

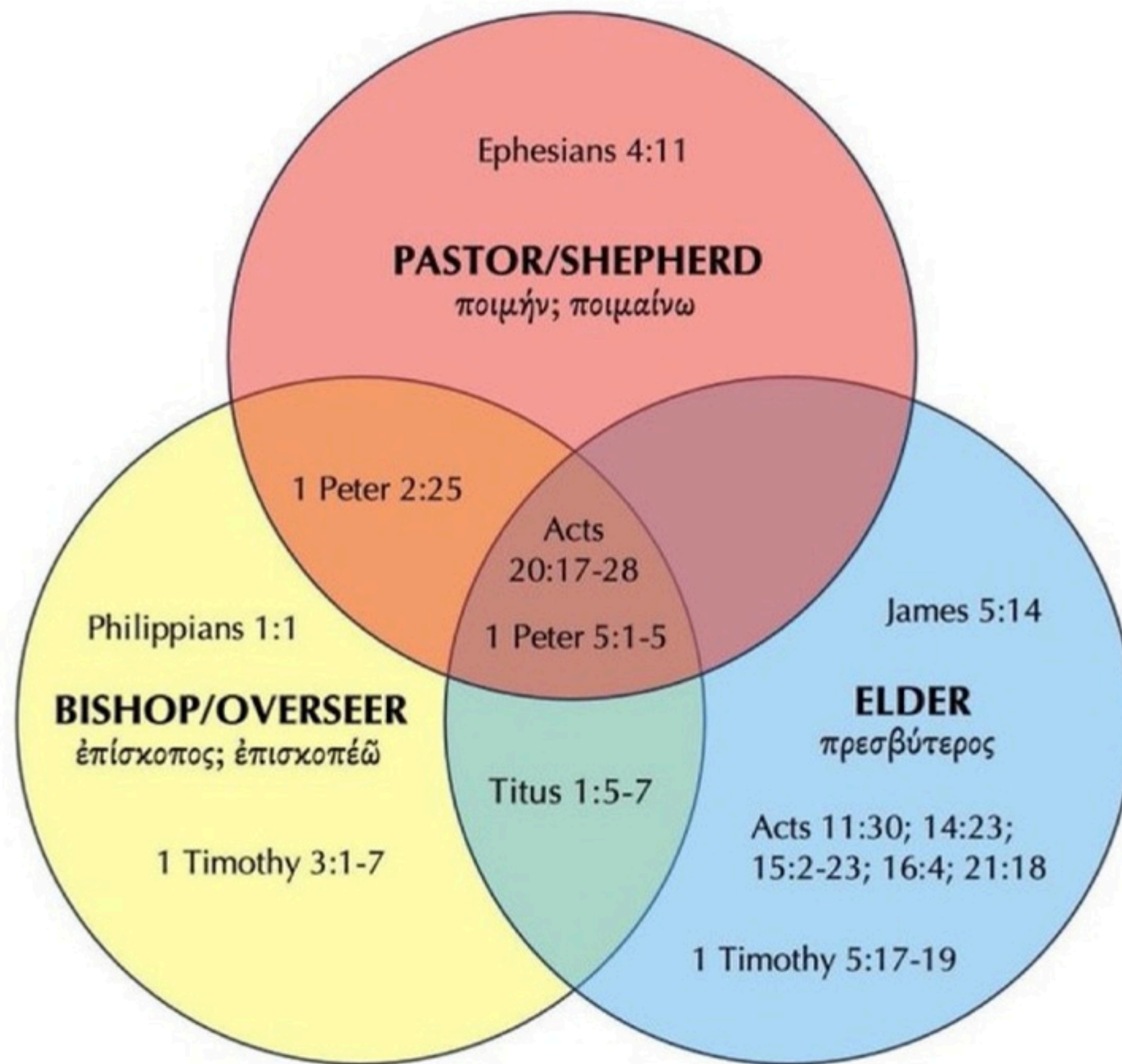
THEOLOGY MATTERS

SESSION 9

ECCELSIOLOGY -PART 2







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“The local church is a visible, earthly outpost of the heavenly assembly. It is a time machine which has come from the future, offering a preview of this end-time assembly.”

Dr. Jonathan Leeman

Church Membership: How the World Knows who Represents Jesus

Works Referenced:

9 Marks of a Healthy Church Overview:

<https://www.9marks.org/about/> and Healthy Churches: An Overview

1. Expositional Preaching

Expositional preaching (otherwise known as expository preaching) is the investigation of a particular passage of Scripture whereby the pastor carefully explains the meaning of a passage and then applies it to the members of the congregation. **The main point (and tone) of a sermon, then, takes the main point (and tone) of a particular passage.** This is in opposition to the topical preaching showcased in the majority of evangelical churches, where Bible passages are woven together to support a pre-existing point.



The Bible has many examples of expositional preaching and teaching. Think of the Levitical priests who taught the Law (Deut. 33:10), Ezra and the Levites who read from the Law and gave the sense of it (Neh. 8:8), and Peter and the apostles who expounded Scripture and urged their hearers to respond with repentance and faith (Acts 2:14-41, 13:16-47).

On the other hand, God condemns those who “speak of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord” (Jer. 23:16, 18, 21-22).



2. Gospel Doctrine

There needs to be a proper understanding and necessary emphasis on the full gospel. Where many contemporary churches teach that Jesus wants to meet our felt needs and give us a healthier self-image, that is not the gospel. The gospel message is that we are sinners who have rebelled against our Creator. But Jesus took the curse that was rightfully ours and all that remains is for us to have faith in Him so God may credit Christ's righteousness to our account. When we de-emphasize sin and damnation to make the presentation more friendly and less offensive we cease declaring the full gospel.

2. Gospel Doctrine (cont.)

This emphasizes not only how we are taught but also what we are taught. In a sense this should follow naturally from expository preaching because the careful exposition of a passage should lead to sound theology. The majority of poor theology arises from a lack of careful Biblical exposition. Where there is poor exposition, we should expect to eventually find poor theology.

Luke 24:13-27

13 That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles^[a] from Jerusalem, 14 and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” 19 And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. (continued)

21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. 22 Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, 23 and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.” 25 And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Gospel doctrine is of vital
importance because all
the Bible points to Jesus.



3. Conversion and Evangelism

When we have a Biblical understanding of the gospel, we must then also have a proper understanding of conversion. Conversion is a new birth from death to life and is a work of God. It is not merely a change of attitude or a change of affection, but a change of nature. Conversion does not need to be an exciting, emotional experience, but does need to produce fruit to be judged a true conversion.



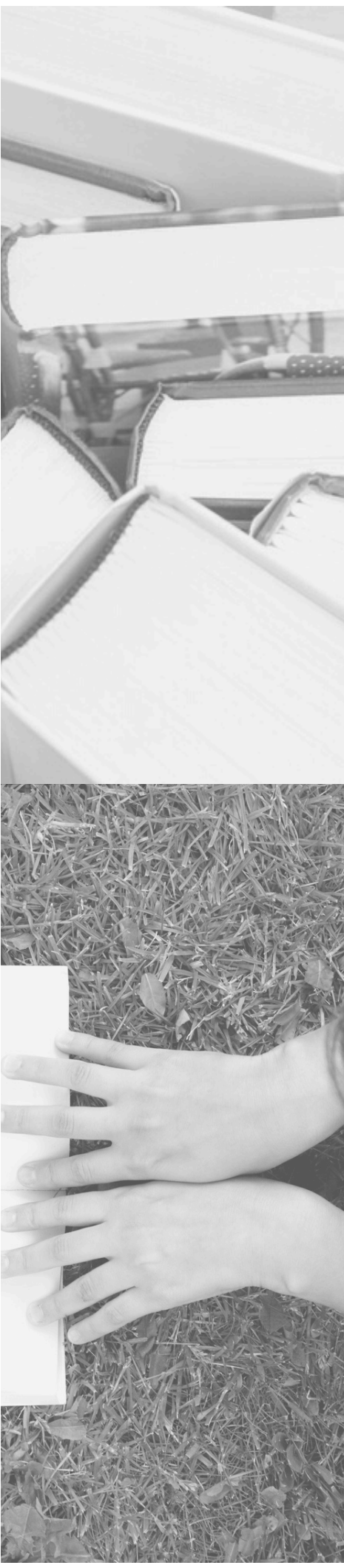
In the Old Testament God promised to save His people by sending Messiah.

Isaiah 53:4-5

*⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
⁵ But he was pierced for our
transgressions;
he was crushed for our
iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement
that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are
healed.*

Jeremiah 31:33-34

*³³ For this is the covenant that I will make
with the house of Israel after those days,
declares the Lord: I will put my law within
them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I
will be their God, and they shall be my people.
³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his
neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know
the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the
least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord.
For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will
remember their sin no more."*



John 3:5-13

5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.^[a] 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You^[b] must be born again.’ 8 The wind^[c] blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” 9 Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” 10 Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? 11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you^[d] do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.



3. Conversion and Evangelism (cont.)

The way we evangelize speaks volumes about how we understand conversion (and further, what we understand about the good news). If we believe that people are essentially good and are seeking Jesus, we evangelize using half truths and tend to elicit false conversions. When we present a watered-down gospel, we end up with a watered-down church. We need to be faithful to present the full gospel, the good news with the bad, and leave the results to God.

4. Church Membership

Church membership is a privilege and a responsibility and needs to be regarded as such. People should only be members if they are dedicated to the church – in attendance, prayer, service and giving. To allow people to become and remain members for sentimental or other unbiblical reasons makes light of membership and may even be dangerous.



1 Corinthians 5:2, 12-13

*2 And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn?
Let him who has done this be removed from among you.*

*12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not
those inside the church^[a] whom you are to judge? 13 God
judges^[b] those outside. “Purge the evil person from among
you.”*



1 Corinthians 12:14, 21-22

14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

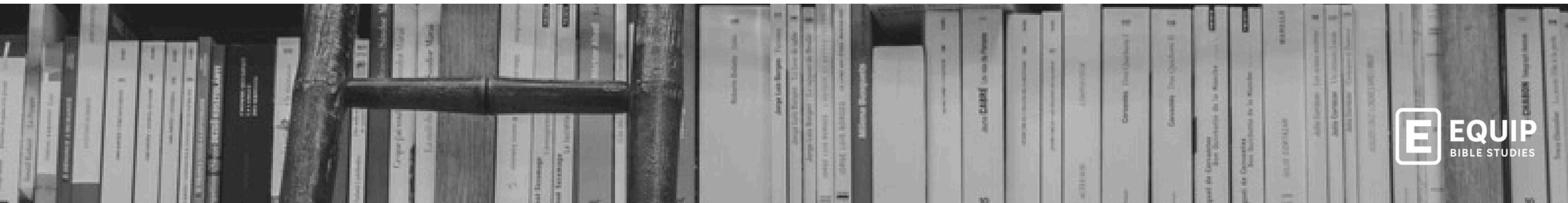
21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.



1 Corinthians 12:26-27

26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.





5. Church Discipline

Discipline guides church membership. The church has the responsibility to judge the life and teaching of the membership since they can negatively impact the church's witness of the gospel. Leadership needs to be firm in discipline as this is an expression of love to the congregation.

Matthew 18:15-17

¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

5 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. 2 And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. 3 For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. 4 When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. [a] 6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

1 Corinthians 5:1-13 (cont.)

8 Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— 10 not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church [b] whom you are to judge? 13 God judges [c] those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

6. Discipleship

We need to recover true discipleship – discipleship that causes Christians to live lives of increasing holiness. The emphasis on growth needs to be directed at holiness rather than membership. True discipleship producing strong, committed Christians will present a clear witness to the world.

2 Timothy 2:2

2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men,[a] who will be able to teach others also.

Colossians 2:6-7

6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.



7. Church Leadership

Until recent times, almost all Protestants agreed that in church government there should be a plurality of elders (which means that there should be an office of elder and not merely one or more pastors in positions of leadership). This is a Biblical and practical model that has fallen out of favor in modern times.



Acts 20:17, 28

17 Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him.

28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God,^[a] which he obtained with his own blood.

Titus 1:5

5 This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—



Acts 14:23

23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

1 Peter 5:1-5

5 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight,^[a] not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you;^[b] not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

8. Prayer

Many wrongly think of prayer as being a kind of mystical energy or religious ritual. But prayer is simply talking to God. It can include praising God, confessing sin, asking for needs, and even lamenting the brokenness of the world. In the Bible, individual Christians and churches are commanded to pray because God really listens and responds to the prayers of his people.



Where is it in the Bible?

Jesus taught his disciples to pray directly to God as their Father, to praise him for who he is, and ask him to provide for all our needs (Matt. 6:6-9).

He also said believers should ask boldly because God knows what we need and has committed himself to providing for us (Matt. 6:25-34).



Where is it in the Bible? (cont.)

James identified the reason for believers not having what we need is because we do not ask (James 4:2-3).

The early church regularly gathered to pray as they faced many challenges in advancing the gospel among the lost (Acts 1:14, 4:23-31, 12:5).



Why is it Important?

Prayer is so fundamental to the Bible that the Bible cannot be understood without it. This is because what God says demands a response from us. Proper responses to God's revelation include praising, asking, confessing, and lamenting to God in prayer.





9. Missions

Missions is church planting across significant barriers. To fill that out just a bit, missions involves churches sending qualified workers across linguistic, geographic, or cultural barriers to start or strengthen churches, especially in places where Christ has not been named.

Where is it in the Bible?

The entire Bible tells the story of God making a people for himself out of those who had been cast into darkness and death by Adam's sin and their own. He accomplished his people's redemption through Jesus Christ, the one who the Old Testament anticipates and the New Testament celebrates. This means that the entire Bible is rightly said to be about missions—God's mission to save.

Where is it in the Bible?

In the Great Commission, Jesus bound churches everywhere to the task of disciple-making (Matt. 28:19-20). We know that local churches are the means for fulfilling Jesus's commission because (i) the apostles planted local churches wherever they went throughout the book of Acts; and (ii) Jesus commands new believers to be baptized—an ordinance normally given to churches rather than to individuals.

Where is it in the Bible?

The book of Acts is all about the planting of and strengthening churches in order to advance the gospel. The individual letters of the New Testament also serve this end.

Revelation 7:9 guarantees that God's mission, which he is currently working through his church, will succeed. A "great multitude" from every nation will gather to him on the last day.

Why is it Important?

Missions is important because God's primary objective in creating the world has always been to redeem a people through Christ for his glory (Col. 1:16-22). God calls churches to join him in this mission.

Baptism

1. Baptism is a Commandment by God.

- **Matthew 28:19** : *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”*
- **Mark 16:16** *“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”*

Jesus gave authority from Himself for all His disciples to baptize as a response to salvation by obedience and public identification with His death and resurrection.

2. Baptism as Public Declaration of Faith

- **Acts 2:38** *“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”*
- **Romans 6:3–4** *“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”*

Baptism visibly proclaims a believer’s repentance and new life in Christ, marking a break with the old way of life. It can be summed up as an “outward expression of an inward change”.

Lord's Supper

1. Instituted by Christ

- **Matthew 26:26–28** *“Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’”*
- **Luke 22:19–20** *“And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’”*

Jesus gave the Lord's Supper to His followers as a continuing remembrance and celebration of His sacrificial death for sin.

6. Communion for Believers

- **Acts 2:41–42**
- **1 Corinthians 11:33–34** *“So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another—if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.”*

The Lord’s Supper is reserved for baptized believers and is part of a local church.