



HOLINESS, GOD'S PLAN FOR THE CHURCH

KEY VERSE:

Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are (John 17:11).

Ephesians 5:25. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

John 17:15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.
16. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.
17. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.
18. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.
19. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.
20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;
21. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

1 Thessalonians 3:11. Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.
12. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:
13. To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

Background Scriptures

John 17:1-26; Ephesians 2:11-22

Devotional Reading

Ephesians 5:14-21

Central Truth:

God has ordained that the Bride for His Son shall be holy.



THE LESSON EXPOSITION

BACKGROUND

The family and the Church are both institutions of God for the perpetuation and preservation of the race in happiness and holiness. The welfare of the race is vitally related to the stability and strength of these two institutions.

God has set certain guidelines for the soundness and success of both the family and the Church. If the family-home institution functions according to the plans of Him who founded it, its effect upon society will be salutary. If the Church operates according to the plan and purpose of him who designed and instituted it, it will be a successful social institution – “an institution which serves society and serves it well.”

The Church does not “serve society and serve it well” by competing with social institutions. The function of the Church in society is not social but spiritual. If the Church does not wield a spiritual impact upon society, she ceases to “serve society and serve it well.” The Church which competes with social organizations by organizing ball teams, bowling leagues, swimming teams, soup suppers, bazaars, dancing and skating parties, or the like, has abandoned, or is abandoning, its God-ordained reason for existence.



I. GOD'S PLAN FOR HIS PEOPLE (Eph. 5:25-27)

Ephesians 5:25. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church. Paul was not a one-sided or even a “warp”-sided person concerning the family or the Church. In **verse 22**, he had just written that wives submit themselves to their own husbands as unto the Lord. He admonished that “as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything” (v. 24). If husbands loved their wives as

Christ loved the Church, so that the needs, desires, and delights of the wife always come before his own, and if wives were subject and submitted themselves unto their husbands, as the Church does to Christ out of loving devotion, there would be no place for organizations that foster competition and animosity between husbands and wives. **Christ ... gave himself for it** [the Church]. Husbands ought to give themselves for their wives. The Church gives itself **to** Christ. Wives ought to give themselves to their husbands. In this pattern the home is a type of the Church and the Church is a type of the home. "The word **love** is a present imperative (*agapate*) and means 'continue to love' or 'go on loving'" (**Beacon Bible Comm.**).

26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it. **Cleanse** and **sanctify** as used here are not identical verb forms. "**Cleanse** ... indicates action which has taken place prior to the action of the main verb, **sanctify**. This being the case, the ... translation would be: 'that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her' ... In other words, 'having cleansed her' refers to the cleansing which takes place in regeneration, whereas **sanctify** denotes the cleansing from inbred sin" (**Beacon Bible Comm.**).

27. That he might present it to himself. Christ gave Himself for the Church that He might sanctify it. He sanctifies it that it might be presented to Himself a glorious Church. There is a close relationship between the sanctity of the Church and the gloriousness of the Church. The Church, spotted with sin and worldliness and wrinkled by its failure to develop or the shrivelling of former development, will not be characterized by an atmosphere of glory. **That it should be holy and without blemish.** God's plan for His people is that they be morally, ethically, and spiritually pure and unblemished. Any blemish or impurity will thwart the Church from carrying out its mission to society.



II. CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR BELIEVERS (John 17:15-21)

John 17:15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world. Christ's mission and purpose for His disciples is "in the world." They could not accomplish His purpose in the world if they were taken out of the world. As surely as they could not accomplish God's purpose if taken out of the world, so they could not if they take the evil of the world into themselves and become worldly. According to this prayer, Christians may serve anywhere in the world without being worldly if they will allow God to keep them from the evil in the world.

16. They are not of the world. Christ was and is out of step with the spirit of the world. Those in whom Christ dwells feel the same conflict with the spirit of the world as Christ did. Worldliness is the antithesis of spirituality. The spirit of the world is antagonistic to the Spirit of God. Dr. J.H. Jowett said, "Worldliness is a spirit, a temperament, an attitude of the soul" (**The Question of Worldliness**, Frederick P. Wood). Someone has observed that while there may be worldly church members by the millions, there is not one worldly Christian in the entire world. James 4:4 declares that friendship with the world is enmity with God, that it is enmity toward God that causes one to even desire to be a friend of the worldly spirit. Christians are to be as different from the world as was Christ.

17. Sanctify them through thy truth. The Holy Spirit guides into all truth. Truth leads one to the acknowledgment of depravity and spiritual need, and then to the provision of divine grace for cleansing from depravity and the fulfillment of spiritual need. The truth of God's Word is always in harmony with holiness and opposed to sin.

18. As thou hast sent me into the world. Christ has charged Christians with carrying out the same salvation mission as that which He had while here. He did not pray that they be taken out of the world, because He intended to give them an assignment in the world. Christ intends that saints be light in a dark world and salt in a corrupt world. Christ has no part in the cloistered, isolationist idea of religion that refuses contact with the needs of the world. One of the great accusations of the isolationist Pharisees was that He was a friend of publicans and sinners, but not friendly to the worldly spirit. He wants His followers to be in the world, but not of the world.

19. For their sakes I sanctify myself. This verse portrays the dual meaning of the word **sanctify**. When used of Jesus, it means to consecrate, set aside, or devote to sacred purposes. This Christ did when He offered Himself without spot to God as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. The purpose of Christ's sanctifying or consecrating (offering Himself) was that He might sanctify, or cleanse them from sin, or make them holy. "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14).

20. Neither pray I for these alone. The same prayer which Christ prayed for the early disciples He prayed for everyone who would believe on Him through their word. Some of the petitions of His prayer were: 1. that they might have His joy fulfilled in them (**v. 13**); 2. "that they may be one" – their unity (**vs. 11, 21-23**); 3. their sanctification (**vs. 17, 19**); 4. that they might accomplish God's purpose for them in the world (**vs. 18-21**); and 5. that they might be with Him in heaven to behold His glory (**v. 24**). These same petitions He prayed for all today who believe on Him through the apostles' words. What tremendous responsibility rests upon Christians to appropriate through faith that for which Christ has prayed. Peter gave assurance that the promise is to all who have been called by the Lord (**Acts 2:39**).

21. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee. "The unity which Jesus envisioned for His followers has its analogy in the unity of the Godhead: unity of purpose, unity of activity, and unity of character. But it must be more than unity within the group; that would create its own fluctuating and eventually deteriorating standard. It must be unity with God the Father and God the Son. Otherwise it would be a false unity, for of itself unity is not a virtue unless it centres in a worthy norm. This prayer for unity has been used as a strong argument for the uniting of churches in the interest of ecumenicity. If this is the meaning, such union could only come on a high plane of faith in Christ – nothing lower than that which John set forth. Some church leaders have advocated organizational unity and not theological or experiential unity. But this could not have been the aim of

Christ's prayer, nor is it the prayer's best application for today. Without denying that value may be found in the interest of Christian unity, true Christian unity, whether organizational or not, must be based upon a minimal creed of the deity of Jesus Christ and the efficacy of His atonement, and fortified by the answers to the other petitions for victory and purity in this prayer of Jesus" (Terry Pollard).



III. CHURCH'S PREPARATION FOR CHRIST (1 Thess. 3:11-13)

1 Thessalonians 3:11. Now God himself ... direct our way unto you. Paul knew how God had directed him to Christians at Ephesus in order that they might receive the Holy Spirit in His fullness (Acts 19:1-6). He believed God would, likewise, bless his ministry to the Thessalonians.

12. The Lord make you to increase and abound in love ... toward all. Only Christians in a high state of justification are proper candidates for the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

13. Establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God. Paul had recognized many Christian qualities in those Thessalonian Christians (1:2-10). Notwithstanding all these qualities, he recognized that they still had serious spiritual needs. He desired for them such establishment as only holiness could produce and that would cause them to be blameless before God.



"KEY" COMMENTS

Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are (John 17:11).

This verse is lifted from Jesus' high priestly prayer for His disciples and "them also which shall believe." That includes all believers. As Jesus thus bared His heart to His Father, one feels almost like an intruder who should slip quietly away. But the prayer is for believers, and all do well to give heed to it. Much of the burden here expressed was for the unity of His followers. Without it, Jesus knew that the effectiveness of the gospel would be greatly hindered.

Jesus prayed that His followers might be kept through the name of the Father. This would same much confusion and make for unity of doctrine and effort. He prayed also for their sanctification. This would promote unity of love and spirit.

In the Church's beginning, "All that believed were together" (Acts 2:44). The whole Christian community was one big fellowship. This was a natural consequence since they were born of the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, and had a closely-woven family relationship. Divine love flowed from heart to heart. Also, their doctrine was that of the apostles. They had not yet begun to form creeds and rituals which would foster division. This was the unity that Jesus prayed might be theirs (and ours). The persecution eventually scattered them from Jerusalem, but wherever they were located, the local believers composed the Church in the community.

It is tragic that this simple Christian unity ceased to exist, but even in Paul's day the spirit of disunity was rising. Note especially Corinth (1 Cor. 1:12, 13; 3:3, 4). Here Paul quickly detected that their crying need was to be sanctified, because carnality "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). Wherever carnality raised its ugly head, problems arise with it. Peter, Paul, and Apollos were men of God who stood together in united effort for Christ. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." Sanctification is a mighty unifying force. Take away carnal selfishness and bigotry, and replace them with charity (divine love). What can be the result but "the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love"?

In verse 21 Jesus, further praying for unity of believers, cried, "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." With warring factions of Christians, the vast conflict of doctrine and standards, the total lack of love commonly manifested, is it any wonder that the world is in such religious confusion and rank unbelief? These conditions all contribute to the present-day infidelity and ignoring of Christian endeavours.

As twentieth-century Christians, let each do all in his power to promote that fellowship, sanctification, and unity for which Jesus so earnestly prayed. In doing so, perhaps some confused and wandering souls can be led into "the way, the truth, and the life." Every soul - any soul - is worth saving.



EXPOSITION

God's Church is made up of born again people who are walking in the light that is given to them by the Bible, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, or through whatever instrument God may choose to reveal light to that person.

One of the great places to find God's will for the Church is in the high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17. In reference to the Church, you will find that the prayer divides itself into three parts.

1. Sanctification of every believer (v. 17).
2. Freedom from divisions (vs. 21, 23).
3. Focusing on the church's main purpose (vs. 21, 23)

For the purpose of helping to remember these three points I have rephrased them to read:

1. Unity of our personality.
2. Unity of our people.
3. Unity of our purpose.

Notice that there will never be unity in our personality until we are filled with all the fullness of God. It is significant, I believe, that the Book of Acts can be divided into four topics: prayer, power, purity, and personal witnessing. When these four elements are incorporated into living to the extent that inward and outward pollution is gone, then you have an individual that will be a worthy addition to any church. Of course, he is a bona fide member of the great Church of the living God!

Probably more of us are, to say the kindest thing about our spiritual condition, feeding on a diet of milk long after we should have been weaned! As a net result, we are weak, wobbly, wooden Christians. Instead of being warriors of the cross, we are wearers of baby bibs! Someone has said that when God desires to produce a great person, He starts with his grandmother. However, the plan for sanctification in a person's life can be brought to a halt by the free will of that person as he refuses to have fulfilled in his life the sanctifying blessing as prayed for by Jesus.

This type of an individual will find that [Galatians 5:17](#) fits his case, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

So long as there is hidden in the heart envying, divisions, and strife, that person will exhibit them in the church where he fellowships. But there is a solution! Each person must be a recipient of the prayer of Jesus in [John 17:17](#). Then he will no longer be at war with himself or others. To paraphrase another, he will no longer say, "I wholly disapprove of what you say, and it will be your death if you say it."

There is a unity among the people of God that is fascinating to observe. It is the same type of unity that was obtained in the rebuilding of the wall of the holy city. The people had one mind – to work! Many of us have never shed our narrow provincialism, and as a result we think that sanctification is isolation rather than insulation from the world. If this is the case, we define the world in the narrow sense of our customs rather than in the biblical sense. The world as the Bible defines it precludes a person from being a Christian (see [1 John 2:15](#)). In making this statement, I would assure you that I believe that Christians try to avoid the minimum in any area of their lives. They will not skirt the issue of modesty or other virtues of Christian decorum.

Nevertheless, there are issues that people will disagree over and will do so until our hearts and heads are perfected in a resurrection body. Such disagreements do not sever our love for each other, nor keep us from cooperating with each other in areas where we can. The significance of a holy Church is the saying, "Behold, how they love one another." In fact, this is so real to us that we often look for chapter and verse for it!

Unity in diversity is a much stronger unity than unity that brooks no thinking by individuals.

There is something wrong with the individual that is always making disparaging remarks about himself. And there is something wrong with individuals that are always making disparaging remarks about God's Body – the true Church.

People who are one in spirit are a beautiful symbol of the Trinity! Rest assured that God's great Church will make it through until Jesus comes! The sad thing about many of us is that in that day we may make it to heaven, but all our works will be burned and our influence will have been lost.

Perhaps we have forgotten why the Church should be holy and in one accord! Please be reminded that the great objective of this is that the sinful world will believe that Jesus is the Christ and that God loves them and wants them in His fold. A holy Church will have a heavenly influence.

There is a unity of purpose in those that are filled with the Spirit. One cannot be against seminars that teach people how to be soul winners, but one could wish that we could see them return to the prayer room so that it would act as a focusing agent on the sinner's and other needs in this poor world today.

Whenever there has been a unity of persons, both in them and in the corporate Body of Christ, there has been and there will be exhibitions of God's approval and that witnessed to by the salvation of some who do not believe.

We can whet the sword of evangelism until it is worn away without ever going out to do some soul-winning. God's great purpose is not publicity, nor our sphere of labour, but it is in winning souls and thus bringing glory to God!



WORKING WITH THE WORD!

Glorious church (Eph. 5:27). It is somewhat fashionable nowadays to deride the Church. Not only her avowed enemies are engaged in this sport, but even many of her so-called friends. But you had better be careful if you criticize the church, to distinguish between an earthly organization and the true Church. For the Bride of Christ is sanctified, cleansed, and a glorious Church! Glorious means to be "honourable," "highly esteemed," "splendid," even "gorgeous." This is an accurate description of the Church of God, which has no spots or wrinkles or any such thing in it. What a privilege to be a part of this Church that crosses all manmade lines and unites Christians as brothers and sisters with all the holy people. This is the perfect Church, for it is "without blemish."

Spot, or wrinkle (v. 27). "The Holy Spirit reveals to us in the Epistle to the Ephesians that those believers who shall reach a degree of grace sufficient to be among the Lamb's Bride must be sanctified and filled with the Spirit to such a degree as to be 'without spot or wrinkle.' Spots indicate positive impurities, and wrinkles indicate negative imperfections, or those defects which mar the symmetry and loveliness of character. Spots are washed out. When applied to a living body, spots are cleansed off, and wrinkles are prevented by being fleshed out with nourishing food and exercise" (G.D. Watson in **Pure Gold**).

World (John 17:21). This word is used so often in these verses that it must have a real significance. It is obvious that Christians are in the world, and not to be presently taken out of the world. In fact, they are sent into the world, yet they are not of the world, and they need to be kept from the evil of the world. If one can grasp these things, then he can both be "separated," and the "salt of the earth." Thayer defines "world" as: "worldly affairs; the aggregate of things earthly; the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, etc., which although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God, and are obstacles to the cause of Christ."

Increase and abound (1 Thess. 3:12). "The two Greek verbs are practically synonyms, so that combined they give the idea of super abounding, overflowing love" (**Beacon Bible Comm.**). In their relationship "one toward another" Christians are not supposed to barely tolerate one another, but their love is to be growing and abundant. This is their principal mark of identification. While it is very important that their dress and deportment be holy, the Bible is insistent that love is to be their supreme sign of identity with Christ.

Establish (v. 13). This word is variously rendered in the New Testament as: "steadfastly set," "fixed," "strengthen," "established," and "stablish." This is indeed "that grace wherein we stand." What joy it is that in the midst of an ever-changing world God can take a frail and fickle man and perform an operation in his heart that will keep him steady. This verse was written looking forward to the time of the Second Coming, so we can be glad that it's for us all today.



POINTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

A Perfect Church

A self-righteous young man once said to Spurgeon, "When I find a perfect church, I'll join it!"

Spurgeon quipped, "Young man, there has never been a perfect church. I am sure my church is not perfect. If per chance you ever find a perfect church, I would advise you not to join it, for then it would become an imperfect church!"

Not until the Church is raptured will it be perfect. Paul said, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (II Cor. 4:7). Earthen vessels are weak and imperfect. Therefore admonished the writer of Hebrews, "Let us go on unto perfection" (Heb. 6:1).

The Church will not be perfect, humanly speaking, but God does want it to be holy.

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When Is a Church Great?

A church is great in the sight of God only when it is:

Great in Spirit. When its warmth of fellowship is apparent to all who worship there (Rom. 1:14).

Great in Love. Its love abounds toward all sinners. The members love one another with deathless devotion. Jesus' love is shown in all areas of church life.

Great in Loyalty. Its members are loyal to the church. Members are loyal to His Word. Members are loyal to "The faith once delivered unto the saints." Members are loyal to the Lord and to His Church by their dedication of time, talent, and treasure.

Great in Consecration. It withdraws itself from the world with its fashions and its fads; its members live a separated life; it has no place for worldliness or for human aspirations.

Great in Compassion. Its heart reaches out to suffer with those who need its ministry. Only by having a compassion of heart can a church be great. As one has well said, "A passionless church is a passing church."



Notes: Instruction tips

The lesson this week speaks of the need for holiness to be present in the Church of God. Consider the following questions for class or group discussion related to this topic. Suggested answers are given.

1. **What is the Church?** It is the Body of Christ (Col. 1:18, 24; 1 Cor. 12:27). It is the body of believers. It is made up of many members (Rom. 12:5). It is a habitation of God (Eph. 2:22).

2. **How does one become a member of God's Church?** He is born of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 2:18-22). He becomes a genuine Christian. Note: Church membership saves no one (Eph. 2:8, 9). It is a benefit of salvation that one becomes a member of the Church of the living God.

3. **How may one get out of the Church of God?** By sinning or backsliding (1 John 3:6-10).

4. **What is the purpose of the Church?**

- a. To enable a collective group to do what is practically impossible for an individual to do, e.g. send missionaries abroad.
- b. To edify the members (Eph. 4:12).
- c. To minister to others (Acts 6:1-3; Matt. 20:26-28).
- d. To evangelize (Mark 16:15).
- e. To indoctrinate and teach God's Word (Acts 4:18-20; 2:42; II Tim. 2:2).
- f. To encourage believers (Heb. 10:24, 25).
- g. To bear fruit (John 15:2, 5, 8; Acts 2:41).
- h. To exhort believers (Heb. 3:13; 10:25).
- i. The Church must be touching the lives of others!

5. **How can the role of the Church be fulfilled?**

- a. There must be a desire to be kingdom-builders.
- b. Each member needs to be filled with God's Spirit to be truly effective (Zech. 4:6).
The New Testament Church was ineffective until filled with God's Spirit. Consider Peter before and after Pentecost (Matt. 26:69-75; Acts 2).
- c. There must be unity. The New Testament Church was not filled until they were in one accord, and then they were effective (Acts 2:1-4, 41).
- d. Lives of faith must be lived (Gal. 3:26; Rom. 1:17; 1 John 5:4).
- e. There must be a vision of what to do and how to do it (Prov. 29:18).
- f. God must be allowed to lead (Prov. 3:5, 6).
- g. It is sometimes healthy to be dissatisfied with the status quo – especially if the status quo is not effectively working. Yet, change simply for the sake of change or because some other group or book suggests it, is not always wise. A change from spiritual ineffectiveness to spiritual life, power and productivity can be right!
- h. The pastor and people need to be on the same wavelength as to what needs to be done and how it should be undertaken. Much prayer is essential. Also, good communication and a willingness to give and take for the overall accomplishment of God's plan is essential. A willingness to sacrifice our (a pastor's or layman's) program for God's program can help lead to spiritual progress.
- i. Remember always, that God deserves the glory for progress – not man (II Cor. 10:17).

6. **Why should one attend church?**

- a. The Bible commands it (Heb. 10:25).
 - b. To worship and hear from God (Ps. 122:1, 4).
 - c. To learn from God's Word for daily living (Acts 15:35; 1 Cor. 1:21; Titus 1:3).
 - d. To edify and exhort the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12; Heb. 10:25).
 - e. To set an example for others as none of us lives to himself (Rom. 14:7; 1 Tim. 4:12).
- Note – while we help others we should also notice that we are benefitting from our time at church.

7. **What are characteristics of a Spirit-filled church?**

- a. It is subject to Christ (Eph. 5:24).
- b. It has spiritual power. There is an obvious presence of God in the services, and it is operative in the lives of believers (Acts 1:8; 1 Thess. 1:5).
- c. Evangelism is occurring to the lost (Mark 16:15).
- d. It is ministering to the needs of others (Matt. 20:26-28; Acts 6:1-3).
- e. It has unity and harmony (Acts 1:14; 2:1, 46; 5:12; Ps. 133:1).
- f. It has teamwork to carry out its functions (Eph. 4:11-16; Rom. 12:4-8).
- g. It teaches and advocates biblical principles and truths. A Spirit-filled church will not condone situational ethics on issues on which the Bible speaks out. Circumstances and people do not decide the rightness or wrongness of such issues for the church. If God's Word speaks to the issue, who is finite man (or the church) to contradict or countermand? (See 1 Cor. 14:37; II Cor. 10:12; Gal. 1:9-12; II Tim. 3:16, 17.)
- h. It has much praying from its members (Acts 1:14; 6:4; 12:5, 12).
- i. It has a love of God and mankind (1 John 5:1, 2; 4:7, 8).
- j. It is separate from the world in terms of lifestyle, values, beliefs, and principles (Acts 2:40; Rom. 12:2; II Cor. 5:17; 6:17).

- k. It lifts up Jesus Christ and recognizes Him as the Son of God who was crucified for sinful man, rose from the dead, now mediates for us, is alive forever, and is coming again to claim His church (**Acts 4:33; 5:29-32; 1 John 2:22-24; 4:2, 3; 5:6**).
- l. It has faith in God and His Word (**1 John 5:4**).
- m. It edifies the members (**Eph. 4:12**).
- n. It exhibits a desire to be filled (**Matt. 5:6**).

8. Cite some evidences of a lack of being Spirit-filled in the professed church.

- a. Lack of prayer.
- b. Lack of Bible reading and knowledge of God's Word. (Give a quick check on either for evidence if there's a doubt.)
- c. Lack of spiritual power.
- d. Luke warmth is evident.
- e. Lack of worshipful attitude.
- f. Lack of personal convictions.
- g. A desire to do one's own thing instead of obeying God's Word.
- h. Refusal to preach and teach the full gospel.
- i. Making light of spiritual things.
- j. Talk about anything but spiritual matters (with gusto).
- k. Gossip.
- l. Lack of concern to find and follow God's will.
- m. Inconsistent church attendance.
- n. Going through a form of worship without meeting with God.
- o. Lack of reverence in the church.

It seems that the church is spiritually anaemic. It is not always strong enough to pray down God-given conviction of sin on sinners and God-given convictions for daily living for Christians. The church has therefore moved to a state of trying to rationalize and thereby give token approval to living the way that seems right to the person. The statement, "Who am I to tell him/her what is right or wrong?" seems implicit in church mentality. The church does not seem to have spiritual power to pray God-given light down. Therefore justification of less-than-holy living is made. (**See Isa. 37:3.**)

9. What should be done to make the church more spiritually alive?

- a. Remember and follow the teachings of Zechariah 4:6.
- b. Read, study, and follow God's Word.
- c. Hunger and thirst for righteousness.
- d. Ask the Lord for a new "touch of fire."
- e. Get serious with God.
- f. Live and practice a life of faith.
- g. Encourage individual and collective prayer.
- h. Don't just talk about spiritual revival – act on it!
- i. Clean up any sinful practices that might have crept into the church .j. Seek, find, and follow God's will.

The Church is the Body of Christ. Christ is the head, and the Body is to bear fruit for His kingdom. The world is darkened by sin, but if the Church will be filled with God's Spirit, miracles can and will occur to the glory of God. Without His power the church will be weak and spiritually anaemic. It's up to the Church – individually and then collectively – to decide!



PERTINENT PRINCIPLES

* Let the Church be in earnest after greater holiness in her own members, and she will soon settle the question whether her resources are competent to change the face of the earth.

- J.H. Thornwell

* If the Church is to rise to its fullest stature in God, if it is to enjoy the abundant life, if it is to meet all foes in the spirit of triumph, it must rely, not upon its numbers or skills, but upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Arthur J. Moore

* Holiness is the architectural plan on which God buildeth up His living temple.

- C.H. Spurgeon

FURTHER THOUGHT

The Church of God was incepted at Creation, instituted at Calvary, inspired by the blood of martyrs, and is destined to rise in the Rapture. She is the most powerful, the richest, the most peaceful, the hardest working, the most benevolent organism in the world.

Her people are royally born – the most elite, in the highest society ever known. There is not a sinner in her, nor a saint out of her. She has saved more homes, delivered more slaves, clothed more nakedness, fed more hungry, slaked more thirst, sobered more drunkards, emptied more jails, healed more diseases, satisfied more needs, appeased more wrath, and settled more disputes than any police force, Red Cross, summit conferences, or armed forces have ever done.

Her banner flies high above flags of the highest civilizations. Her foundation is the surest and most steadfast this universe can know. She has withstood more oppression, weathered more storms, survived more assaults, and outlived more antagonists than any other organization; yet she towers higher than ever, above the filth and stench of this world.

Her people are the most pure, holy, peaceful, meek, longsuffering, hospitable, yet the most feared in battle, the hardest fighters, the most determined, rugged, and sacrificial people ever known. They have died by rack, lions, stoning, sword, bullet, torture, burning at the stake because of her; yet, as the death angel claimed their tortured and pain racked bodies, they shouted praises to her glorious, divine Founder.

Within her framework are found the most privileged people, the best chances for advancement, the best reward for labour, the greatest opportunities for service, the most varied careers, and the most security of any organization known.

- The Church Herald