. This quiet but influential person is an elder's wife.

Elders' wives come in a variety of shapes, sizes, colors and textures. She can usually be found long after services are over, sitting in a parked car by herself – waiting – or in an empty, unheated auditorium after the crowd has gone – waiting. She gets a lot of Bible reading done this way, and she knows where all the songs are in the song book.

She knows the loneliness of long evenings at home while her husband is out trying to correct other people's troubles. She is alone because her children are usually old enough to be occupied with their own pursuits, if they have not left home altogether. So she occupies her time carefully – and waits.

An elder's wife must be as staunch as a rock, as busy as a beaver, as quiet as a mouse, as biblically informed as a preacher, as flexible as a rubber band, and as patient as a mother with triplets.

She must know how to change her plans without notice, how to keep a meal hot and tasty for two hours after it was ready to serve, how to hold her temper – and her tongue – when people criticize her husband, and, most of all, how to use time profitably while she waits for her husband to get out of prolonged conferences.

Hers is the frustration of knowing little and being able to tell less, when people expect her to know all and tell it. She knows the heartache of watching her man

wrestling with a problem not of his own making and which he cannot discuss – even with her. Hers is the responsibility of setting an example of a faithful Christian wife, not because anyone wants or intends to follow it, but simply because her husband is an elder. She has the burden of knowing that, of all the positions and offices in the Lord’s church, her husband occupies one of the two whose qualifications depend on the character and caliber of his wife as well as himself.

An elder’s wife likes a peaceful congregation, worship services, Bible classes, potlucks, children, younger women, going visiting with her husband, opportunities to serve, company, a night when her husband has nowhere to go, getting to go home when the worship services are over, short business meetings, and people who do not cause any trouble.

An elder’s wife is concerned about what people think of her husband, what people think about her, what people think about her husband because of her, whether her children are faithful like she has taught them to be, and members who are not faithful.

Her life is hard, but she would not have it any other way. She loves the Lord with all her heart and feels the warm flow of satisfaction that comes of knowing that she has not only dedicated herself, but even her home, her husband and her family to the service of God and the betterment of His kingdom. She knows that she has a reward in heaven, and she is willing to do more of that which has already learned to do well – wait.

All the trials of body and spirit become trivial by comparison when a man of God, exhausted from long hours of tending the Master’s flock, comes home late at night, takes her in his arms, and says, “I just could not make it without you!”

Adapted

IV. THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

1. If there is one area of the church that is definitely challenged today, it is the worship of the church.
2. Those in the denominational world do not understand the worship of the church. In light of what most have in their religions, the worship of the church is too conservative, not “uplifting enough”.
3. Because we as people like to be entertained, it is easy for us to think that when we worship it must be an entertaining experience. This, for many, is the only way they get anything out of the worship.
4. One area of worship that has been challenged for many years now is the singing portion of our worship. To make this “more meaningful” or “more uplifting”, the mechanical instrument of music has been incorporated. From what used to be a piano or an organ has come full bands!
5. Several in the church no longer believe that we cannot use the mechanical instrument of music when we worship God in song. These would teach us that this issue is not a matter of fellowship.
6. Besides the issue of singing, there is the overall issue of reverence in worship. Again, because we have forgotten about God, and have concerned ourselves with our enjoyment, our worship may degenerate into more of a recreational activity than a gathering before God. We have moved away from the fact that God is the end of our worship.
7. In this portion of our study, we will examine the idea of worship and what God has directed us to do in our worship.
8. What is worship?
 - A. There are three words that are translated in the English by our word “worship”. These are *proskuneo*, *sebomai*, and *latreuo*. Of the three, the first two generally carry with them the idea of worship. The last word is more often translated “serve”.
 - B. A look at these three words:
 - 1) *Proskuneo* – “to fawn or crouch to, that is, to prostrate oneself in homage”
 - 2) *Sebomai* – “to revere, that is, adore” (Used in Matt. 15:9; Acts 18:13 for example)
 - 3) *Latreuo* – “to minister, that is, render religious homage” (Used in Matt. 4:10, Acts 24:14, and Rev. 7:15 for example)
 - C. The idea of worship is to make obeisance to or do reverence to. As we will see, one can worship someone or something other than God. We will also note that not all worship is acceptable worship.
9. Types of worship
 - A. There are various types of worship found in God’s word. Not all of these are good. We must make certain that we worship God “in spirit and in truth”.

- B. What types of worship are mentioned in the Bible?
- 1) Worshipping the devil – Matt. 4:9
 - 2) Worshipping God – Matt. 4:10; Rev. 13:8
 - 3) Vain worship – Matt. 15:9
 - 4) Ignorant worship – Jn. 4:22; Acts 17:23
 - 5) True worship – Jn. 4:23
 - 6) Worshipping the host of heaven (evil things) – Acts 7:42,43
 - 7) Worshipping God contrary to the law of God – Acts 18:13; Ex. 32:4,5
 - 8) Worshipping God in the spirit – Phil. 3:3
 - 9) Will worship (a worship of one's own making) – Col. 2:23
 - 10) Worshipping devils (demons) – Rev. 9:20
 - 11) Worshipping false gods – Rev. 13:8,15; Acts 19:27; Jer. 10:3-5; Isa. 44:9-17
- C. We must understand that just because we claim we are worshipping God, it may be the case that we are not or that our worship is in vain.
10. We cannot worship men or angels.
- A. It is interesting to me the emphasis that people place upon angels. Figurines adorn many homes and pictures hang from many walls. People think that sometimes angels visit them or that they see angels moving about. I believe that if an angel did appear to someone this person would fall down and worship the angel.
 - B. While I can somewhat understand why people might worship an angel, since good angels are of the heavenly host, I cannot understand why anyone would worship a person. It is not unusual for us to find individuals bowing before a person or the image of a person. From the Pope to Mohammed to Hitler, people will find someone to worship along with their ideologies. People worship people who are as fallible as they.
 - C. The Bible is quite clear that we are to only worship God (Matt. 4:10), and that we are not to worship men (Acts 10:25,26) nor angels (Rev. 19:10; 22:8,9).
 - D. When Cornelius fell down to worship Peter, Peter told him to get up for he also was a man (Acts 10:26). Interestingly, this is the same Peter that many teach was the first Pope!
 - E. Men will present themselves as though they are God, but God says these are the ones “*who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God*” (2 Thess. 2:4). These are also described as “*the Wicked*” (2 Thess. 2:8).
 - F. When the angel that revealed the book of Revelation to John stood before John, John fell down to worship him. The angel told John to “*see thou do it not*”. Why? Because he was a fellow servant like John, and we are to worship God (Rev. 19:10; 22:8,9).

G. Those who would exalt angels or men fail to exalt God. God has no equal (Isa. 45:6; Ex. 20:1,2; Deut. 4:39).

11. Reverence in worship

A. Many worship services have devolved into “meet and greets”. We are more concerned about making everyone comfortable, and less concerned about worshipping God in spirit and in truth. We have forgotten that we are before God Almighty.

B. In Psa. 111:9, we find that God’s name is holy and reverend. He is superior to us all.

C. In Jn. 4:24, we are told that those who worship God must worship him in spirit (right motivation/direction) and in truth (right method/as authorized by God).

D. Matt. 4:10 instructs us to worship God only and serve God only.

E. The Christians in Acts 20:7 gathered for the purpose of worshipping God, and were not concerned about the time.

F. We reverence God because it is he who made the heavens, earth, sea, and fountains of water, and all things therein (Rev. 14:7; Ex. 20:11).

G. Neh. 8 gives us great insight into the proper attitude when worshipping God.

1) They stood when the book was opened (vs. 5).

2) They were attentive to the book of the law (vs. 3).

3) They stood for about 6 hours (vs. 3).

4) They bowed their heads and worshipped (vs. 6).

5) What did they have? A respect for God’s word; a love for God’s word; and reverence before God.

12. Dress in worship

A. Whether we want to admit it or not, how we dress says something about how important an event is to us. For instance, we normally dress up for funerals and weddings. If a very special event is happening and we are to attend, we dress up for the occasion.

B. In the Bible, we find two occasions in which dress is discussed when people were coming into the presence of God.

1) Gen. 35:2 shows us Jacob being instructed to go to Bethel and build an altar unto God. Among the instructions that Jacob gave those with him was “*change your garments*”.

2) When God was getting ready to come down to Mt. Sinai, he told the children of Israel to prepare themselves for this event. Part of his instructions was for the Israelites to “*wash their clothes*” (Ex. 19:10).

C. Our dress tells others about us. While we would not dare to “dress down” for the special event in the community, we often do not think about how we dress for the worship assembly. While it is not necessary to go out and buy some fancy clothes, it is necessary that we give God our best (Ecc. 9:10; Col. 3:23).

- D. Let us make certain that when we prepare ourselves for the worship of God, that we do so by giving God our best in all things.
 - E. Please consider this: The God we worship on Sunday morning is the same God we worship on Sunday evening and Wednesday evening. None of the services is a “lesser service”.
13. Worship is not confined to the worship assemblies
- A. In the minds of many, the only time we actually worship God is during our worship assemblies.
 - B. To these people, the things we do outside of the worship assembly do not really matter. That is, the things that would normally be restricted by God’s word inside the worship assembly do not have the same restrictions outside the worship assembly..
 - C. For instance, consider the difference in atmosphere and what is allowed in our worship assemblies and such things as vacation Bible schools, singings, and youth rallies. We have played with the young people for years now when we should have taught them reverence, and now, these youngsters have grown up and they still want to be entertained.
 - D. While it is certainly the case that we gather for specific times of worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17,18; Rom. 16:3-5), it is also the case that we can worship at other times (Acts 20:36; Jas. 5:13).
14. The avenues of worship
- A. While we must worship with the proper attitude (Jn. 4:24), it is also the case that we must worship in the manner God has authorized (Col. 3:17).
 - B. As we examine the worship in the New Testament, we note the following avenues of worship:
 - 1) Singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
 - 2) Preaching (Acts 20:7ff)
 - 3) Giving (2 Cor. 8,9; 1 Cor. 16:1,2)
 - 4) Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17ff)
 - 5) Prayer (Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17)
15. An examination of each of these avenues
- A. Singing
 - 1) Eph. 5:19
 - a. It is a reciprocal action – “*speaking to yourselves*”. That is, all are to sing.
 - b. It is to be done with specific songs – “*psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs*”.
 - i. Psalms – generally refers to the Old Testament Psalms
 - ii. Hymns – generally those songs that are religious that celebrate God.

- iii. Spiritual songs – By definition, non-carnal songs. Songs that are religious and not worldly or of the things of the world.
- c. It is to be done vocally – “*singing*”. Singing is also known as vocal music. It can be done without the aid of a mechanical instrument.
- d. It is to come from within man – “*making melody in your heart*”. “Make melody” comes from a word that means to “twitch or twang”. It is this word that men like to use today to say that we can play a mechanical instrument of music in our singing.
 - i. If this verse authorizes the mechanical instrument, then what it teaches is that those who sing must also play. That is, all of us would have to play an instrument to fulfill this passage.
 - ii. The word translated “making melody” is used in only three other passages in the New Testament, and in each passage, it is translated ‘sing’. In none of these passages do we see any indication that playing an instrument is discussed. (cf. Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Jas. 5:13)
 - iii. Eph. 5:19 teaches us which “instrument” we are to make melody with – the heart.
- e. It is to be to the Lord. That is, God is the audience of our singing. While we teach one another, God is the one we are to please.

2) Col. 3:16

- a. With our singing, we are to teach – “*teaching one another*”. This is a reciprocal action that has us instructing one another. We must pay attention to what we sing, and make certain that we are not singing that which is unscriptural.
- b. With our singing, we are to admonish – “*admonishing one another*”. To admonish is to “*put in mind, caution, reprove gently*”. While we instruct generally, we also specifically caution and reprove one another in order to help assure that we all stay on that straight and narrow path that will lead us into Heaven.
- c. This passage also gives us the songs we are to use – “*psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs*”. This is what God wants us to use in worshipping him in song.
- d. It is to be done with graciousness/thankfulness – “*singing with grace*”. Truly, when we think of all

that God has done for us, we should be willing to express our gratitude in song.

e. As with Eph. 5:19, this verse teaches us that our singing must generate from within – “*in your hearts*”.

f. Again, ultimately our worship in song must be directed to God and pleasing to him – “*to the Lord*”.

3) 1 Cor. 14:15

a. In this passage, singing is compared with praying. Paul writes that he will pray with the spirit and he will pray with the understanding also.

b. Paul teaches us that we should sing with the spirit and understanding also.

c. As serious as prayer is, so is singing.

4) Singing is that which expresses words that can be heard by others and that will instruct others, as well as that which praises God. Therefore, humming, whistling, or other such noises cannot be used in our praise to God.

B. Preaching

1) When the church gathered together to worship God in Acts 20:7, part of what was done was they were taught a lesson from God’s word.

2) We are commanded to preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2) and to go into all the world with the gospel (Mk. 16:15).

3) Our preaching must not express the “wisdom of men” but must set forth God’s will (1 Cor. 1:21-24).

4) It is through the preaching of God’s word that we give people the opportunity to be saved (Rom. 1:16; 1 Pet. 1:23).

5) We have been put in trust with the gospel, and must please God in our preaching (1 Thess. 2:4; Gal. 1:10).

C. Giving

1) One of the things we have the privilege to do is to give of our finances for the purpose of enabling the work of the church.

2) Giving is a burden to many, and when the preacher talks about giving, many will get upset with him.

3) God has instructed us concerning our giving.

a. There is to be a gathering upon the first day of every week (1 Cor. 16:2).

b. Each person is to give (1 Cor. 16:2).

c. We are to give as we have prospered, and we must remember that our blessings come from God (1 Cor. 16:2).

d. We are to first give of ourselves (2 Cor. 8:5).

- e. We must remember that we will reap what we sow (2 Cor. 9:6).
- f. Each person must determine what he or she is to give. There is no such thing as tithing in the New Testament (2 Cor. 9:7).
- g. We are not to give grudgingly. This word comes from a compound word that means “out of sadness”. People do not always enjoy giving and sometimes they do it, but wish they did not have to (2 Cor. 9:7).
- h. We are not to give of necessity. We must not give because we have to, but because we want to (2 Cor. 9:7).
- i. God loves a cheerful giver. It is a great privilege for us to give to support the work of the kingdom of God (2 Cor. 9:7).
- j. We must give remembering that God can supply all our needs (2 Cor. 9:8-10).
- k. We must give understanding that our generosity helps supply the needs of others, and that by doing so, we cause much thanksgiving to God (2 Cor. 9:12-14).
- l. Our giving can never repay what God gave us. We should give abundantly because God did so (2 Cor. 9:15).

D. Lord’s Supper

- 1) The Lord’s Supper is to be observed upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
- 2) The Lord’s Supper is to be taken in the collective gathering of the saints – the assembled body (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17,18).
- 3) The Lord’s Supper is a commemoration of the death of Christ (1 Cor. 11:26).
- 4) Each must examine himself to make certain that they are observing the Lord’s Supper correctly (1 Cor. 11:28,29).
- 5) The emblems for the Lord’s Supper were put into place by Jesus himself (1 Cor. 11:23; cf. Matt. 26:26-29; Mk. 14:22-25; Lk. 22:14-20).
 - a. The bread represents his body that was broken for all (1 Cor. 11:24).
 - b. The fruit of the vine represents his blood that was shed for all (1 Cor. 11:25).
 - c. Both of these elements are unleavened. Alcoholic fruit of the vine is corrupted, and cannot represent the pure sacrifice of Jesus – one who was without sin (Heb. 4:15).

- i. The Lord's Supper was instituted during the Feast of the Unleavened Bread (Matt. 26:17). During this feast, no leavening agent was allowed in the house (Ex. 13:7). Therefore, both the bread and fruit of the vine were without leavening agent. (Grape juice will not ferment without a leavening agent.)
 - ii. The other issue that necessitates unleavened fruit of the vine and bread is that Jesus is our Passover sacrificed for us (1 Cor. 5:7). The Passover sacrifice was unblemished. You cannot represent the unblemished with that which is corrupted.
- 6) The Lord's Supper is a solemn occasion in which we observe and recall the great sacrifice – when Christ gave his life that we might live!

E. Prayer

- 1) Prayer is the privilege we have to address God (Phil. 4:6).
- 2) In prayer, we can make our requests known and express our thankfulness for what God has done for us.
- 3) Sin can cause it to where God will not hear our prayers (Isa. 59:1,2; 1 Pet. 3:7).
- 4) God's ears are open to the righteous (1 Pet. 3:12).
- 5) Prayer is to God through Christ (Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17).
- 6) The benefit of prayer is the peace of God (Phil. 4:6,7).
- 7) We are to pray for those in leadership positions (1 Tim. 2:2).
- 8) We are to pray for all men (1 Tim. 2:1).
- 9) Prayer must be made with the understanding that God can provide us with the answer we need (Jas. 1:6,7).
- 10) Prayer must be made without selfishness being our motivation for asking (Jas. 4:3).
- 11) Our prayers help one another (2 Cor. 1:11).
- 12) Our prayers are not to be used to draw attention to us (Matt. 6:7,8).
- 13) Prayers are answered in various ways.
 - a. Sometimes the answer is "No" -- Lk. 23:42; Jas. 4:3; 1:6,7
 - b. Sometimes the answer is "Yes" – Jas. 5:17.
 - c. Sometimes the answer is "Yes", but it may take some time to receive the answer – Neh. 1:1-4; Neh. 2:1 (From Chisleu, 9th Jewish month, to Nissan, 1st Jewish month, is approximately 4 months.)
 - d. Sometimes the answer is different than the request – 2 Cor. 12:8,9

V. THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

1. While there are various specifics we discuss when we talk about the work of the church, the ultimate work of the church is to seek and save the lost.
2. This task was laid out by Jesus even before the church was established.
 - A. *“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest”* (Jn. 4:35)
 - B. *“Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest”* (Lk. 10:2)
 - C. *“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest”* (Matt. 9:37,38)
3. We are to walk in the footsteps of Jesus
 - A. Jesus came to the Earth and left us an example to follow. As Christians, we must walk in the footsteps of Jesus (1 Pet. 2:21).
 - B. We are to have the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5).
 - C. We are to imitate others as they imitate Christ (1 Cor. 11:1).
 - D. We are to walk in love as Christ walked in love (Eph. 5:2).
 - E. We are to follow God and walk where he is (Eph. 5:1; 1 Jn. 1:7).
 - F. Jesus left us an example to follow
 - 1) Compassion (Matt. 23:37; Jn. 11:35)
 - 2) Doing the will of God (Jn. 4:34)
 - 3) Teaching the word of God (Jn. 12:49)
 - 4) Seeking the salvation of all (Lk. 19:10)
4. We are to serve because we love God
 - A. Our love for Christ is shown by keeping his commandments (Jn. 14:15).
 - B. Our love for God is shown by keeping his commandments (1 Jn. 5:3).
 - C. We love God because he first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19).
5. Christianity is a working religion
 - A. Many like to have their religion do all the work for them. They want to reap whatever benefits there are, but without having to put out any effort.
 - B. Christianity on the other hand requires that all Christians work.
 - C. Consider the following passages from 2 Cor. 4. (Emphasis mine, C.C.)
 - 1) *“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, **we faint not**”* (vs. 1).
 - 2) *“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves **your servants** for Jesus’ sake”* (vs. 5)

- 3) “*But we have this treasure **in earthen vessels**, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us*” (vs. 7)
- 4) “*For which cause we **faint not**; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day*” (vs. 16).
- D. We are to be steadfast in our work knowing that our labor is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58).
- E. Remember this: *Sitting in a church building does not make one a Christian any more than sitting in a chicken house makes one a chicken.*
- F. We are known by our works (Tit. 1:16; Matt. 7:20; Prov. 20:11).
- 6. Christianity is an individual religion
 - A. By this, I mean that Christianity begins with the individual.
 - B. Too often, we get caught up in talking about what the church should be doing without realizing that we are part of the church.
 - C. We expect everyone else to get it right, to improve themselves, to change their actions, and to make things better. Yet, we do not see the same things for us.
 - D. Timothy was exhorted to be an example of the believers (1 Tim. 4:12).
 - E. Titus was commanded to set things in order in the congregations on Crete (Tit. 1:5).
 - F. Philemon was commended because of his faithfulness and benevolence (Phile. 5-7).
 - G. At least 27 individuals are recognized for their faithfulness in Rom. 16:1-15).
 - H. If we want the church to be more active in its work, then we must become more active in the work. The sad story is this: *While **everybody** waited on **somebody** to do what **anybody** could have done, **nobody** did anything.*
 - I. “*If not us, then who? If not now, then when?*”
- 7. We must never waver from the work that is set before us
 - A. The early church was threatened, and they prayed for more boldness to proclaim the word of God (Acts 4:29).
 - B. The early church was persecuted, and they went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:4).
 - C. Nothing should separate us from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:35-39).
 - D. We must continue to run the race well (Gal. 5:7; 2 Thess. 3:13).
 - E. We will reap if we do not faint (Gal. 6:9; Matt. 24:13).
 - F. Do not think that the trials that come upon us are a reason to waver, rather we should commit ourselves to God (1 Pet. 4:12-19).
 - G. Remember that we are not the only ones who suffer for Christ (1 Pet. 5:9).

- H. We are to give diligence to make our calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:10).
 - I. We must realize that we cannot do anything but serve God (1 Cor. 9:16).
 - J. We must please God and not men (1 Thess. 2:4).
8. What is the work of the church?
- A. While all that we do is for the salvation of mankind, it is the case there are various areas of work to accomplish this task.
 - B. Please note the following:
 - 1) Seeking to save those who have never heard the word of God (Matt. 28:19,20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:46,47; 1 Cor. 1:21).
 - 2) Seeking to save those who were faithful and have now fallen away from God (Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19,20; 1 Cor. 5:5).
 - 3) Encouraging those who are members of the church (Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:25; 2 Cor. 12:19; Eph. 4:29).
 - 4) Helping those who are in need, whether members of the church or not (Acts 2:45; 4:34,35; 11:29; Gal. 6:10).
9. The work of the church will never end
- A. For the year 2000 (the last census taken in the United States), the following statistics were seen:
 - 1) The population of the United States was 281,421,906.
 - 2) The population of the state of Michigan was 9,938,444.
 - B. According to the United States Census Bureau, the world population in the year 2000 was estimated to be 6,081,527,896. In 2006, the world population is estimated to be a little over 6,500,000,000. By the year 2013, the world population is projected to pass the 7,000,000,000 mark.
 - C. According to the latest statistics from the United States Census Bureau, every second 4.2 children are born and 1.8 people die. This produces a gain in population of 2.4 people every second. This would mean:
 - 1) For every minute, the world population grows by 144 people.
 - 2) For every hour, it grows by 8,640 people.
 - 3) For every day, it increases by 207,360 people.
 - 4) For every 30 day period, the world's population increases by 6,220,800.
 - 5) If these statistics hold true, in 30 days, more people will be added to the world's population than the total number of people estimated to be in the church worldwide!
 - D. Truly, we can see that the field is white unto harvest. And, even if we could convert one person every second, we would never catch up with the number of people in the world.

10. The work of the church in teaching those who have never been Christians
- A. We are the instruments that God has in spreading his word (1 Cor. 1:21; 2 Cor. 4:7), therefore he commissioned his people to take his message into the world (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15; Acts 1:8).
 - B. All of us can teach God's word. The key to being able to teach is study (2 Tim. 2:15), which brings about growth in the knowledge of God (2 Pet. 3:18).
 - C. There are some obstacles that we have to overcome. These obstacles are generally self-imposed, and can be easily overcome. All we have to do is have our priorities right (Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:1,2). What are these obstacles?
 - 1) **Fear.** Too often, we are just afraid to say anything. Sometimes it is because we do not want to lose a friendship or the love of a family member. It could be that we are afraid of what we might be asked. To overcome this obstacle, remember that Jesus expects us to love him more than friends or family or even self (Lk. 14:26,27), and always keep in mind that the fearful will have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8).
 - 2) **Time constraints.** How often do we say that we just do not have time? To be honest, what we usually mean by this is that what is being asked of us interferes with what we want to do. People make time for the things they want to do. It would be helpful for us to remember what we have been encouraged to do with our time and why we were encouraged to use our time wisely: "*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil*" (Eph. 5:15,16).
 - 3) **Lack of self-esteem.** We hear people belittling themselves constantly. They talk about what they cannot do. They talk about what they do not know. They let others know the abilities they lack. I have found it interesting over the years to note that people only lack certain abilities when someone asks them to do something. Otherwise, they seem to be able to do just about anything they put their minds to. If it is knowledge of God's word that we lack, then we need to get into the Book – study the Bible. Like the Psalmist, we need to shout, "*O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day*" (Ps. 119:97). It should also help us to overcome this obstacle when we consider that God does not accept excuses (Ex. 4:1-14).
 - D. What can I do to teach the lost?
 - 1) Go to someone privately (Acts 20:20).
 - 2) Preach the word publicly (Acts 20:20).

- 3) Write letters. (Remember that the New Testament books were letters that both encouraged the faithful and corrected the erring.)
 - 4) Use the media that is available
 - a. Radio
 - b. Television
 - c. E-mail
 - d. Internet (to the extent that you control what is going on)
 - 5) Give someone a tract that is true to the word
 - 6) Offer to study the Bible with them by mail (Bible Correspondence Courses or just answering questions as they ask)
 - 7) Respond to questions that are asked (even if there is only a short time to give an answer).
 - 8) Always let it be known that you are willing to discuss the Bible at any time.
 - 9) Support those who preach the word (3 Jn. 5,6; Phile. 7).
 - 10) REMEMBER: No one of these things is exclusive of the others. We should use every means we can to spread the word throughout the world.
11. The work of the church in restoring the erring
- A. As Christians, part of our work is to help those who have drifted from Christ to come back to Christ.
 - B. Gal. 6:1 teaches us to restore those who are in error. The word “restore” that is used here is a word that fishermen used when mending the holes in their nets. As Christians, when we help a brother return to the fold, we repair a “hole” in the “net” of Christianity. We help remove a stumbling block.
 - C. Jas. 5:19,20 shows us that by helping a fellow Christian return to the fold makes it where their sins can be taken care of and they are now in a position to be saved.
 - D. In private matters, we are taught to go to the person in error and give them the opportunity to repent. If they do, then nothing else needs to be done. If they will not, then we must go back to them and take with us 2 or 3 who will be witnesses to our discussion. If repentance comes about, then nothing else needs to be done. If not, then we must bring the matter before the church so all can work to restore the one in error. If repentance comes about, then we have accomplished our goal and much rejoicing will be in all of our lives. If no repentance is there, then we are to have no fellowship with the unrepentant person. (Matt. 18:15-17).
 - E. In public matters, we are to withstand the erring Christian publicly and call them to repentance (Gal. 2:14). Note that those

who walked in sin were often called out by name in the Bible (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 4:10,14).

- F. Eventually, in whatever matter we are handling, it may come to the point of withdrawing fellowship from that person. The Bible teaches us to do so, and shows us what must take place if we do have to withdraw from someone.
 - 1) Rom. 16:17,18; Tit. 3:10; 2 Thess. 3:6 and 1 Cor. 5 all teach us to withdraw from those who will not repent.
 - 2) When we do withdraw from that person, then the following results:
 - a. We are to avoid them (Rom. 16:17). That is, we cannot company with them.
 - b. We are not even to eat with this person (1 Cor. 5:11).
 - c. We are to reject this person (Tit. 3:10).
 - d. We are to admonish this person as a brother (2 Thess. 3:15).
 - 3) We discipline a fellow Christian who is in error because we want to save their souls (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Thess. 3:14).

12. The work of the church in benevolence

- A. According to *Webster's*, benevolence means "*an inclination or tendency to do kind or charitable acts*". This certainly should be one of the characteristics of a Christian (cf. Gal. 2:10).
- B. Among other things that we are to be, Christians are to be kind and tenderhearted (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:12).
- C. We are to take care of the needs of our fellow Christians (Acts 2:45; 4:35).
- D. We are to take care of the needs of our families (1 Tim. 5:8,16).
- E. We are to take care of the needs of the fatherless (Jas. 1:27).
- F. We are to provide for the needs of the widows (Jas. 1:27).
- G. We are to use the opportunities presented to us to do good unto all men, even those who are not members of the church (Gal. 6:10).
- H. It is the work of all Christians, both privately and collectively, to be benevolent.

BENEVOLENCE IN ACTION

“I GAVE HIM HALF OF MINE”

He’s just a little orphan
Who goes to school with me;
And he ain’t got any parents, cause
His folks is dead, you see.

And when he sees my toys and things,
My, but his eyes just shine;
And he ain’t got any marbles,
So I gave him half of mine.

And one time I just told my Ma,
How he don’t have much fun,
Cause he ain’t got no Ma or Pa,
Our aunt or anyone.

And when I told her how I thought,
That it would be just fine,
Cause he ain’t got no Mother
If I’d give him half of mine.

He ain’t my brother, really true,
He’s just an orphan, so
My Ma she took him cause she knew,
He had no place to go.

I’m awful glad we’ve got him and,
My Ma thinks it’s just fine,
He didn’t have no Mother, so,
I GAVE HIM HALF OF MINE.

~Anonymous

VI. THE PURITY OF THE CHURCH

1. Because Christ will deliver the church to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24) and he will do so as a pure body (Eph. 5:26,27), it is necessary for the church to keep itself pure (1 Tim. 5:22).
2. Sadly, many in the church have defiled themselves with the world and have become individually worldly people and congregationally denominational. The world, which should be on the outside of the church, has infiltrated the church and polluted what should be the pure body of Christ.

3. How do we keep the church pure?
 - A. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them (Eph. 5:11)
 - 1) Have no fellowship (“share in company with”). We are not to participate or share in their works of darkness (sin).
 - 2) Reprove (“confute – to refute decisively; admonish”). We are to stand up against them and refute their error.
 - B. Be not partakers (“co-participant”) with them. We have nothing to do with their sins.
 - C. We are to rebuke and if necessary sever our relationships with our brethren.
 - 1) Paul admonished the brethren at Corinth and told them that if they did not correct their errors he would not spare them when he came (2 Cor. 13:2).
 - 2) John rebuked Diotrephes and told him that he would bring his deeds to remembrance when he came (3 Jn. 10).
 - 3) Paul withstood Peter to his face (Gal. 2:11-14).
 - 4) Paul told the Corinthian brethren to withdraw from the brother who was in sin (1 Cor. 5).
 - 5) Hymanaeus and Alexander were given over to Satan that they might learn not to blaspheme (1 Tim. 1:19,20).
 - 6) Rom. 16:17,18; 2 Thess. 3:6; Tit. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:20; Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19,20
 - D. We are to withdraw ourselves from those who do not walk in the light.
 - 1) 1 Jn. 1:7 – Our fellowship with each other depends on us walking in the light.
 - 2) 2 Cor. 6:14-18 – Light is so far from darkness that there is no possibility of fellowship. Therefore, for a faithful congregation to have fellowship with an unfaithful congregation would require that the faithful congregation become like the unfaithful congregation. This is why God told us to come out from among them and be separate.
 - 3) Congregations that have walked away from God have no fellowship with God and are removed from God (Rev. 2:5). Again, if they have been removed from God, then the faithful can have nothing to do with them, except to work to get them to repent and come back to Christ.
 - E. To remain pure, we must walk with God and not defile ourselves with those things which are evil. To the faithful Christian, the world is so foreign and repulsive that they will have nothing to do with the things of the world. To the faithful Christian, the church is too precious to allow themselves or their congregations to become defiled and trample under foot the Son of God (cf. Heb. 6:4-6).