

DAILY BIBLE STUDIES

“Church Basics” - Part 5

Selected Scripture

May 22 – May 28, 2011

THE LORD'S DAY –We continue this week in our small mini-series taken from Joshua Harris’ book entitled “*Stop Dating The Church –Fall In Love With The Family Of God*”. We are going to start going through a “top ten” list if you will of things that should matter to individuals as they look for a local church to belong to. This list is by no means exhaustive but it hits squarely the main and very important things that need to be present in a local church that would honor Christ. All of us that belong to Christ’s church in general and this local church in particular need to strive to excel in growth and further establishment of these God honoring criteria. Honesty, humility, and courage are necessary to evaluation and change in the Christian life. Read **James 1:19-21**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: God, help me be wise in evaluating my life before You.

MONDAY – TEN IMPORTANT QUESTIONS IN CHOOSING A CHURCH. In looking for a spouse to marry, it is not wrong to look for a certain man or woman who meets a particular checklist of preferences. One may want to find a spouse with black hair that enjoys camping and a certain type of food etc.... But it would be foolish to put those preferences over the Godly criteria of whether the person is truly converted and loving the Lord and growing in Him. In a similar way it is not wrong for folk to look for some particular things in a local church such as a lot of people a certain age, or a certain style of music. But we must understand these things are **SECONDARY** concerns. The Word of God not our wishes is what lays out the “**MUST HAVE**” list for every church. There are certain qualities that would be nice but there is a Biblical list of musts that are a priority in looking for a local church. The following are 10 important “must’s” to look for. (*The following list is taken from Josh Harris “Stop Dating the Church” Chapter 5 Pages 83-96*) Read **1 Timothy 3:15**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: God, help me to have humility and courage to make changes where they are needed in order to live my life in line with Your Word.

TUESDAY – 1. Is this a church where God’s Word is faithfully taught? Nothing nourishes us like the Word of God—**NOTHING**. It is God who created the individual and He through His Word has given out the necessary instruction and food for life. A local church that pleases God is one that is submissive to Scripture. It is governed by the Word of God which is what is

profitable. (**2 Timothy 3:16**) There is a difference between “sprinkling” a little or a lot for that matter, of Scripture around a church and a church that is saturated with a mindset to conform to Biblical truth and make it the standard that will be followed. Make sure the church you choose to attend is one that is under the authority of Scripture.

What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: Father, help me to love to hear Your Word taught and help our church to be a place that is faithful to teach and obey Your Word.

WEDNESDAY – 2. Is this a church where sound doctrine matters? Just the word “doctrine” causes some folk problems but this is precisely what the local church is commanded to follow. (**Acts 2:42**) We understand that sound doctrine is constantly attacked both outside and inside the church. (**2 Timothy 4:3-4**) Doctrine is not divisive but rather necessary and unifying as it informs us to the way God has designed for us to live and act. **Josh Harris** speaks in his book about a youth conference where the host started the event by walking onstage and declaring, “*It’s not about doctrine! It’s about Jesus!*” We can agree with **Harris** as he comments that the statement is both sad and misleading. As he states, “*We don’t have to choose between caring about doctrine and loving Jesus. The two pursuits are not opposed to each other. In fact, they are inseparable! We can only grow in our love for our Savior as we learn more of who He is and what He has accomplished for us. A concern for truth doesn’t take us away from a deeper relationship with Him. It leads us closer to Him, in greater worship, adoration, and obedience.*” So to wrap up this point we should be looking for a church that knows and defines what they believe according to the Scripture.

What truth(s) did I learn from God’s Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: Father, thank You for doctrine. Give us wisdom to study and courage to obey what You teach us from Scripture.

THURSDAY – 3. Is this a church in which the gospel is cherished and clearly proclaimed? It goes without saying that the Gospel or “The Good News” is the primary message that ought to be upheld by Christ’s church. In the Gospel we find the perfect, sinless life of Christ, His substitutionary, sacrificial death for sinners, and His glorious resurrection from the grave and ascension on high. It is the story of how God has by His grace and mercy alone made the way for sinful man to be reconciled to Himself through faith. It all comes back to this glorious message of the gospel. As Paul the apostle said his desire was “*to know Christ and Him crucified*”. The church is to be the place where this message of Christ is clearly embraced and forth told. Commenting on choosing a church it was **Charles Spurgeon** who said, “*Do not go where it is all fine music and grand talk and beautiful architecture; those things will neither fill anybody’s stomach nor feed his soul. Go where the gospel is preached, the gospel that really feeds your soul, and go often.*” Read **1 Corinthians 2:2, 15:1-3**.

What truth(s) did I learn from God's Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: God, help me to love, and to live; 'swimming' as it were in the great Gospel of Jesus Christ. God, praise to You; for You are the Gospel!

FRIDAY – 4. Is this a church committed to reaching non-Christians with the gospel? We all have heard Christ's command to every believer. (**Matthew 28:18-20**) We must make this a priority in both our personal lives and it should be a priority in the life of our church. It is not enough to just celebrate the Gospel; we must share it with the lost as well. Yes, it is God who quickens a person to salvation and not our man made manipulation, but God uses us as the vehicle He has ordained to get the saving message of the Word to those who are lost. Churches have a very real danger of becoming selfish and introverted when they don't spread the message of Christ to others. We do not go and take a message that has been adapted to better fit the culture or one that will draw a larger crowd at church on Sunday. We take a message that will clash with the thought process of fallen men but we bring it to folks in love and with authority.

What truth(s) did I learn from God's Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: Father, help me to be committed to reaching out the 'lifeline' of salvation in Christ to a world of individuals drowning and facing a certain death.

SATURDAY – 5. Is this a church whose leaders are characterized by humility and integrity? No Pastor is perfect, but you want to find church leaders that you can trust and whose example you can follow. We are given the list of Biblical qualifications for men who would be overseers in the local church in **1 Timothy 3** and **Titus 1**. The things listed in these passages are all about a man's character. Leadership is first and foremost about character not charisma. We don't see a list that requires men to be perfect but to be men of perfection. True leaders see themselves as the sinful men they are, understand they are not immune to sin, and try to be servants while maintaining the understanding of their accountability to Christ. These qualities are something that can be seen even by those who would oppose God's leaders—for God has made it evident. (**1 Timothy 5:25**)

What truth(s) did I learn from God's Word today?

Suggestion for prayer: Father, help me pray for those who lead me as well as strive to be a person of maturity, integrity, and Godly character.