



CHURCH ALIVE HOME BIBLE STUDY

Lesson 2 – *What is a Church? What Is a Christian*

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Life is precious! Life is what we are all about! Each week we are studying God's Word, seeking the reality of *His Resurrection Life!* Jesus came that we might have life and life more abundantly! (John 10:10) May this study today encourage you and inspire your faith.

Let's begin with prayer: Heavenly Father, I welcome your presence into my home today and I thank you with a grateful heart for the opportunity to study Your Word at home. I invite Your Holy Spirit to guide my thoughts. Open my mind to understand, my heart to receive, and my life to reflect the truth I learn. In the Name of Jesus, I ask!

1. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, *"...on this rock I will build my church..."*

Throughout Scripture the Church is compared to a building or temple of God.

Ephesians 2:19-22: *"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

1 Corinthians 3:16 – *"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"*

The *Hope Centre* structure, the building, is **not** the temple – it is **not** the Church. **WE ARE THE CHURCH!** It is a group of *"called out"* people who belong to Him, who come together as a family – **called the Body of Christ. TOGETHER, we are THE TEMPLE of GOD** – inhabited by the Spirit of the Living God!

The CHURCH was always a part of God's original plan. In Adam and Eve, we have a picture of Christ and the Church. It all goes back to God's original plan. *Please read Genesis 2:7-25 before you go on....*

God created man in His image male and female He created them (Gen. 1:27). God breathed into them "the breath of life" (2:7). They shared in His divine nature. Adam and Eve loved God and walked and talked with Him (Genesis 3:8) They had an intimate relationship with Him. When Adam and went his own independent way, he lost the presence of God. *The result: SPIRITUAL DEATH* (Romans 5:12)! (We will look at in another lesson.)

God instituted the Law and the Sacrificial system as a temporary measure to deal with sin until Christ came to redeem mankind and to reveal His holiness. (John 1:14) In Exodus 25:8 God spoke to Moses and said, ***“Let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.”*** **The first thing God instructed Moses to build was the ARK of the Covenant - which held the presence of God.** (Exodus 25) The Ark went with them wherever they went. It was the presence of God that gave them success.

It is God's presence that distinguishes Christians from any other creature God created. It's God's presence that distinguishes us from every non-Christian religion (Deuteronomy 4:7).

When we were “born-again” in Jesus Christ we became spiritually alive. Christ, by His Spirit, is living within us. He is WITH us and IN us! When God looks at us, He sees Jesus Christ!

Marriage is a picture Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:28-33)

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might ^lsanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So, husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, ^lof His flesh and of His bones. ³¹ “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

The **CHURCH UNITED is the BODY OF CHRIST**. We are SUBJECT to the HEAD – JESUS CHRIST! Just as our brain directs our body, the JESUS directs the BODY of CHRIST.

What was Jesus' intention when He said, “I will build My Church...?”

He was saying that He would build His Church on the foundational revelation that Jesus is the Son of God. (Matthew 16:18)

God created us to function as He does – to carry on the work of Jesus' ministry on earth. **Everything that is in God, is in us.** God wants to open up the capacity of who we really are in Christ. He wants to put His Church back in touch with what He put within us at our new birth.

Sing this song over your home...

Oh, the glory of Your Presence. We, Your Temple, give You reverence.
Come and rise from Your Rest and be blessed by our praise.
As we glory in Your embrace; as Your Presence now fills this place.

LET'S STOP AND PRAY... *Lord, thank You for calling me to be a part of Your Church. Help me to be bold in my service for You...I need to be restored in my passion for prayer, for Your Word and Your presence. That my relationship would be fresh, deep and alive. In Jesus Name I ask.*

2. WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

The word “*Christian*” literally means “*belonging to Christ*” or a “*follower of Christ*”- first used in Antioch to describe the disciples of Jesus because their behavior and speech reflected Jesus’ teachings. (Acts 11:26)

Jesus said in John 3:3, “...*unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*”

A Christian is “*born-again*” through the Holy Spirit. This rebirth transforms the believer’s heart, enabling them to live in obedience to God and reflect Christ’s character in love, humility and service.

We have become temples of the God, because the Holy Spirit is lives IN us (John 20:22). When Jesus left earth He promised to send the Holy Spirt. (Acts 1:8) He promised that the Holy would be WITH them forever. (John 20:22,acts 1:8; Matt. 28:20) The Holy Spirit is WITH us and IN us!

1 Peter 1:3 says, “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*”

A Christian is a person who has faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, believes in His death and resurrection for salvation, repents from sin, and seeks to live according to His teachings. This faith is not merely intellectual but is a personal trust in Christ for salvation. (Romans 3:23, 5:8; 10:9).

Make this declaration today...

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:2).

GOD’S SPIRIT DWELLS WITHIN US! Christ Jesus, in the Person of the Holy Spirit lives within us!

Testimony: Recently I got an unexpected call to an appointment. Jerry was not feeling up to par so I had to call a taxi. I suddenly became very anxious that I had to go ALONE in a taxi. As I was about to leave, I was stopped in my tracks and I said, “**No, I am not alone, You are with me Jesus!**” I went on my way. **This may sound trivial to you, but it was a profound experience for me!** I arrived safely! 😊 I even got on the elevator to the 3rd floor instead of taking the stairs. **WE ARE NOT ALONE!**

Remember... **BELIEF implies ACTION to FOLLOW!**

PRAY: Father, I believe, but help my unbelief. Remind me of your promises and power – that I will trust in you fully, allowing You to be in control. May my heart be filled with unwavering faith.

Let’s sing the chorus of “He Lives”... by Alfred Henry Ackley

He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me, along life’s narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart.

KNOWING JESUS and MAKING HIM KNOWN is the foundational key upon which everything else in our Christian walk rests. God wants us to pursue Him with our heart, soul and mind and strength.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 reveals much about being devoted to God:

"Hear, O Israel - The LORD our God, the LORD is one!⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

⁶ "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

This passage emphasizes the oneness of God and the importance of loving Him wholeheartedly. It instructs believers to keep God's commandments close to their hearts and to teach them to future generations. We are to keep the Word before us! Study it! Meditate on it! Speak it!

I recall years ago as I was praying the Lord spoke to me, *"Keep the Word ever before your eyes!" The Word is to be our guide in every situation – every day.*

Remember... Jesus said in Mattheew 22:35-40, when asked, "Which is the greatest commandment?" "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

These two fundamental commandments emphasize the importance of love in all aspects of life and relationships in both the Old Testament and in our New covenant Christian faith.

God calls us to pursue Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. This means with all our being...

HEART – the center of our being, where we communicate with God.

SOUL- mind, will and emotions

STRENGTH – our body, our ability, resources.

We must pursue God faithfully and apply it to all we think and do. We are to be people of God's Word. The foundation for our Christian beliefs is the Word of God!

Let's pray... I thank you, Lord, for loving me, and for the *"new life"* I have in You. I thank you for the work you have begun in me. Help me to grow in my faith in You each day and in love and character. Help me to be aware of Your presence WITH me and IN me every moment of every day.

Let's sing again... (Lyrics by Steve Fry)

Oh, the glory of Your Presence. We, Your Temple, give You reverence.

Come and rise from Your Rest and be blessed by our praise.

As we glory in Your embrace; as Your Presence now fills this place.