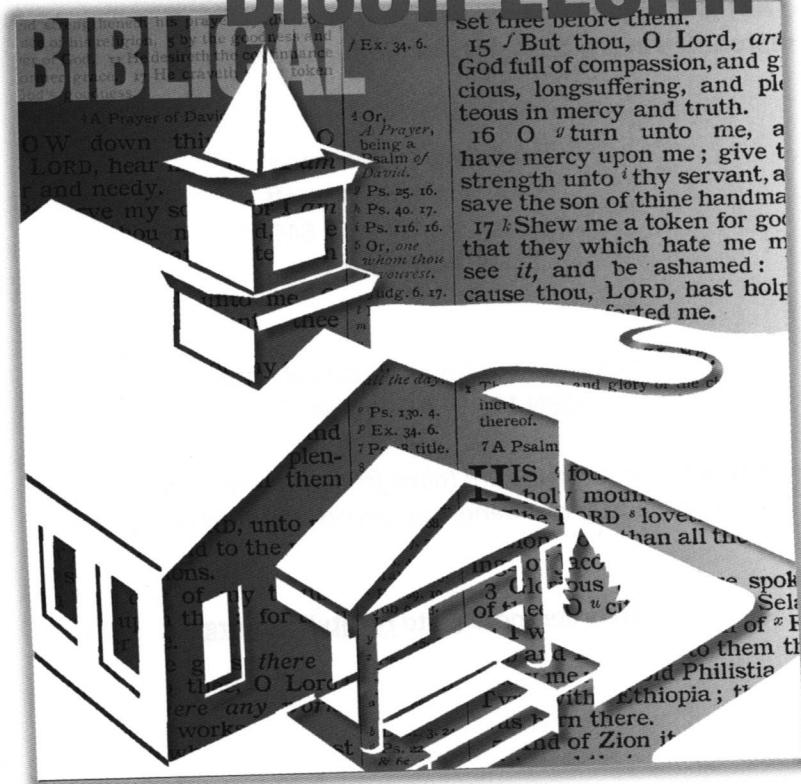


THE LOCAL CHURCH

8

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LESSON 8: THE LOCAL CHURCH

“What is the Purpose of My Involvement in a Local Church?”

God has established three major institutions on this earth: the family, the civil government, and the local church. It is the local church which has been commissioned by God to carry out His purposes in reaching the lost and perfecting the saved. Therefore, God's plan for a Christian will always be fulfilled best when connected with the local church.

The purpose of this lesson is to impress upon you the central role which the church should play in your everyday life.

- I. Understand the biblical definition of the local church.
 - A. It is **NOT** a building. *Acts 14:27*
 1. We worship God in spirit and truth. *John 4:24*
 2. Our bodies are the temple of God.
I Corinthians 6:19
 - B. It is **NOT** a denominational group of congregations.

C. A **local** church is a body of men and women who have been saved and called by God to serve in a specific area. **The Church** is the body of Christ – the saved multitudes from every nation.

1. Writing to saved people, Paul states clearly in *I Corinthians 12:27*, "...ye are the body of Christ."

2. Paul compares the church body to the human body in *I Corinthians 12:14-27*.

a. Each member has a different function – verses 14-20.

b. No one member can function alone – verse 21.

c. Each member's contribution is important – verses 22-24.

d. A properly functioning body operates as a single unit – verses 25-27.

II. Understand the biblical function of the local church?

A. According to *Acts 2:41-47*, the first local church in the Bible was organized for the following purposes:

1. Teaching the Word of God – verse 42.
2. Fellowship with other believers – verse 42.
3. Prayer – verse 42.
4. Observance of the two ordinances of the church:
baptism – verse 41 and the Lord's supper –
verse 42.
5. Testifying to God's grace and power – verse 43.
6. Mutual assistance and ministry – verses 44-45.
7. Reaching out into the community –
verses 46-47.
8. Glorifying and praising God – verse 47.

* B. The first priority of the local church is to edify (build up, teach, and strengthen) the saints.

Ephesians 4:11-16

III. Understand your function within the local church.

During your Christian life you should grow through three **broad** and **general** stages as outlined in *Ephesians 4:12*.

- A. You are to be perfected as a saint. This is a time to observe and learn.

Your first priority should be submission to the teaching of the Word of God and learning to be the person God wants you to be.

Matthew 11:28-30

- B. You are to do the work of the ministry. This is a time to participate.

In time, you will naturally grow to the point where you can begin to serve and take on some basic functions through the already established ministries of your church.

Matthew 4:19; James 1:22-25

- C. You are to edify the body of Christ. This is a time to lead.

As your growth continues you should reach the point where you can begin to minister to others in the same way others have ministered to you.

II Timothy 2:2

These three stages can be roughly compared to the stages of physical growth: childhood, youth, and adult. **BE PATIENT!** This process takes time. Just be sure to remain faithful to God's established institution – the local church.

IV. Basic questions:

If God moves me to another location, how do I find the particular local church through which God will want me to serve?

- A. Pray about it! Ask God to lead you to the right church.

James 1:5

- B. Observe the qualities of a particular church and compare them with the **biblical** requirements of a church.

1. Is there evidence of soul winning?

Matthew 7:20; Acts 2:47

2. Does the church leadership believe and teach the Bible as the Word of God and the infallible guide for life?

Titus 1:9

3. Is the membership encouraged to read and study the Bible as much as the leadership?

Acts 17:10-12

4. Do the people minister to the needs of others?

Acts 6:1

5. Does the church send out and support missionaries?

Acts 13:1-3

NOTES

THE LOCAL CHURCH
Lesson 8

1. What are the three in which God has established His church?

A. Word, Sacrament, and Fellowship

B.

C.

D.

2. Why is it important that a church be a local church?

A.

3. Define the following terms:

A.

B. Church

C.

D. The Church

E.

NOTES

THE LOCAL CHURCH

Lesson #8

1. What are the three institutions God has established on earth?
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.

2. List some things that a church is **NOT**:

3. Define the following terms:
 - A. Local church

 - B. The Church

4. In *I Corinthians 12:14-27*, Paul teaches that in many ways the church body is similar to the _____.

List five parts of the body mentioned in this passage of scripture.

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

5. List four basic similarities between the church body and the human body.

A.

B.

C.

D.

6. The first local church in the Bible was at Jerusalem. In Acts 2:41-47 we see this local church functioning. List the functional purposes found in this passage of scripture.

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

F.

G.

H.

7. What is the most important priority of a local church?

8. There is a proper order to follow as you function in the church body. List the three general stages connected with spiritual growth.

A.

B.

C.

9. How do these three stages of spiritual growth match up with the three stages of physical growth found in *I John 2:12-14*?

A.

Discipleship - Lesson 8

B.

C.

10. The Christian should be _____ because growing spiritually is a process which can only be properly accomplished within the established _____ of the _____.

11. When a Christian is looking for a place to worship and serve, what qualities should be evident in that church?

A.

B.

C.

D.

12. Briefly explain the primary purpose of this lesson.

Key memory verses:

*Ephesians 4:11-12; I Corinthians 12:27;
II Timothy 2:2*

NOTE: Many churches today are not fulfilling God's plan because their primary attitudes are:

1. In order to really learn the Bible you need to go to a Bible College.
2. The primary purpose of a local church is to be a social or political organization.
3. The local church is primarily for weddings, funerals, and religious holidays.
4. Only the "leadership" of the church is charged with any responsibility of meeting people's spiritual needs.

From the Bible principles taught in this lesson, you should understand these attitudes are false and why.

→Write any questions you may have concerning the subjects in this lesson.

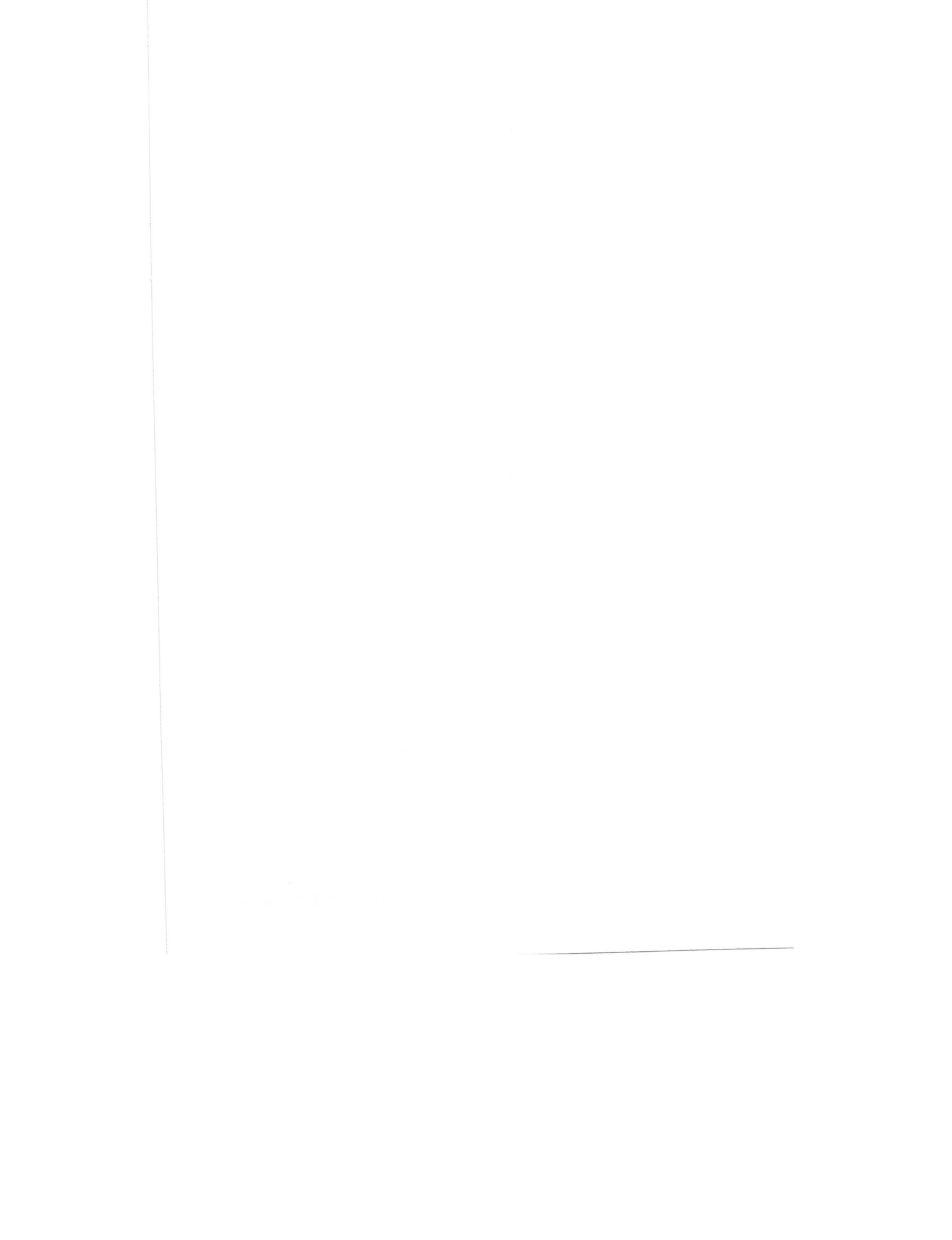
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