

The Muscles and the Flesh, Part 1

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

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INTRODUCTION

God has blessed and built Grace Church. The people desire for the church to be all that He wants it to be. We are as rich in spiritual things as any church could be. While we enjoy those blessings, it's important for us to understand the reasons that God blesses us with the best that He has to give. That's why in this study, we're doing a little spiritual archeology and examining the foundations of Grace Church. We want to share what we're committed to.

A. The Responsibility

I rejoice in the Lord because I see God's work being done through the people at Grace Church. I'm not doing this study because I feel that we lack in the things a church should be committed to; rather, I want to encourage us to be more committed to those things. Paul said the same thing to the Thessalonians about love: ". . . as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And, indeed, ye do it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more" (1 Thess. 4:9-10). However, my fear is that as the church grows, people will get further away from the foundational things that it is built upon. If that happens, then we will decline in our usefulness to God and His blessings on us will decrease. The virtues we have studied are present in the hearts of the people and the ministries at our church. But I still want to call everyone to a greater commitment to those virtues.

All of us have a great responsibility to make sure others see those virtues in us. I believe there are principles that place a church in a position of maximum blessing by God. It's not the largeness of a church that counts; it's the attitudes of the people that is important. It's the commitment in our lives that other people must see. It's the things in us as committed believers that aren't always seen in others who call themselves Christians that make us useful to God. The purpose of this study on "The Anatomy of a Church" is to see what things make a church all that it should be. We're finding out the basics of what a church should have. We have to keep reminding ourselves what makes up the foundation of a church.

B. The Remembrance

Peter said, "Wherefore, I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the present truth" (2 Pet. 1:12). Although the people he was writing to already knew what they should know, he wanted to make sure they remembered. You have to keep on track. It's easy to start down a track and all of a sudden go off on a different path. You have to remember God's truth so that you don't wander from it.

Review

In our study about the church, we've been making features of the human body to be analogous to the church. The first feature that a church should have is. . .

I. THE SKELETON

The skeleton gives form to a body. There are several nonnegotiable, foundational things that a church must have:

A. A High View of God

B. The Absolute Authority of Scripture

C. Sound Doctrine

D. Personal Holiness

E. Spiritual Authority

Next, we looked at. . .

II. THE INTERNAL SYSTEMS

A body must also have internal systems that give it life. They give the body the capability to act and react. The church's internal systems are made up of certain spiritual attitudes. It's what's flowing in the lives of the people in a church that is important. We tell pastors that look at Grace Church, "Don't just take what you see on the surface here and try to incorporate it in your church at home. Behind the surface of things are certain internal attitudes that have to be built into people's hearts before a ministry can be what God wants it to be. Let's look at the list of those attitudes:

A. Obedience

- B. Humility
- C. Love
- D. Unity
- E. Willingness to Serve
- F. Joy
- G. Peace
- H. Thankfulness
- I. Self-Discipline
- J. Accountability
- K. Forgiveness
- L. Dependence
- M. Flexibility
- N. Growth
- O. Faithfulness
- P. Hope

Those are the attitudes we must cultivate among ourselves. We must build those spiritual attitudes into each other through preaching, teaching, and discipling.

Now, when the skeleton is present and the right kind of attitudes are flowing through the people of a church, then we're ready to move on to. . .

III. THE MUSCLES

The muscles represent the function of a body. The body gets its form from its skeleton, its life from its internal systems, and its muscles enable it to function. What is the function of the church? What is its responsibility? What is our ministry? After a church has become committed to worshiping God, the authority of Scripture, teaching sound doctrine, personal holiness, submitting to spiritual

authority, and cultivating proper spiritual attitudes, what is it supposed to do?

We are going to look now at the responsibilities of the church. I call these the muscles--the things that make the church move.

A. Preaching and Teaching

I've put preaching and teaching together because they are both related to the proclamation of biblical truth. I see the proclamation of the Word as a primary function of the church. The church is the receiver of the revelation of God; therefore, it must be the dispenser of it as well. God has revealed Himself to us so that we will understand Him. We, then, are to be hearers and proclaimers of His Word.

I am committed to that as an absolute priority in the church. Proclaiming the Word of God is a function of the church. I grieve in my heart about the sermonettes that people hear in some churches. Some preachers just counsel from the pulpit and deal with ethical issues. Some of that is helpful. There are many Sunday school classes at different churches where people don't really know much about the Bible, and they guess about what it teaches. But the church's most important function is to proclaim the Word of God in an understandable, direct, authoritative way. Grace Church will always be committed to a strong emphasis on preaching and teaching.

1. THE PARTICULARS

Let's look now at excerpts from the two Epistles that Paul wrote to Timothy. Those Epistles were written to help us understand the ministry from the viewpoints of the minister and the congregation. In fact, 1 Timothy 3:15 says that 1 Timothy was written to tell us "how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God [the church]. . . ." First Timothy tells us how we are to behave and function in the church, and both 1 and 2 Timothy emphasize that we are to make a priority of proclaiming the Word of God.

a. The Content Described

First Timothy 3:16 talks about the wonder of the incarnation of Jesus Christ: ". . . without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh. . . ." That's an incredible truth. It's the heart of the Christian faith. If God hadn't manifested Himself in the flesh of Jesus Christ to die and rise again, then our faith would mean nothing. The incarnation is the very heart of our faith--it is a great revealed truth.

Reading further, Paul said: ". . . God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the nations, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Notice the words ". . . preached unto the nations. . . ." One of the essential elements of God manifesting Himself in the flesh is preaching. There must be a proclamation of the incarnation. I believe that at the heart of the church is the incarnation, and at the heart of the incarnation is its proclamation. Preaching has a central place in the life of a church.

b. The Commission Delivered

Paul told Timothy to be faithful to preach. He said, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things. . . ." (1 Tim. 4:6). In other words, "Timothy, your primary responsibility is to be a teacher. Whatever you've received from God's Spirit, teach that to the church. Teach the brethren the truth of God." How marvelous it is that we can tell people that the Bible is God's truth! So many people are groping for truth, making up their own opinions about things, and trying to figure out the meaning to life. Pilate, the ultimate cynic of the New Testament, said, "What is truth?. . ." (Jn. 18:38a). We

know the truth. Jesus said to the Father in John 17, "... Thy word is truth" (v. 17b). What a legacy! We must impart God's truth.

I believe that God has blessed Grace Church because it has made a priority of proclaiming the Word of God. We don't just talk about the Bible; we teach from it. Many hundreds of people over the years have said they come to Grace Church because they want to be fed the Word of God. That's our commitment; that's our function. It isn't just my job to proclaim the Word; it's everybody's job! Some people are gifted to preach or teach, but we're all to proclaim the Word.

c. The Clout Demanded

Paul told Timothy that if he reminded the brethren of the truth, that he would be "a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine..." (1 Tim. 4:6). Paul added in verse 11, "These things command and teach." In other words, "Teach with authority."

I was invited to speak at a commencement ceremony at the Los Angeles Police Academy recently, and the man next to me told me about the various graduates. He said, "We had to flunk one man because of his voice. It wasn't authoritative enough. A policeman needs to have authority in his voice." I thought that was interesting. A policeman's authority is the law. If I sound like I speak with authority, it's because the authority is the Word of God. That's what Paul was emphasizing to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:11: "You don't just teach the Word; you command it. You call people to a mandate of responsibility." In verse 13 Paul continued, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." Timothy was to read the Bible, explain its doctrines, and exhort people to apply it. He was told not to neglect preaching (v. 14), but to meditate upon God's truths (v. 15), take heed to it, and continue in it (v. 16). The responsibility we all have to proclaim the Bible is thrilling!

Preaching: The Focal Point of the Church

Paul talked about another dimension of preaching and teaching in 1 Timothy 5:17. He said, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." That verse tells us that the leadership of a church should focus on preaching and teaching. The church's function is to proclaim God's Word.

I've heard people criticize Grace Church and say, "There's too much preaching and teaching at Grace Church, and not enough of other things." I don't see how there could ever be too much preaching and teaching. That could happen if everyone knew all of God's revelation, but that is impossible. There can't be too much proclamation of the Word. The only way we would have too much preaching and teaching is if people didn't obey what they were taught. The reason we put so much emphasis on preaching and teaching is because they help everything else to happen. We have to know what the Bible says about something before we know how to act. Teaching is the sine qua non of everything. We won't know how to worship, pray, evangelize, discipline, shepherd, train, or serve unless we know what the Word of God says. That's why preaching and teaching are so important.

d. The Commitment Discussed

In 1 Timothy 6, Paul told Timothy, "... keep that which is committed to thy trust..." (v. 20). In other words, he was telling Timothy to hold onto the revelation of God-- the content of true doctrine--and stay away from the philosophies and errant theologies of the world. Likewise, we are to be careful not to deviate from God's Word. We don't want to get carried away by the opinions of men.

In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul told Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Paul wanted Timothy to handle the Word correctly. In 2 Timothy 1:13, he said, "Hold fast the form of sound words..." A person proclaiming God's Word must commit himself to it and then dispense it. Paul told Timothy to be committed to the Word, preach it, and stay away from the heresies of the world (2 Tim. 2:16). Paul added, in 2:24, that a servant of the Lord--a leader in the church--must be "apt to teach." He must be skilled in his teaching. According to 2 Timothy 3:16-17, it is Scripture that perfects us; that includes

enabling a person to preach and teach.

As you can see, Paul emphasized to Timothy the importance of preaching and teaching in the church.

2. THE PRIORITY

a. Paul's Command to Preach Diligently

Paul gave a great mandate to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1-2. He said, "I charge thee, therefore. . ." (v. 1a). The word "therefore" points back to what Paul just said in 3:15-17: "Since the Word of God is able to make people understand salvation, and is able to make you perfect in Christ, 'I charge thee. . . before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word. . .'" (2 Tim. 4:1-2a). Paul held Timothy accountable before God to preach the Word. It is Scripture that makes people "wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3:15b). It is the Word that "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (vv. 16-17). Continuing in 2 Timothy 4:2, Paul said, "Preach the word; be diligent in season, out of season. . . ." In other words, "Work hard at proclaiming God's Word. Keep preaching all the time. Don't worry about whether people are offended by what you say."

b. Paul's Command to Preach Confrontively

1) Preaching Calls Others to Accountability

Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2, " . . . reprove, rebuke, exhort. . . ." Why did Paul say that? Because he knew that Christians are always fighting their sin. He knew that preaching needed to be confrontive. The mildest of the three confrontive words is "exhort," which means "to encourage a person to change his behavior and warn of judgment if he doesn't change." Preaching has to confront people about their sin. It needs to cause people to search their hearts and feel convicted. Paul told Timothy to be confrontive in his preaching, and to do it "with all long-suffering and doctrine" (v. 2b). Preaching should be done with conviction. It should make people look at the failures in their lives. However, we can't expect people to change overnight. In the process of confrontive preaching, we must be patient and teach doctrine. It is the Word that convicts. One of the functions of the church is to patiently teach the Word of God in a confrontive way so that people are made accountable before God to make sure their lives are right.

2) Preaching Calls You to Accountability

You yourself are called to that accountability. When you go to church or Bible study and listen to the teaching, you are being called by the authority of the Word of God to see if you are living according to the Scriptures. If your life is not right, then the preaching will reprove or rebuke you until your life is what God wants it to be.

So, when Paul gave what were his last instructions to Timothy, he said, "Timothy, everything is summed up in this command: Preach the Word." You say, "Why is that?" Because it's when people have the Word in their minds that right behavior is generated. Ephesians 4:23 says, " . . . be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Romans 12:2 says, " . . . be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. . . ." You need to have the Word in your mind so that you are able to produce right behavior. Preaching and teaching the Word helps put Scripture in people's minds; there is no substitute for them.

A second function of the church is. . .

B. Evangelism and Missions

I use those two terms together just to give you a comprehensive perspective. Evangelism is generally carried out on a personal basis, while mission work usually covers broad areas. We are to be committed to the fact that the church exists for the sake of the world. We are to desire to live as God wants us to so we can be a shining light in the midst of a dark and perverse generation (Phil.

2:15). The ultimate goal of all ministry is to reach others for Christ.

1. EVANGELISM

There are two ways to evangelize: through our lives and through our words. First, let's look at how we evangelize. . .

a. Through Our Lives

It's our lives that make our testimonies believable or unbelievable. If we have a church where Christ is exalted and people are living in obedience to God, then we're going to establish credibility for our testimonies. The way we live in the world is important.

It's wonderful when people come to Grace Church and say, "The people here really live out their message. They obey the Word of God." Living out the Bible is what makes Christianity credible. Have you ever noticed that Satan doesn't try to destroy the church through extermination, but through proliferating churches that have no credibility? He knows that doing that will undermine the message of the gospel. How many times have you heard people say things like, "I went to that church over there, and they have a lot of hypocrites. They don't care about anyone. The pastor embezzled money from the church and ran off"? Satan does everything he can to corrupt churches so that the integrity of the gospel message is undermined. He wants to corrupt churches so that there is no foundation for individual testimonies.

I believe that we have been called to live an evangelistic life-style in our communities. In Matthew 5:13, our Lord says that we are. . .

1) The Salt of the Earth

Jesus said, ". . . but if the salt have lost its savor, with what shall it [the earth] be salted? . . ." (Mt. 5:13). We are a preservative on the earth; we are distinct. That's why we're called to live pure lives. I am concerned that we live godly, virtuous lives not just so that we can glorify God, but so that unbelievers can glorify God. We are to live holy lives because that will draw others to that kind of purity. We are to be godly examples.

In Matthew 5:14, Jesus says that we are also. . .

2) The Light of the World

Matthew 5:15 says that a light is not supposed to be hidden under a bushel. The word "bushel" is used to indicate that there is sin in your life or that you are clouding the testimony of your life; consequently, your light is not shining.

If you're really salting the earth and shining brightly, then you're going to have an impact on the world. Your actions speak louder than words: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven" (Mt. 5:16).

Are you hurting the credibility of Christianity?

I have met people that I know in circumstances that were embarrassing to them. I can't tell you how many people have tried to swallow a cigarette when they saw me! Sometimes I'll go into a restaurant and see someone I know with a drink in his hand. I'll just smile and wave, and he'll go into instant panic. I don't have to say anything. On some occasions, I've even gone over to a table and greeted people I know just to remind them that there is a certain standard of life for Christians to live up to for the sake of unbelievers that watch us.

One time when I went into a restaurant, a cocktail waitress came up to me and said, "Would you like a cocktail?" I knew her, and when she recognized me, she was embarrassed and said, "No, you wouldn't want a cocktail." I said, "You look familiar." She said, "I have to apologize," and gave me a story about why she was a cocktail waitress. But it was very interesting because she knew that she was not living the Christian testimony she was supposed to. It was embarrassing for her to see me. I thought to myself, "She should be more embarrassed by unbelievers seeing her un-Christlike behavior than by my seeing it."

We have a foundation of credibility that we need to protect with our lives.

Jesus summed up your responsibility to live a righteous life when He said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven" (Mt. 5:16). Unbelievers should be able to look at your life and say, "Only God could do that in a person's life. What a wonderful life!"

Second, we evangelize. . .

b. Through Our Words

Not only do we need to live out the gospel message, but we need to proclaim it. We need to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you. . ." (1 Pet. 3:15). In order to proclaim Jesus Christ, we need to have our lips unsealed. Someone once joked that most Christians are like an Arctic river: They are frozen over at the mouth! It's unfortunate that for many Christians, that is true. For some reason, many Christians are resistant about proclaiming Christ. We ought to be as eager to speak about the Lord as we are to speak about mundane things. One reason some of us have difficulty proclaiming the gospel is because we don't know very many non-Christians. Our world is narrowed. It's like a pyramid: the longer you've been a Christian, the fewer non-Christians you know.

When we proclaim the gospel, we have to make sure we know what to say. That's why at Grace Church we spend a lot of time articulating the gospel. We want to make sure everyone understands how a person becomes saved. We study how Christ evangelized the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:16-26 and the crowd that listened to His Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7). Churches all over the world are filled with people that think they are saved, but they aren't because they misunderstand how a person obtains salvation. That's why we need to be committed to evangelism.

2. MISSIONS

Missions is a worldwide view of outreach--it involves reaching across the globe to whatever areas God will open to us. I received a letter from a pastor in the Philippines, and he said, "I've heard about Grace Church. I want to build my church the way God would want it built. Could you send me some information so that I know what to do?" We have some people at our church strategizing for us to reach as far beyond our own walls as God will allow us. Jesus said, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded. . ." (Mt. 28:19-20a). We want to reach out to the world as far as our resources permit. We are training people so that we can reach out more effectively. We're committed to preaching, baptizing, and teaching wherever we can.

The third function of the church is. . .

C. Worshiping

1. THE DISCUSSION OF WORSHIP

Paul told the Philippians, "For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3). John 4:23 says that those who "worship the Father in spirit and in truth" are true worshipers. We are called to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to God in a holy act of worship (Rom. 12:1b). Peter said that we are "an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5).

2. THE DEVOTION TO WORSHIP

At one of our church staff meetings recently, there was some concern about how many people really worship God during the service. These questions came up: How many of the people in the worship service really worship? How many hearts are really lifted up to God in praise and adoration? How many people are thinking about their plans for the rest of the day while the service is taking place?

We are so bombarded by the cleverness of Satan's media in the world--we continually think about shows we've watched or commercial tunes we've heard--that it's hard for us to push that clutter out of our minds so that we can meditate on the things of God. We would almost have to go to a monastery to filter our brains clean!

3. THE DEFINITION OF WORSHIP

When you go to church, do you really think about the songs you are singing or meditate on the things of God that you hear taught and preached? You need to cultivate a worshipful heart. Your worship of God should not be confined to when you're in church. A worship service should just be a catalyst to get you to worship at all times. In a book I wrote entitled True Worship, I said that we worship best when we are fully obedient. Obedience the basic definition of worship. We are to obediently offer God praise, do what He says, and worship Him. Like obedience, worship should become a way of life rather than just an exercise on Sunday.

Hebrews 10:22 tells us to draw near to God. Do you know what it means to draw near to God? James 4:8 says, "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. . . ." What great thoughts those are! Do you ever draw near to God in an unhurried way? Do you let your heart and mind ascend when you hear the hymns, Scripture readings, or prayer? Do you meditate in deep devotion? Some people get a mental picture of gurus when they hear the word meditate. They don't know what it really means to meditate on God.

We function in worship. Paul told Timothy to have men lift up their hands in prayer (1 Tim. 2:8). The church is to meet together for the purpose of praise. We are to be worshipful people.

The next function of the church I'd like to talk about is. . .

D. Praying

I want to place in your memory this thought: I believe with all my heart that prayer is the hardest spiritual exercise we engage in. There are two reasons for that. The first reason is that. . .

1. IT IS SELFLESS

a. Praying for Others

Prayer is hard work because it is selfless. True prayer embraces the Kingdom of God: "Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. . . ." (Mt. 6:9b-10a). True prayer also embraces the people of God: "Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation. . . ." (Mt. 6:11-13a). There is no "I" in the Disciples' Prayer. That prayer embraces the Kingdom of God, His glory, and the needs of His people. That's why prayer is an unselfish exercise. Only humble people can abandon themselves to embrace the will of God and the needs of His people. When Paul said in Ephesians 6:18 for us to be "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," he was calling us to pray unselfishly for God's glorious will and the needs of His people. Prayer is selfless; only unselfish people can pray.

b. Praying for Ourselves

It's hard work to pray on behalf of God, His will, and His people. It's easy for us to pray when a problem hits us. When we get injured, get sick, lose a loved one, get caught doing something wrong, despair over a child that strays from the Lord, or our children are making decisions about who they're going to marry, then we find it rather easy to pray on our own behalf.

A person that prays only in times of personal need has a weak prayer life. A person has a strong

prayer life when he is able to abandon himself in unceasing prayer on behalf of the glory of God in His eternal Kingdom and the needs of His redeemed people. Luke 11:5-8 tells about a man banging on his friend's door for bread at night so that he could feed a guest. If I were hungry myself, I would have no problem banging on somebody's door all night for bread. But would I be able to bang on somebody's door all night for bread for someone else? A church can have an ice cream social after a service, and many people will show up. But if that same church has a prayer meeting, you would find few who would come. Not many people are selfless enough to pray. When we pray, we should embrace things other than ourselves. None of us pray as we should.

Why do older people pray better?

On a radio interview in Chicago, I said that one of the benefits of growing older is that you have a longer list of answered prayers than younger people. You've had more chances to see God demonstrate His power. The more you see God answer prayer, the more confident you become in your prayers. I think that older people pray better than younger people because they have seen a larger number of God's responses to prayer.

The second reason that prayer is difficult is because. . .

2. IT IS PRIVATE

When you pray, you usually do it by yourself. No one knows how much you pray. That's why you've got to be self-disciplined to pray without peer pressure. Don't pray just so you can tell someone that you prayed. Some people go to a Bible study to look good, or read a particular passage so they can say they've read that passage.

No one sees you when you pray. There are no visible rewards. We perform much better when we know people are watching us. I spend a great amount of time preparing my sermons because I know that many people are going to listen to what I say. But it's easy to not pray, because no one would notice the effects of that for a while. But if I come to church on Sunday without anything to say, then I'd be in trouble.

Prayer is hard work. It's selfless, and it's to be done without seeking people's attention or approval. I thank God for the selfless people we have in our church. I pray that we'll get more people like that in our fellowship. We have a small group of older people that get together every Monday to pray. They've been praying together for over ten years. They pray, and God answers their prayers. The church benefits from their faithfulness. God help us to be faithful in our prayer life! Prayer is the nerve that moves the muscles of omnipotence. I don't know how to explain God's sovereignty and our prayer requests working together, but I do know that God answers prayer. James said, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (5:16b). I want to be a prayerful, righteous person because I want to see God do His work and give Him the glory due Him.

We must be committed to prayer. Paul couldn't have said that more clearly than when he said, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). You say, "What does it mean to pray unceasingly?" Praying without ceasing means to live in God-consciousness. It means offering your whole life as a prayer; that is, being aware of God every time you think, act, or talk. Every thought in life should be offered to God in a prayer, as if to say, "I'm going to do this, Lord. Is that all right?" To pray unceasingly means to live life as if you were looking through the mind and heart of God. It doesn't mean walking around mumbling with your eyes closed all the time. Prayer allows us to offer and communicate everything to God. Prayer works two ways: God speaks to you through prayer and leads you by His Spirit; you offer Him your thoughts, joys, and problems. Prayer is living life in a God-conscious way. The functions of the church are very foundational: preaching and teaching, evangelism and missions, worshiping, and praying.

Focusing on the Facts

1. What did Peter say in 2 Peter 1:12? Why?
2. In our analogy of the body representing the church, what do the muscles represent?
3. Why do preaching and teaching appear together as a function of the church?
4. The church is the _____ of the revelation of God: therefore, it must be the _____ of it as well.
5. How is the church to proclaim the Word of God?
6. Why was 1 Timothy written (1 Tim. 3:15)? What do 1 and 2 Timothy tell us?
7. According to 1 Timothy 3:16, what must we proclaim?
8. What was Timothy's primary responsibility? (1 Tim. 4:6; see p. xx)
9. What was Paul emphasizing to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:11?
10. What did Paul mean when he told Timothy, ". . . keep that which is committed to thy trust. . ." (1 Tim. 6:20)?
11. What was the charge that Paul made to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1-2? Whom did Paul hold Timothy accountable to?
12. Why did Paul tell Timothy to "reprove, rebuke, exhort" (2 Tim. 4:2)? What does the word "exhort" mean there?
13. What must preaching confront people about? How are we to confront others?
14. What happens when people have the Word in their minds?
15. What is the difference between evangelism and missions? What ultimate goal do they have in common?
16. How can we establish credibility for our testimonies?
17. Explain how Satan tries to destroy the church.
18. What will happen if we salt the earth and shine brightly?
19. According to 1 Peter 3:15, what do we need to be ready to do at all times?

20. What is one reason that some of us have difficulty proclaiming the gospel?
21. How far into the world are we to venture with the gospel? Support your answer with Scripture.
22. Should your worship be confined to when you're in church? Explain.
23. When do we worship best?
24. What is the first reason why it's hard to pray? What does true prayer embrace? Support your answer with Scripture.
25. What does a person with a strong prayer life pray for?
26. Why do older people often pray better?
27. Explain the second reason why it's hard to pray.
28. What does it mean to "pray without ceasing"? (1 Thess 5:17)

Pondering the Principles

1. One of the primary functions of the church is to preach and teach the Bible. If you are responsible for preaching or teaching others, estimate how much you use the Scripture in your teaching. Is everything you teach backed up by the Word of God? When you teach, do you teach from the Word, or do you just talk about it? How often do you interject your own opinions in your teaching material? How well do you know the material that you teach? If you do not handle the Word correctly and carefully when you teach, then you will cause people to misunderstand God's Word. Make sure that you are a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).
2. Are you living an evangelistic life-style? A good way to answer that question is to ask yourself this: Is there anything in my life I don't want my pastor or Christian friends to know about? If unbelievers know that you are a Christian and see you sin, what effect will that have on them? What effect will that have on the unbelievers' view of other Christians and the church? Read Matthew 5:16, and examine your life to see if you are bringing glory to God by the way you live.
3. When you worship God, do you find yourself easily distracted by unimportant thoughts during church services or devotion times? What can you do to prevent that from happening? One good idea is to start your prayer and meditation on God before you go to church. Describe your worship of God. What can you do to cultivate a more worshipful heart?
4. In your own words, write what it means to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). Why do you think it is important for you to pray unceasingly?

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