



“A Life Changing Church “

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

PATHWAY CLASS 1

The church exists to edify, encourage, exalt, equip, and evangelize

DISCOVERING MEMBERSHIP

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

2245 N. Main Street

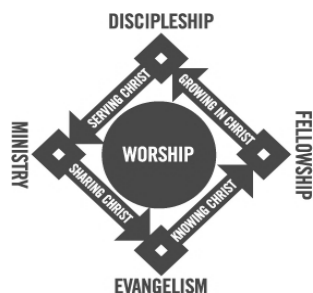
Pearland, TX 77581

Dr. Deryck J. Hunte, Pastor

Visit Us Online @

WWW.VISIONMINISTRIESCHURCH.ORG

Call Us @ 713-777-8464



What are connection classes?

C.L.A.S.S. stands for Christian Life And Service Seminars. We offer four, 4-hour classes that provide a clear path to grow spiritually. God has a purpose for your life as you begin your journey on what we call the PATH you will begin to discover that purpose. Through Connection Classes you on the right Path to discovering what is your purpose in life as you grow in the knowledge of God and His Word you will discover how wonderful life can really be.

Pathway Class #101 To lead people to Christ and MEMBERSHIP at The Vision Church

- ▪ Our salvation (What God has done for us)
- ▪ Our Statement (Why we exist as a church)
- ▪ Our Strategy (How we fulfill our purpose)A
- ▪ Our Structure (When & where we fulfill our purpose)

Pathway Class #201 To grow people to spiritual MATURITY

- ▪ Equips you with the skills you need to begin 4 habits all Christians need to grow spiritually
- ▪ Explains the tools you need to continue these habits.

Pathway Class #301 To equip people with the skills they need for MINISTRY

- ▪ *Five Personal Factors* that have combined to shape the "real" you.
- ▪ By identifying the specific traits you possess in each of these areas, the ministry God has designed you for will become crystal clear!

Pathway Class #401 To enlist people to the worldwide MISSION of sharing Jesus

- ▪ Discovering my mission
- ▪ Understanding church membership
- ▪ Fishing in my fish pond
- ▪ Becoming a world-class Christian

The Purpose of the Class

1. To know you are a Christian.
2. To know and understand the historical and theological roots of The Vision Church
3. To know the Vision Church history.
4. To understand the purpose for why this church exists.
5. To know and experience our convictions and values at The Vision
6. To understand the vision and strategy to fulfill our purpose.
7. To be introduced to some key leaders at The Vision Church.
8. To know what it means to be a member of The Vision Church family.
9. To involve you in the "body life" of The Vision Church.
10. To eat well, meet some new friends and have fun!!

Pathway Class 101 outline

Introduction

- A. Service Opportunities
- B. History of The Vision Church
- C. Who we are?
- D. Our values
- E. Our strategy
- F. Our church government
- G. What is the next step after joining?

I. Our Salvation

- A. Making sure you are a Christian
- B. Assurance Of salvation
- C. The symbols of salvation
- D. The meaning of baptism
- E. The meaning of communion

II. Our Statements

- A. Our purpose Statement: why we exist?
- B. Personalize the purposes: My responsibility as a believer
- C. Our vision Statement: what we intend to do?
- D. Our faith Statement: what we believe?
- E. Our value statement: what we practice?

III. .Our Structure

- A. How our church is organized for growth
- B. Statement of Doctrine
- C. Church Guidelines
- D. A Financial Covenant with God
- E. The vision church structure
- F. Why I Attend All the Meetings of the Church?
- G. What the Bible says about the church

IV. Our Strategy

- A. What is the next step after Pathway Class 101 ?
- B. Life in the vision :Opportunities to serve in the vision church
- C. Life in the vision: Service sign up form
- D. Life in the vision: Evaluation form

Dear Fellow Believer in Christ,

It gives me great joy to welcome you into God's Family. Your decision to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is the most wonderful decision a person can ever make. Receiving Christ as Savior means you have chosen to follow Him and to allow Him to direct your life. God has promised eternal life to those who receive His Son.

Eternal life does not just begin when you die; it begins the moment you receive Christ into your Life. Eternal life means heaven when you die and a new quality of life as you live. Christ in John 10:10 calls this "abundant life". The joy of this abundant life is dependent upon your obedience to God and your willingness to submit to His will. God calls you to a life of faithfulness to Him and love for Him.

Let me encourage you to put Christ first in your life. As you do you will know the Joy of the Christian life. We have prepared this booklet to help you as you grow as a Christian. Please study it, answer the questions, read the Bible daily, pray continually, tell others about Jesus and serve God in church. God will help you to help others. You can bring someone to Jesus Christ. Let God use the life you have now given to Him.

As your pastor I am concern about only one thing and that's you, so you can call me at anytime if you need me. Our staff is available to answer any question that you might have about the church and your Christian walk please feel free to access this resource.

I am excited that you enrolled in PATHWAY CLASS 101 you will learn all about your new church and discover if this is the right place for you to grow.

Your Pastor
Dr. Deryck J. Hunte
Hab2:1-3



Service Opportunities

Weekly Fellowship Opportunities

Sunday	Pathway Classes 101-201-301-401	9:05AM
Sundays 905	Seminary On Sunday	9:05AM
Sunday	Worship	10:00 AM
Sunday's	Kingdom Kids & Student Life	10:00 AM
Tuesday	Prayer	6:20PM
(1 st) Tuesday	Men's Ministry - Women's Study	6:30PM
(2 nd) Tuesday	Single – Married – Young Adults Study	6:30PM
(3 rd – 4 th Tuesday)	Conversation In the Word Tuesday Bible Study	6:30PM

Future and Current Ministries

Adults 60+	Children
Teens	College Students
Business and Professional	Couples and Neighborhood Groups
Men	New Believers
Women	Helping Hands (elderly, handicap, widow and homeless)
Marriage	Singles in their 20's
Singles in their 30's	Singles in their 40's
Singles in their 50's	Single Dating Couples
Stepfamily	Celebrate Recovery
Care Prayer & Help	Financial Training
Bible study Training	Pastor's Aide
Benevolence	Fitness and Health (FIT365)
S.W.A.T. Soul Winners Action Team	

Frontline Ministries 101 - MEMBERSHIP

Frontline ministries are designed to help each member of The Vision Church to find his or her "sweet-spot" in ministry. This resource is one of many tools used by the Pathway 301 C.L.A.S.S Team to help members make their journey down "The Serving path."

Anniversary Celebration	Baby Dedication Ministry
Baptism Class	Building Refreshing Ministry
Card Ministry	Care Calling Ministry
Vision Café	Discovering Christ Class
Mail Ministry	Vision Ministries Resources
Greeter Ministry	Guest Information Table
Guest Pastoral Follow-Up	Hospital Visitation
New Member's Luncheon	Membership & Business Directory Ministry
New Member Bulletin Board	Transportation Ministry
Email Ministry	Website Ministry

We will provide you with a description of each ministry so you can decide where you want to serve. We encourage every member of The Vision Church to take Pathway Class 301: Discovering Ministry. Through this seminar, you will complete a SHAPE Personal Profile. SHAPE Guide will assist you in finding your "sweet-spot" for ministry.

THE VISION CHURCH HISTORY

The Vision Church was founded on April 30, 2005 by Dr. Deryck J. Hunte. As we reflect, Bible Study was held on **Tuesdays in a small conference room at 104 Industrial Dr. Sugar Land , TX with the attendance of 11 people.**

In October of 2005 our service location was rented out to a company that the building manager saw fit for that business to have. We didn't get discouraged! God was up to something great! A week later, God lead Pastor Hunt to a hotel less than miles out and we continued to have services at the Hearthside Suites conference room in Sugar land Texas. The Vision Church held services for 7 months at that location.

As we began to increase in number, we also began to outgrow the location but we endured. In being, faithful over the few things and in constant prayer God blessed us with a ***Worship Center in Sugar Land , TX*** that we could finally call our own after only a couple of months God again with his unmerited favor allowed us to expanded with the Nehemiah Project which became our Fellowship Hall and Seminary Class.

In our Vision Casting for 2007, we included God's Extraordinary Children, God's Extraordinary Teens.

In ***November 2008, we relocated to 11834 Riceville School Rd. Houston , TX*** The building was an abandoned daycare and by God's grace and power in ten days, we renovated and moved in and we stayed there 4 years leading people to Christ and reaching the Glenshire neighborhood with many outreach projects Summer camp , lawn service , revivals and prayer walking.

In ***November 2012, we relocated to 3901 E.Plum St. Pearland, TX.*** We stayed there for seven years ..

In ***August 2019***, we relocated to 2245 N.Main St. Pearland our current location..

Who we are ?

- We were born on April 30, 2005
- We are a Bible Church not a Non denominational Church
- We practice the fundamentals of the faith
- We do what that Bible says to do
- We are an independent Bible church
- We are a group of caring ,loving and compassionate followers of Jesus Christ
- We have flaws and we don't hide them, as we learn more about Christ we are conforming more to his image.

What does my church family give me?

- God's purpose to live for (***mission***)
- God's people to live with (***membership***)
- God's principles to live by(***maturity***)

- God's profession to live out (**ministry**)
- God's Power to live on (**magnify**)

OUR VALUES

Values shape us. They help define who we are and how we make decisions. Most of all, they describe the kind of church we strive to be.

• **WORD CENTERED**

We believe the Bible is the actual Word of God and is the authority for how Life works. While the methods of how we apply the truths of scripture may vary, the theology and belief of the Bible's authenticity and authority shape us. It's a personal love letter from God to each of us.

• **COMMUNITY FOCUSED**

Jesus didn't come to be served, but to serve. Part of living as though He were living through us is to place the needs of our community over our own. Our service should be relevant and tangible, making a real difference.

• **GENEROSITY**

We believe that God wants to take care of our needs and give us enough to share with others, too. Money is most valuable when it is put to work helping people. As individuals and as the church, it is our privilege to give generously to people in need; locally, regionally, nationally, and abroad.

We are a generous church with generous people

OUR STRATEGY

• **WORSHIP GOD**

For most, weekend worship services are the first step in connecting with The Vision Church. In this environment we gather together with one another to Worship God.

• **GROW UP**

It's ok to not be ok, but it's not ok to stay that way. At The Vision Church growth is expected of one another. We will guide you down the growth path.

• **REACH OUT**

We want go beyond the four wall to reach out and serve our community. This is a great summation of what it means to reach out and serve one another. Whether in your own backyard,

community wide events or even local missions, reach out and make a difference!

OUR CHURCH GOVERNMENT

- *Associate Ministers*
- *Ministry Teams*
- *Ministries Oversight Team*
- *Stewardship Oversight Team*

The office-bearers in our church are nominated and elected by the members of the congregation (e.g. Acts 6:5-6), but must also be examined, confirmed and ordained by the present board of elders (Acts 6:6; 13: 1-3; 1 Tim. 4: 14).

Members of the church have the right to appeal disputed matters in the congregation to their elders for resolution, and if the dispute is with those local elders, to appeal to the Pastor or, beyond that, to the whole general assembly (Acts 15). The decisions of the wider governing bodies are authoritative in all the local congregations (Acts 15:22-23, 28, 30; 16:1-5).

God is the head

The Church is a theocracy, not a democracy. God is the head Ephesians 5:23

1. Throughout the New Testament, principles of church leadership point to a central theme: plurality.
2. The church is to be led by a plurality of godly leaders. By relying on consensual agreement of godly Elders selected from the congregation, the church creates a healthy checks-and-balances of leadership direction, financial accountability, spiritual guidance, and ministry implementation.
3. The Vision Church implements these biblical principles in its leadership structure.
4. A strategy of biblically based policies and guidelines within its Elder board and ministry leaders guides ministry decisions and ensure that a healthy, God-honoring implementation of leadership and pastoral care is carried out.
5. Elders are the spiritual leaders in the local church. Elders are God's spiritual government for His local church, who bear the spiritual burden of the people, with the pastor, for safety. **Timothy 3:1-7 Titus 1:5-9 Titus 2:1-2**
6. God calls elders (**the pastor is the head elder**). This calling is confirmed in the life of the individual. The leadership and the body recognize this calling.

7. Each congregation and center of leadership is to have a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Phil. 1:1), not one-man rule.
8. These elders have oversight of the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2-3) and are thus responsible to rule the congregation (1 Tim. 3:5; 5:17; 1 Thes. 5:12; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24).
9. They judge among the brothers (cf. 1 Cor. 6:5) and, in contrast to all the members, they do the rebuking (1 Tim. 5:20).
10. Christ calls them to use the "keys of the kingdom" to bind and loose (Matt. 16: 19; 18: 18; John 20: 23)—these keys being the preaching of the gospel (1 John 1 :3)
11. The elders are assisted in their ministry by "deacons" who give attention to the ministry of mercy (Phil. 1:1; Acts 6:1-6; cf. 1 Tim. 3:8-13).

What do the Elders do?

- The tasks and responsibilities of the Elders vary greatly and require discernment as the board strives to keep the church on its biblical course. The Elder board tackles key issues facing the church. These include:
- Determining the overall vision and future direction of the church.
- Creating policies to define clearly church values and biblical operating procedures.
- Ensuring the church's teachings and practices reflect accurate biblical theology.
- Providing avenues for pastoral care, conflict resolution, discipline, and restoration.
- Providing direction on financial or risk-management issues.
- Providing accountability to the senior pastor, to ensure the vision and values determined by the Elders are being carried out.

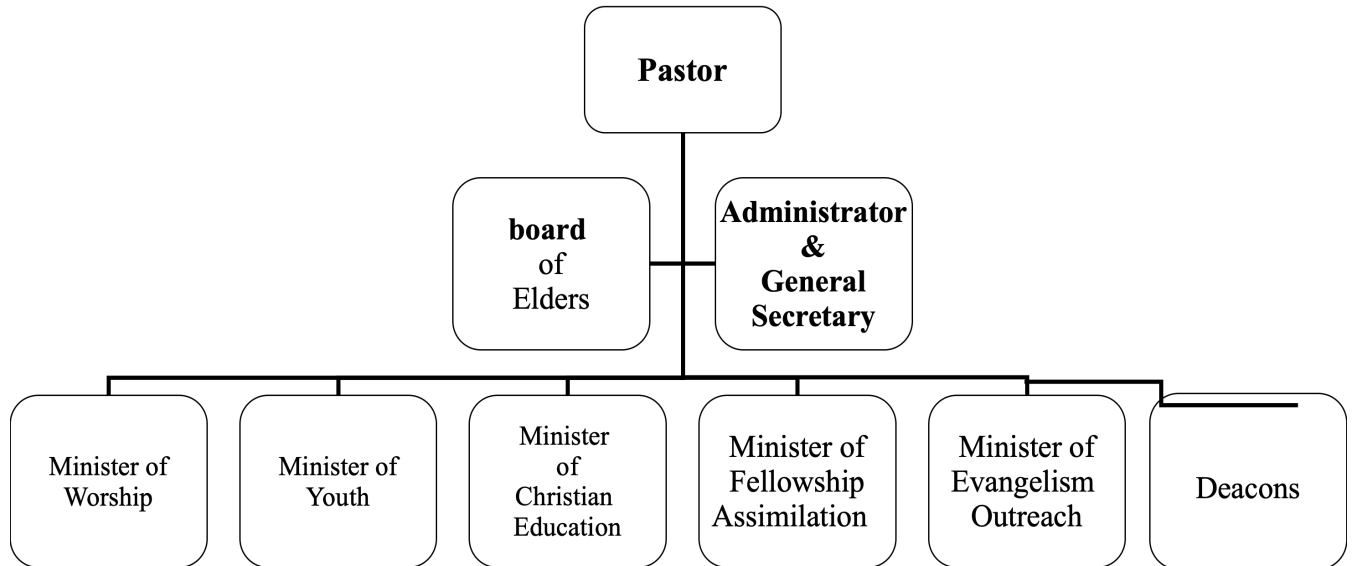
Deacons

- 1. Deacons see to the physical needs of the church. They are God's government over the natural things in the local church. Acts 6:3-6 -Acts 6:3-6**
- 2. The biblical qualifications for the deacon are found in 1st Timothy 3:8-13 and in Acts 6:3.**

The Vision Church

Organizational Chart

Executive Staff



YOUR FIRST STEPS

Watch your beginnings! The right start in the Christian life can greatly encourage your rate of growth and enhance your future usefulness and enjoyment. It is of supreme importance to start right.

“For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it?”

Luke 14:28

You, my friend, have taken a life-changing step. You have decided to begin a new life. God has become your heavenly Father, and you are now His child; a wonderful eternal relationship has begun. It is really a brand-new beginning. In the words of Jesus, you have been “born again.”

Possibly you feel helpless to explain what has taken place. A new sense of freedom is yours. You are something like a happy child let loose in a big park. Practically everything is touched with divine newness, and it is delicious. Do not be perplexed by what you have experienced, for this is wonderfully normal and right. The apostle Paul puts it this way: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). When you receive Jesus Christ, you become a brand-new person.

Our Salvation

A. Making sure you are a Christian

2 Realize that you are a sinner.

This is a hard one for people to admit. Yet Romans 3:23 clearly says, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” We must first accept full responsibility for our sins.

2. Recognize that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sin.

Because there was no other way to resolve this problem of our sin, God sent his own Son to die in our place on the cross of Calvary. Romans 5:8 says, “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Jesus said, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

3. You must repent.

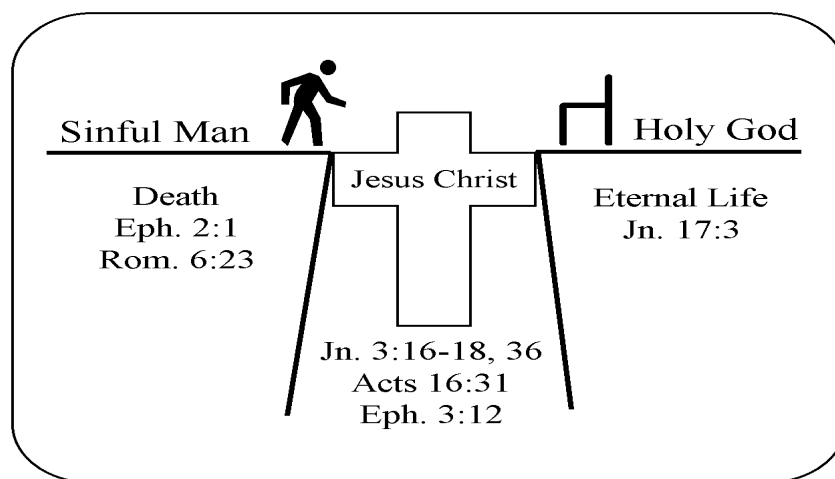
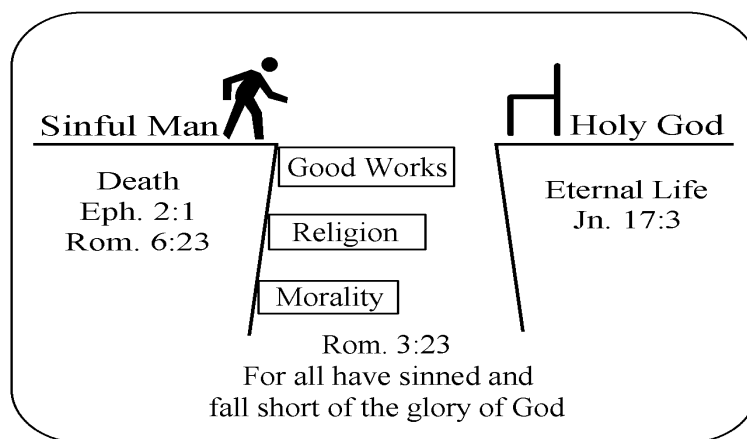
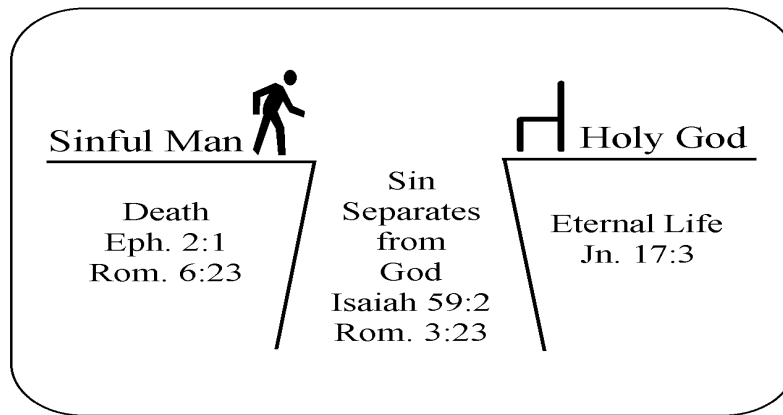
Acts 17:30 says, “God . . . commands all people everywhere to repent” (NIV). What does this word *repent* mean? It means that you have been going the wrong way in life, and you need to hang a U-turn and start going God’s way. Instead of running from God, you run *to* him.

4. You must receive Jesus Christ into your life.

Jesus said, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in” (Rev. 3:20). You see, being a Christian is not merely believing a creed or even going to a church. You can do those things and not necessarily have your sin forgiven and have Christ in your heart. There must come a moment in every person’s life where he or she says, “Lord, come in.” Scripture tells us, “To all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12, NLT).

5. You must do it now!

2 Cor. 6:2 says, “Today is the day of salvation” (NLT). This could be the last opportunity this individual has to respond to the gospel.



B. Assurance of Salvation

Assurance Versus Security

Security

When we trust in Jesus Christ, our eternal security in Christ becomes a spiritual reality whether we understand it or believe it. One's *belief* in security in Christ does not make it true or false. If we have trusted in the person and work of Christ for personal salvation, security is a fact.

Assurance

Assurance is the confident realization of that security. It is the realization of what we have in Christ such as eternal life, forgiveness of sin, and being the object of God's personal care as his children. Assurance has to do with our **comprehension** of the facts and provisions of salvation through faith in Christ. This is a crucial doctrine because, properly understood, it will touch the believer's life in several areas. Not only does it give assurance of salvation, but with that also comes a greater assurance of God's provision in all areas of life.

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

When people do not have assurance, we should always begin by sharing the gospel to be sure they have truly trusted in Christ. Once this is confirmed, then move on to the matters of assurance.

Reasons Why People Lack Assurance

(1) People often lack assurance because they cannot remember or point to a specific time when they received Christ. Some doubt or wonder if they were ever really saved. There is a specific point in time when salvation occurs—the point when regeneration takes place. The issue for people is to know if they **now** really trust in the person and work of Christ.

(2) People often lack assurance because they question the procedure they went through when they accepted Christ. Many evangelists and preachers emphasize the need for some form of public confession of faith like going forward at the end of a service or raising your hand. If people receive Christ privately, they may wonder if they should have made a public confession or prayed a different prayer.

(3) People often lack assurance because of struggles they have with certain sins. They wonder if a true believer would have these kinds of problems. The real problem is ignorance of man's sinful nature, the spiritual warfare we are in, God's means of deliverance, and the need to grow and mature in Christ.

(4) The primary reason behind a lack of assurance is doctrinal misunderstanding and the consequent lack of faith in the finished work of Christ. This means a failure to understand the Word and its teaching regarding mankind, his sin and inability to work for or maintain his salvation, God's perfect holiness, and the finished nature and sufficiency of the work of Christ.

(5) Finally, people often lack assurance because they have erroneously been taught that they should look to themselves and their works as the primary proof of their salvation.

So what is the proper basis for assurance?

Should we look to some experience or our works?

Foundations for Assurance

The Word of God

The Word of God is God's witness to the believer (1 John 5:11-13). The Greek text includes the article with the word "life." Salvation in Christ is not just the gift of life, but of "the life," the one which comes only through faith in God's unique Son. The clear declaration of Scripture is that the one who believes in Christ's person and work on the cross as God's provision for his sins has:

(1) Eternal life.

John 3:36 - 1 John 5:11-13

(2) Forgiveness of all sin.

Acts 10:43 – Colossians 2:13

(3) Freedom from condemnation.

John 5:24 - Romans 8:1

(4) Justification (declared righteous by God).

Romans 5:1 -Romans 4:1-6 -Romans 4:25

(5) Salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9

(6) A child of God by faith. John 1:12

The Work of Christ

To properly understand the work of Christ (Christ's substitutionary death, dying in our place and bearing our sins on the cross) is another vital need tremendously important to assurance. This too, of course, is based on the statements of Scripture, but the emphasis is on understanding the sufficiency, finished nature, and accomplishments of the death of Christ. There are two prominent aspects here which Scripture emphatically teaches:

(1) Salvation is not by our works or merit Rom. 4:1-7

Ephesians 2:8-9 Titus 3:5-7

(2) Salvation is solely by Christ's person and work as a gift of God.

1 John 5:5-12 - Acts 4:12 - Ephesians 2:8-9 - Philippians 3:8-9

The Witness of the Holy Spirit

(1) The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Truth.

John 14:17 - John 15:26 - John 16:8-13 - 1 John 4:6

(2) The Holy Spirit is called an anointing. Both of these descriptions portray the Holy Spirit's ministry of teaching believers God's Word.

1 John 2:20, 27

(3) The Holy Spirit opens the Word to our hearts.

Acts 16:14

(4) The Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ and gives us understanding.

1 Corinthians 2:12-16 Ephesians 3:15-19

(5) The Holy Spirit assures our hearts through the Word that we are children of God.
The witness concerning life in the Son through believing in the Son as promised in 1 John 5:11 is really the message to which the Holy Spirit bears witness in the Word.

Romans 8:15-16 , 1 John 5:7-11

Principles for Assurance

Principle 1: We need to draw our assurance from faith in the facts of Scripture and *not from our feelings*. Our faith and thus our assurance must stand on the sure promises of the Bible rather than on our feelings. The biblical order is: FACTS —> FAITH —> FEELINGS. Feelings are the responders of the soul or heart. They are to follow and respond to our understanding of Scripture, but they are never a safe guide to what we should believe or of the state of our salvation. This leads to the next point.

Principle 2: We need to draw our assurance from faith in the facts of Scripture and *not from our works*. Works or the biblical changes that occur in our lives as a result of the grace of God can confirm the reality of our life with God. We must be ever so careful, however, in making such subjective ground the basis of our assurance, for when a believer is out of fellowship he or she can have the appearance of an unbeliever especially if the condition lasts for any length of time.

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

If we depend on works or obedient living to prove our salvation then we are faced with the following dilemma: If we are living obediently now (the supposed proof of salvation), the possibility exists that could change in the future. If later on we cease to live obediently, then that would prove (based on the above premise) that we are not now true Christians in spite of our obedient lifestyle. So present obedience can never really prove our Christianity and thus, we could never have assurance.

Post-generation performance is not a trustworthy basis for assurance of salvation. Scripture clearly warns against basing assurance or true relationship with God on performance. Note Matthew 7:13-23, for an example. The false prophets typically come in sheep's clothing. Catch that—they look good! They do all the right things. They appear to be 'model Christians,' pillars of the church. (Fruit here refers not to the behavior of these people but to their teaching—see Matt. 12:31-37.) But they've never trusted Christ; they have no vital relationship with Him (v 23). Instead, at the bottom line, they are trusting in themselves (v 22). Their performance looks good. In fact it leads them to conclude that they are right with God. And yet they are deceived. They learn too late that assurance of salvation cannot properly be based on performance.¹

Proper Christian living should never be the fundamental grounds for assurance of salvation. Rather, assurance of salvation which should rest in the merit and sufficiency of the Savior and the believer's new life in Christ, must be the fundamental basis for proper Christian living.

Colossians 3:1-4 If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

¹ Rich Christianson, *The Grace Evangelical Society News*, Vol. 9, No. 1, January-February 1994, p. 4.

As John shows in 1 John 1:6-7, Christlike behavior is an evidence of genuine fellowship and that a person is truly walking with the Lord in the light.

1 John 1:6-7 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

However, proper Christian living is not necessarily an evidence of genuine relationship because when believers are out of fellowship for any length of time they will manifest the works of the flesh and may look very much like an unbeliever. As mentioned earlier, the apostle Paul speaks of this when he described carnal Christians as “mere men” in 1 Corinthians 3:3-4.

3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? 4 For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not mere men?

To walk like a mere man is to walk like those who do not know the Savior. The apostle was not questioning or denying the fact of their salvation. He affirmed his conviction of their salvation, but they were walking according to the flesh rather than according to the Spirit of God. This made them behave so they looked like natural men, like men who were without the saving power of Christ, when in reality they were in Christ with the Spirit indwelling them.

1 Corinthians 1:2-9 - 1 Corinthians 3:1 -1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Sometimes a passage like 2 Corinthians 13:5 is used to support the necessity of examining our works to prove our salvation. This is unfortunate because this is mere proof-texting and misses the context and the actual meaning and purpose of this passage in the argument of Paul in 2 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 13:5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

MacArthur a sound bible teacher gives an illustration of this. He writes: “Doubts about one’s salvation are not wrong so long as they are not nursed and allowed to become an obsession. Scripture encourages self-examination. Doubts must be confronted and dealt with honestly and biblically.” Then, after quoting 2 Corinthians 13:5 he concludes, “That admonition is largely ignored—and often explained away—in the contemporary church.”²

But is this the correct interpretation of this passage? Is Paul calling these believers to examine themselves for the purpose of assurance of salvation? The context says no! The following are some reasons for this position:

(1) Again, as in 1 Corinthians, Paul affirmed his conviction they were saved. He does not question their salvation for a moment as is clear from the passages mentioned above.

(2) Even if Paul were telling them to examine themselves for assurance, he does not tell them to examine their works for assurance. In light of the plain teaching of Scripture, if anything needed to be examined, it would be the **object** of their faith. Had they truly trusted in Christ rather than in some system of works?

(3) He does tell them to examine themselves, but he had another purpose in mind according to the context of verses 3-7. Some were questioning the validity of the ministry of the apostle because of the influence of certain false teachers. Compare 2 Corinthians 11:1-12:21 where the

² John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According to Jesus*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1988, p. 190.

apostle defends his ministry against their accusations. They were demanding proof in verse 3 that Christ was speaking through Paul. In verse 5 Paul shows them that the proof they were looking for was in themselves because he had been their father in the faith.

1 Corinthians 4:15 For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.

The sure way to prove Paul's ministry was to examine their own faith since their belief in the genuineness of their faith carried with it the proof of the genuineness of Paul's ministry as a spokesman for Christ. Did they know the Savior? Yes. How did they come to know the Savior? Through Paul's ministry. He did not believe they were counterfeit and knew they were unlikely to come to a different conclusion about their faith which only proved he too passed the test. This is the point of 2 Corinthians 13:6, "But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test."

Remember that the basis God gives us for assurance of salvation is His record or witness to us as clearly declared in 1 John 5:11-13:

11 And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. 13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.

B. The symbols of salvation

The meaning of baptism

THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM

A. The Importance of Baptism

The importance of baptism is underscored by the following considerations.

1. Christ was baptized (Matt. 3:16). Though the meaning of His baptism was entirely different from the significance of Christian baptism, nevertheless there exists a sense in which we follow the Lord when we are baptized. To be sure, we can never fully imitate a sinless Person; yet we are to follow His steps, and baptism was one of them (1 Pet. 2:21).

2. The Lord approved of His disciples baptizing (John 4:1-2).

3. Christ commanded that people be baptized in this age (Matt. 28:19). Clearly this command was not only for the apostles who heard it but for His followers throughout the entire age, since He promised His presence to the end of the age.

4. The early church gave an important place to baptism (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12-13, 36, 38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5). The early church never conceived of a believer remaining unbaptized.

5. The New Testament used the ordinance to picture or symbolize important theological truths (Rom. 6:1-10; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21).

6. The writer to the Hebrews termed baptism a foundational truth (6:1-2). It is no more optional or less significant than the doctrines of repentance, resurrection, and judgment.

B. The Meaning of Baptism

Biblically, baptism is associated with forgiveness (Acts 2:38; 22:16), union with Christ (Rom. 6:1-10), making disciples (Matt. 28:19), and repentance (Acts 2:38). This is not to conclude that water baptism effects forgiveness, etc., but that it is closely connected with those things that begin the Christian life.

Theologically, baptism may be defined as an act of association or identification with someone, some group, some message, or some event. Baptism into the Greek mystery religions associated the initiates with that religion.

D. The Time of Baptism

The examples in the New Testament indicate that believers were baptized right after they believed. No probationary period is indicated, though such might be justified in order to attest to the genuineness of the faith.

The meaning of communion

THE LORD'S SUPPER

A. Its Institution

Apparently the Lord instituted the Supper in connection with eating the Passover meal before His crucifixion.

B. Its Order

The ordinance alone (without the meal) consisted of Christ taking unleavened bread, giving thanks, distributing it to the disciples, and doing the same with the cup.

C. Its Significances

1. It is a remembrance of Christ (1 Cor. 11:24). It recalls His life (the bread), His death (the cup), His resurrection and living presence (the service itself).

2. It is a proclamation of His death (1 Cor. 11:26). The service itself states the Gospel message as well as the claims of the Gospel on the redeemed person. A missionary whom I knew was directed to service on the mission field when he, as a pastor presiding at a Lord's Supper in his church, was meditating on its meaning while the deacons were distributing the elements.

3. It is an assurance of Christ's second coming (Matt. 26:29; 1 Cor. 11:26).

4. It is a time of fellowship with Christ and His people (1 Cor. 10:21). In what sense is Christ present in the Supper? The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the literal body and blood of Christ are present in the bread and cup and at the time of consecration the

D. Its Requirements

1. Regeneration. Only believers can experience Communion.

2. Fellowship with a local church. Unrepentant believers under discipline were excluded from the Supper (1 Cor. 5:11-13; 2 Thess. 3:6, 11-15).

3. Cleansing before partaking (1 Cor. 11:27-32).

E. Its Frequency

The Scriptures do not specify on this point. After Pentecost the believers broke bread from house to house, but this does not prove a daily observance of the Supper (Acts 2:46). For one thing it is not clear that “breaking bread” in this text meant anything other than taking a fellowship meal together.

F. Some Questions

1. At what service of the church should the Supper be observed? The example of the early church answers Sunday. But since it was a Supper, it seems appropriate to observe it during an evening service on Sunday, at least sometimes.

2. Should it only be observed in the church? This seemed to be the normal pattern (1 Cor. 11:18, 20).

3. Should only church members partake? Again, this seems to be the New Testament example, since only baptized believers were clearly associated with a local assembly. Should visitors be excluded if they are believers? Not necessarily. As a courtesy they could participate. But since discipline by a local church and fellowship within a local church are related to the Supper, then normally only those who are clearly associated with that local church should partake of the Supper in that group.

II. Our Statements

A. Our purpose Statement: why we exist?

Purpose Statement

The purpose of THE VISION CHURCH is

Worship

Purpose #1 Worship: Love the Lord with all your heart

Matt 22:37-38

The church exists to worship God.

How do we love God with all our hearts? By worshipping him! Matt 4:10, Psalm 34:3

Ministry

Purpose #2 Ministry: Love your neighbor as yourself

Matt 22:39

The church exists to minister to people.

Ministry is demonstrating God's love to others by meeting their needs and healing their hurts in the name of Jesus. The church is to minister to all kinds of needs: spiritual, emotional, relational, and physical. Eph 4:12

Evangelism

Purpose #3 Evangelism: Go and make disciples

Matt 28:19-20

The church exists to communicate God's Word

We are ambassadors of Christ, and our mission is to evangelize the world

Fellowship

Purpose #4 Fellowship: Baptizing them

Matt 28:19b

The church exists to develop fellowship

As Christians, we are called to belong, not just believe, we are to belong to Christ's family and be members of his body. Baptism is not only a symbol of salvation; it is a symbol of fellowship. It not only symbolizes our new life in Christ; it visualizes a person's incorporation into the body of Christ. It says to world "this person is one of us".

Spiritual Maturity

Purpose #5 Spiritual Maturity: Teaching them to obey

Matt 28:20

The church exists to edify, or educate God's people

This process is call Discipleship, it is helping people become more like Christ in their thoughts, feelings, and actions. As a church we are not only called to reach people, but also to teach them it is the church's responsibility to develop people to spiritual maturity. Eph 4:12-13

Personalize the purposes

B. Personalize the purposes: My responsibility as a believer

In communicating the purposes of our church, it is important that we personalize them, so that it becomes meaningful to you. It is a privilege and responsibility that we connect to each of them, we have a responsibility as believers to live out the purpose that God intended for your life.

The purpose of the church can be personalized as God's five goals for every believer. These goals express what God wants each of us to do with our lives while on earth.

My responsibility as a believer

1. God wants me to be a magnifier of his name.

This is the **purpose of Worship** stated in a personal way. We each have a personal responsibility to worship God. If we don't worship God we will find something else to worship, whether it be a job, a family, money, a sport, or even ourselves. Psalm 43:3 ,Ex 20:3.

2. God wants me to be a minister of his grace.

This is the **purpose of Ministry** stated in a personal way. God expects us to use the gifts, talents, and opportunities He gives us to benefit others. God intends for every believer to have a ministry and if you want to please God it is important that you discover where God wants you to serve. 1Pet 4:10, Eph 2:10

3. God wants me to be a messenger of his love.

This is the **purpose of Evangelism** in a personal way. Part of the job description for each believer is that once we have been born again, we become messengers of the Good News to others. We are Christ's ambassadors. God is using us to speak to others. We plead with the unbeliever to receive the love he offers to be reconciled to God. Acts 20:24, 2Cor 5:19-20.

4. God wants me to be a member of his family.

This is the **purpose of Fellowship** stated in a personal way. The bible is very clear that following Christ is not just a matter of believing, it also includes belonging. The Christian life is not a solo act. We are meant to live in relationship with each other. 1Pet 1:3, Heb 10:25, Eph 2:19.

1Pet 2:21, Heb 4:12:14, 1Tim 4:12.

5. God wants me to be a model of his character.

This is the **purpose of Spiritual Maturity** stated in a personal way. God wants every believer to grow up to become like Christ in character. He does not want you to stay the same so it is important that you personalize this purpose as a lifestyle. It is possible to be well versed in the bible and still be immature.

The church exists to edify, encourage, exalt, equip, and evangelize

B. Our vision Statement: What we intend to do?

Vision Statement

Our vision is to be a church that moves people to maturity, membership, ministry, mission while motivating them to magnify our savior. Col 1:28

Our Moto

Prayer - Hope – Caring

Mission Statement

“Our Mission is Prayer, hope for the hurting and Caring for our Community”
Matt 28:18-19

Core values

The Vision Church is given to holy purposes as a church in which the name of Jesus Christ is magnified as Lord, in which Jesus Christ is proclaimed as The Son Of God, and the Savior Of The World.

Magnify: We celebrate God's Presence in worship

Mission: We communicate God's word through evangelizing

Membership: We incorporate God's family into our fellowship

Maturity: We educate God's people through discipleship

Ministry: We demonstrate God's Love through Service

C. Our faith Statement: what we believe?

- We believe the Bible to be inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
- We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons; Father,
- Son and Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
- We believe that, for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by who's indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost: they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

D. Our value statement: what we practice?

- God's purpose to live for (mission)
- God's people to live with (membership)
- God's principles to live by (maturity)
- God's profession to live out (ministry)
- God's Power to live on (magnify)

The Vision Church Church Guidelines

1. Enter the church with humility and meekness
2. When you enter the church and see think about the fact that the Lord Himself is looking at you; be particularly reverent and have the fear of God.
3. Always come to the beginning of the service, if for some important reason you are late, be careful not to disturb the prayer of those already there. If you come to church during the reading of the Gospel, stand at the entrance doors until the end of the reading: when it is finished, quietly go to your seat always stand for the reading of the Scripture.
5. If you come to church with children, see that they behave themselves properly, meekly, that they not be noisy; teach them to understand and know how one should behave in church; accustom them to pray.
6. Pray in church when praying please close your eyes and bow your head to show respect for God.
8. Never, without extreme need, leave the church before the end of the service; this indicates disrespect for the holiness of the church.
9. During altar call please remain in your seat never walk out of service; this indicates disrespect for the holiness of the church and distracts others.
10. Parents of children are responsible for the action and safety of their children. This includes destruction of property and medical bills that may occur.
11. Respect the Pastor as he watches over your soul treat him with high respect. Eph. 4: 11-14; Phil. 2: 19-22; II Cor. 6: 3-10; 8: 16-19; 8: 22-24 B. I Cor. 9: 1-10; Gal. 6:6, Gal. 6: 2; Rom. 12: 15; Matt. 18: 21-25, I Tim 3

I. OUR RELATIONSHIP AS MEMBERS TO ONE ANOTHER Eph. 4:1-6, 15-16; 5:1; I Peter 2: 9-10; II Cor. 5: 17-19 A. Phil 1:9; 2: 1-4; Jn. 13: 34-35;

- A. We will treat one another with courtesy and kindness. We will endeavor to maintain an attitude of Christian love in all our relationships.
- B. We will welcome the expression of differing viewpoints and will seek to create an atmosphere of trust and confidence that will encourage free discussion.
- C. We will seek to keep confidences and will refrain from gossip. We will seek in all we do and say to strengthen character and dignify personality.
- D. We will remember that our personal conduct gives evidence of our sincerity and reflects upon the good name of the Church, the Body of Christ.

II. OUR RELATIONSHIP AS MEMBERS TO OUR CHURCH OFFICERS AND LEADERS Matt. 23: 1-12; Mk. 10: 42-45; 9:35; I Peter 5: 1-3; Col. 3: 12-17; I Tim. 3: 1-13; Titus 1:5-9

- A. We will select our officers intentionally and impartially on the basis of their commitment, competence, compassion and maturity in the faith. We are committed to having men, women and youth serve in the various responsibilities of the congregation.
- B. We will provide them opportunities for training, skill development and faith formation. We will provide the resources needed for each to be an effective leader.
- C. We will expect our officers to manifest Christian principles in their conduct.
- D. We will pray daily for our leaders
- E. All leaders are required to be faithful with their time, talent and treasures.

THE VISON CHURCH STRUCTURE

What do we expect as a Church in order for the body to function it has to have a structure we will discuss the function from a biblical point of view.

I. THE SKELETON: The skeleton is what gives a body structure

A. High View of God: It is absolutely essential that a church perceive itself as an institution for the glory of God (Prov. 9:10), James 4:8 When you have a right relationship with God, everything else will fall into its proper place. I am not saying that we are to ignore people's needs. We are to be concerned about people the same way God is. But there is a balance that must be found, and that begins with a high view of God. We must take God seriously.

The second nonnegotiable truth is that a church must believe in.

B.The Absolute Authority of Scripture:

Jesus said, ". . . Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4). If we are fed by every word that comes out of the mouth of God, then we ought to study every word. Today, preaching has lost that. Many things are preached except the Word of God. We must teach the Bible--every word of it. That is important. It doesn't matter if you don't have an appetite for it.

C.Sound Doctrine

If you have a high view of God and are committed to Him, then you must go along with what His Word teaches. The teachings of God's Word make up sound doctrine. Many Christians today are vague about doctrine. There are many of what I call sermonettes for Christianettes--little sermons that are nice and interesting.

D. Personal Holiness

Second Corinthians 7:1 Many Christians aren't as concerned about their personal holiness as they should be. A person's prayer life is one of the things that cultivates holiness. What is your prayer life like? What about your study of the Word of God? Do you fast? How often do you meditate on the Word of God, if at all? You say, "I'm an elder," or "I'm a deacon and I teach a Bible study. " I'm not talking about that; I'm asking, "How often do you meditate for a prolonged period of time, drawing nigh unto God in a prayer that extends beyond a moment?"

E. Spiritual Authority

Believe with all my heart that a church must understand that Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22; 4:15), and that He mediates His rule in the church through godly elders (1 Thess. 5:13, 14; Heb. 13:7, 17). The Bible teaches that; I didn't invent it. The Bible says that elders have the rule over the congregation in the Lord. They have authority.

There are five foundational things that a church must be committed to: A high view of God, a belief in the absolute authority of Scripture, a commitment to teaching sound doctrine, the personal holiness of its people, and the establishment of spiritual leaders. Of the five items listed above, take one item at a time and explain what problems could arise if that item were missing in a church. A church must have flowing through it certain spiritual attitudes. A physical body has organs and fluids in it that help keep the body alive and functioning. A skeleton gives a framework to a church, but it isn't alive. The life of a church comes from its spiritual attitudes. The goal of a pastor and the leaders of a church should be to generate proper spiritual attitudes in the hearts of the people. The leaders of a church can't just say, "You need to do this, and you need to do that. " They must generate the spiritual attitudes in people that will motivate them to proper behavior. A person can do something good outwardly, yet have a bad attitude. However, good outward behavior should come from good attitudes. That's why it's so important to emphasize the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)--the internal attitudes.

II. THE INTERNAL SYSTEMS

A. Obedience Matthew 7:13-14 - 1 John 2:5

This attitude overarches all other attitudes. An obedient person does whatever God says to do. He does not compromise. If God says something, that's it--there is nothing to argue about. It's important for us to have God's Word in our hearts and minds so that we know how to be obedient.

B. Humility Philippians 2:3-4 1 Peter 5:5-6

C. Love Colossians 2:18

Love is an act of service on your behalf that flows out of a heart of humility. A humble person says, "I care more about you than myself," and acts out his care in love. That's why I say that only humble people can love others. Proud people can't love others because they're too busy caring for themselves. The only love they know is a physical love; they have emotional attachments to certain people. They don't care about anybody else. They enjoy being with others who are like them, and are indifferent to the needs of everybody else.

D. Unity Eph. 4:13

E. Willingness to Serve 1 Corinthians 4:1

F. Joy John 17:13, Phil. 4:4 What is joy? It's an outward exuberance. It's the response of the heart, soul, and mind of a person to his relationship with Jesus Christ. One of the things that the leaders of VMC Church has to endeavor to cultivate in the congregation is joy.

G. Peace Jn. 14:27, Corinthians 13:11

H. Thankfulness Thessalonians 5:18

I. Self-Discipline 1 Corinthians 9:24- 27 Self-discipline means staying away from sin and doing only those things that are right.

J. Accountability Heb. 10:25, Galatians 6:1,

K. Forgiveness Matthew 6:12, Ephesians 4:32

L. Dependence Deut. 6:10b-11a If a church isn't careful, then it can come to the point of eliminating God in its ministries because it's depending on the strength of its people and programs.

M. Flexibility

N. Growth Peter 2:2

O. Faithfulness First Corinthians 4:2

P. Hope Romans 12:12

It is important for you to be dependent on God in all that you do. Write a list of the things you are currently doing in your church. Look at your list, and ask yourself these questions: How much do I pray about each of the things I am doing? Have I sought God's divine guidance whenever I needed to make a decision? How much do I depend on God in each of the things I am doing? Examine your life and make sure that you are depending on God in every aspect of

your church life. If you are not dependent on God, then it is very easy to do things that are not a part of His will.

Why I Attend All the Meetings of the Church

Hebrews 10:19-25

When the Hebrew writer penned this passage, the church was experiencing a number of problems. Some were being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:12,13). Some were remaining immature as Christians (Hebrews 5:12). Some were falling away from Jesus (Hebrews 6:4-6). Some were living immoral lives and were bitter and were causing others to be lost (Heb. 12:14,15).

The Hebrew writer knew they needed each other's strength to remain strong in their faith: He exhorted them:

- let us draw near to God (10:22);
- let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering (10:23);
- let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works (10:24);
- and not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together like some, but encouraging one another--and all the more as you see the day drawing near (10:25).

Reasons Why I Attend Every Service of the Church

1. ***Because Jesus is there.*** Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." Jesus' custom was to worship in the synagogue (Luke 4:16). Jesus is with us as we commune (Matt. 26:27-29).

2. ***Because in my worship I show my love and gratitude.*** When I think of all that God has done for me, it is one way I can sacrifice myself for Him. One who truly loves God never asks, "Do I have to attend all the services?" He wants to.

3. ***Because I need the strength of fellow Christians.*** Hebrews 10:24 asks us to consider how to stimulate to love and good works! Others strong in their faith encourage and strengthen me (Acts 2:42,45). I know that missing hurts me--those who are gone miss the good they could have received. I am stronger from the worship and the word of God! A coal of fire alone on the hearth will die; so we by ourselves grow cold and lifeless. Together we can stay fervent in our love.

4. ***Because I want to set the right example for others.*** In 1 Tim. 4:12 Paul says we ought to set a good example for others. It certainly would be disappointing to others if I urged them to attend and I was not here. I want to impress upon my children the necessity of church attendance, so I attend (Eph. 6:4). My influence is either for against Christ! I do not ever want to be a stumbling block to anyone (Matt. 18:6). I don't want to be somebody's excuse for not coming.

5. ***Because I want to put my priorities in the right order.*** Jesus demands in Matt. 6:33 that we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. The context suggests to us that seeking the kingdom ought to come before food or clothing. Jesus would not have said so if the kingdom were not so important.

6. ***Because I am preparing to go to heaven.*** Our time together in church is a foretaste of what it will be like in heaven with the Lord. Here is where we learn of God and His way and how to prepare ourselves for His everlasting service (2 Thess. 1:10-12).

The Church

We will focus on what the Bible says about the church. The New Testament church is the one Jesus died for, purchased with his blood, and is the one of which He is the head. We ought to be concerned with being a part of this church and no other! The world today sees the church through its own eyes. Some think of the church as a building; others think of it as a denomination. How does God define the church in the Bible?

The Church Is Made Up Of People

In Matt.16:16-18 Jesus says He will build his church. Eph. 2:19-22 tells us the church Jesus built was not made of brick and mortar but of people. In Acts 8:3 But Saul {began} ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. It is clear that the church was made up of people. In Rom 16:16, people greet people; buildings do not greet other buildings. There were, in fact, no church buildings prior to 3rd century A.D.

The Church Is Made Up Of Called and Saved People

The word "church," (ἐκκλησία) means "called out" (a group of people called together for a purpose). Christians have been called by the gospel (2 Thess. 2:13,14) to serve Jesus. The church is made up of people who obeyed the gospel and are saved by Jesus. In Acts 2:41,47 saved people were added to the church. In Eph. 5:23 (cf. 1:22-23), Jesus is the Savior of the body or the church. The church is the saved; Jesus the head of the church and the Savior of his body.

The NT refers To the Church by Several Pictures:

1. As a family, it is a household (1 Tim 3:15).
2. As a government, it is a kingdom (Matt 16:18,19).
3. As an organism, it is a body (Eph 5:23).
4. As a dwelling place, it is a temple of God (1 Cor 3:16).

God Wills That His People Be One, United

In John 17:20-23 Jesus prayed for his disciples, that they might all be one. Paul instructed the Corinthians in 1 Cor 1:10-13 that they all agree, that they be of same mind and judgment and that there be no divisions among them. God wants His people to be one. Paul wanted the Ephesians to forgive one another and to forbear one another, "keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). The basis for that unity came from the following verses. In Eph 4:4-6, Paul said, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all." Each of these "ones" has a meaning for us:

- * one body--one church, not many.
- * one Spirit--not many conflicting Spirits
- * one hope--by obedience to the gospel
- * one Lord--no presidents, popes or conferences
- * one faith--one system of doctrine
- * one baptism--no do-it-yourself practices
- * one God and Father--not many gods

Paul noted in 1 Cor 12:13 that we are all baptized into one body. That body is the church (Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18,23). This being true, the church as the Bible describes it is not:

- * a collection of denominations with differing doctrines, practices, names, organizations, creeds, worship, and requirements for entrance.
- * interdenominational (allowing several all under one umbrella)
- * nondenominational (not aligned with any particular one but having members in several)

Rather, the NT church is Undenominational. The NT knows nothing of the whole concept of denominationalism, prevalent in our world today. The New Testament condemns the idea of sectarian

names, division, and various false doctrines. In the New Testament, the church was merely the church. It is absurd to ask what kind of church it was, because there were no kinds. There was just the church! If we were to see the first automobile, we wouldn't ask what kind it is; for there were no "brands" of automobile. There was just an automobile.

Some basic points to consider:

* Matt 15:8,9, 13-14 Man-made religion will be uprooted.

* Gal 1:6-9 There is but one gospel.

* Col. 3:17 We are to do all in the name of the Lord.

Good News: One Can Be "Just A Christian" And Never Be A Member of Any Denomination

New Testament Christians were merely "Christians." There were no man-made names, creeds, practices, or organizations among them. You can practice the same thing by reading and following the Lord's instructions in the Bible, the word of Christ and avoid any man-made beliefs or practices. Jesus said in John 8:31,32 that the true disciples abide in His words. He reminds us in John 12:48 we will be judged by His words. It just makes sense to do God's will and follow the Bible in all we teach and do. This means giving up every man-made doctrine, idea, practice, name, or organization. It means observing all things that Jesus commands (Matt 28:19,20). The church as God's people love the Lord, love each other, share the gospel, help the needy, and follow every teaching of Jesus Christ.

Why Becoming A Member Of The Lord's Church Is Necessary

1. *Because God adds all the saved to His church* (Acts 2:41,47, Col. 1:13,14). Since repentance and baptism leads to salvation (it, the remission of sins), and since the baptized were added unto them, and since the saved were added to the church, the Lord by the same act both forgives sin and adds one to His church.

2. *Because members of the church have been released from their sins by the blood of Christ* (Rev 1:4-6). When John wrote the seven churches of Asia, he was speaking to a people who had come into a kingdom and were priests to God. John taught that "we" Christians "are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one," There are but two kingdoms: the domain of darkness and the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col. 1:13).

3. *Because Jesus Christ is the Head of His Church and the Savior of His Body* (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18). Jesus Christ purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). We have no record anywhere in the New Testament that the blood of Jesus ever purchased anything but the church. His kingdom (Rev 5 9,10, Matt 16.18,19).

4. *Because men are reconciled to God in the Body through the cross* (Eph. 2:11-22). The church, which is His body (Eph. 1.22,23), is able to draw near to God because the blood of Christ has cleansed it. If one is not reconciled to God, one is alienated from God. God reconciles people to Himself in one body, the church.

5. *Because members of the church are members of God's Family* (1 Tim 3 15; Gal. 3:26,27; 1 Cor. 12:13). God's household is His family, the church. To be God's child one must be baptized into the body of Christ, which is the church. One is either in God's family or Satan's family. Baptism is the time one becomes a child of God and enters that body.

6. *Because only members of the church have their names written in heaven* (Heb. 12:23; Rev. 20: 15; Luke 10:20). Only the ones whose names are written in heaven will escape the lake of fire and brimstone. The Lord has added those who are saved to His church and to that heavenly list.

Read the scriptures listed below. What do they say about the purpose and mission of the church? How may they help you develop a purpose statement for your church?

Matthew 28:19-20

I Peter 2:1-5; 9-12

Acts 1:8

Matthew 16:18

Ephesians 2:1-9

Ephesians 4:11-16

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

Acts 2:42-47

Colossians 4:5-6

Colossians 3:12-16

Hebrews 10:25

List five Reasons why people should be involved with your church.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

List seven people who you know that are unsaved or saved and not in church ?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

The people that you listed above commit to praying for them and invite them to church.

A. Statement of Doctrine

The following basic doctrines contained in the Holy Scripture are adopted:

1. The Holy Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures to be the inspired Word of God, authoritative, inerrant, and God breathed (II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:20, 21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12, 13).

2. The Godhead

We believe in one triune God existing in three Persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—eternal in being, identical in nature, equal in power and glory and having the same attributes and perfections (Deuteronomy 6:4; II Corinthians 13:14).

3. The Total Depravity of Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, became alienated from God, and is totally unable to retrieve his lost condition (Genesis 1:26, 27; Romans 3:22, 23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:12).

4. The Person and Work of Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man; that He accomplished our redemption through His spiritual death on the Cross as a substitutionary sacrifice; that our redemption is made sure to us by His literal physical resurrection from the dead (John 1:1, 2, 14; Luke 1:35; Romans 3:24, 25; 4:25; I Peter 1:3-5); that the Lord Jesus Christ is now in heaven, exalted at the right hand of God, where, as the High Priest for His people, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (Hebrews 9:24; 7:25; Romans 8:34; I John 2:1, 2).

5. The Personality and Work of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person who convicts the world of sin, indwells all believers in the present age, baptizes them into the Body of Christ, seals them unto the day of redemption, and that it is the duty of every believer to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 12:12-14; Ephesians 1:13, 14; 5:18).

6. Salvation

We believe that salvation in every dispensation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose efficacious death on the Cross provided man's reconciliation to God (Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; John 1:12).

7. The Eternal Security of Believers

We believe that all believers are kept secure forever (Romans 8:1, 38, 39; John 10:27-30; I Corinthians 1:4-8).

8. The Church

We believe that the Church, which is now the Body and shall be the Bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of this age irrespective of their affiliation with Christian organizations (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:25-27; I Corinthians 12:12-14).

9. The Personality of Satan

We believe in the personality of Satan who is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Job 1:6, 7; Matthew 4:2-11; Isaiah 14:12-17).

10. The Blessed Hope

We believe that the next great event in the fulfillment of prophecy will be the coming of the Lord Jesus in the air to receive to Himself the dead in Christ and believers who are alive at His coming, otherwise known as the Rapture and Translation of the Church (I Corinthians 15:51-57; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14).

11. The Tribulation

We believe that the Rapture of the Church will be followed by the fulfillment of Israel's seventieth week, the latter half of which is the time of Jacob's trouble, the great Tribulation (Daniel 9:27; Jeremiah 30:7; Matthew 24:15-21; Revelation 6-19).

12. The Second Coming of Christ

We believe that the great Tribulation will be climaxed by the (premillennial) return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth to set up His kingdom (Zechariah 14:4-11; Matthew 24:15-25; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:6).

13. The Eternal State

We believe that the soul and human spirit of those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation do at death immediately pass into His presence, and there remain in the conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body at His coming, when soul, human spirit, and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in the glory; but the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious misery until the final judgment of the Great White Throne at the close of the Millennium, when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (Luke 16:19-26; 23:43; II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6, 7; Revelation 20:11-15)

14. The Responsibility of Believers

To “grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ,” to the end that his life is consistent with the Lord’s plan, thus bringing both blessing to the believer and honor to the Lord (II Peter 3:18).

15. Church Ordinances

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Lord’s Supper to be observed until His return (Matthew 28:19, 20; I Corinthians 11:23-26).

16. Sovereignty

We believe that God, existing as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is sovereign and exercises supreme and absolute rule over all creation as a part of and consistent with the essence and attributes of Deity (I Chronicles 29:11,12; Daniel 4:35; Psalms 24:1; Ephesians 1:11; I Timothy 6:15).

17. Spirituality

We believe that spirituality is an absolute condition in the life of a believer in this dispensation wherein he is filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit, walking in love and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe that spirituality is distinct from maturity, that a believer becomes carnal through any act of mental, verbal, or overt sin, and that spirituality (fellowship with Christ) is restored solely by personal confession of that sin to God the Father (John 15:7,8; II Corinthians 5:6; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18; Romans 6:11-13; I John 1:5, 9; 2:2; I Corinthians 11:30, 31).

18. Spiritual Gifts

We believe that God The Holy Spirit in grace and apart from human merit sovereignty bestows spiritual gifts to believers in this dispensation. (I Corinthians 12, 13; Ephesians 4:7-12; Romans 12:4-8).

What is the next step after Connection Class 101?

PATHWAY CLASS 201 "Discovering Spiritual Maturity"

After completing Class 101 the next step is Class 201, "Discovering Spiritual Maturity". This is a four hour class that helps us know how to help you become all that Christ wants you to be.

LIFE IN THE VISION

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE IN THE VISION CHURCH

Having completed Connection Class 101 you know the emphasis we put on serving as a part of the church family. If you have chosen to become a member you have committed to become a part of a Small Group for relationship and ministry and also to join a service team to help with the Sunday meeting.

Beyond this there are a number of service opportunities and other activities available during the week. To help us connect your gifts and interests with areas of need please complete the form below and return it today. Make a note of which areas you signed up for. Feel free to call the office for more information. We will contact you as soon as possible.

Weekend and Weekday Services:

- **Kid's Ministry** - Classes for kids of different age groups; teaching or assisting.
- **Childcare** - Attend to nursery/pre-school age children.
- **Greeters** - Make new people feel welcome, tell them about The Vision, and assist them.
- **Ushers** - Assist during the services as needed.
- **Audio Visual Media** - Assist with sound and visual media during the services.
- **Prayer Ministry Team** - Pray for those who request prayer during or after services.
- **Vision Café** - Make coffee, espressos, lattes, set up, clean up, and be friendly!
- **Dramatic Arts** - Be a part of the Drama Team for various presentations.
- **Worship Team** - Play an instrument and/or sing in worship at a service.
- **Parking Attendant** - Direct people where to park on occasions as needed.

Other Opportunities:

- **Building Maintenance** - Help maintain interior of our buildings.
- **Grounds Beautification** - Once-a-month grounds clean-up and yardwork.
- **Meal Ministry** - Meals for families when someone has been ill or in the hospital.
- **Newcomer Assimilation** - Reaching out to guests through various means UpUp.
- **Helping Hands** - Assist the body with various needs, e.g. moves, handiman work, etc.
- **Hospitality** - Help prepare, set up and clean up for potlucks, receptions, etc.
- **Helping Hands**- is a group of volunteers who assist our congregation in difficult times. Their mission is to provide prayer and support to attendees and their immediate families experiencing serious illness by sending get-well cards and/or visiting local hospitals or homes.
- **The Prayer Chain**- is a group that handles special prayer request by phone calls.

LIFE IN THE VISION

SERVICE SIGN UP FORM

-----RETURN TO OFFICE -----

Name: _____ Date: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kid's Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare | <input type="checkbox"/> Greeters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ushers | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio Visual Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer Ministry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vision Café | <input type="checkbox"/> Dramatic Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Worship Team |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parking Attendant | <input type="checkbox"/> Building Maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds |
| Beautification | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meals Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Newcomer Follow-Up | <input type="checkbox"/> Helping Hands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality | <input type="checkbox"/> Website Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Design | <input type="checkbox"/> Email Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Letter Writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> Administration | <input type="checkbox"/> Helping Hands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> The Prayer Chain |

**LIFE IN THE VISION
PATHWAY CLASS 101 EVALUATION**

Please answer the questions as best that you can. There is no right or wrong answer; your input is simply evaluated as to how we can improve the Pathway Class 101 course.

1. Which subject/teaching was the most meaningful/helpful to you? Which was least meaningful/helpful?

2. If someone were to ask you what the vision or purpose of the Vision Church is, what words would you use to describe it?

3. Here is the list of the goals we had for the course; please evaluate the degree to which you feel the goal was accomplished with 1 = "goal poorly accomplished" and 10 = "goal highly accomplished".

A. To know and understand the primary values and practices that Vision Church is based on.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

B. To know and understand the vision and direction Vision Church is headed.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

C. To become familiar with key leaders in Vision Church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

D. To provide opportunities to serve in the context of the local church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

E. To make new friends and establish relationships.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10