

YOUR SPIRITUAL FAMILY

The Doctrine of the Church

64 Days of Truth
Days 43-49
Heritage Bible Church

64 Days of Truth is designed to help Christians understand the great doctrines of the Bible. As you spend the rest of your life feasting on the word of God (the Bible), you should forever expand and deepen your knowledge of these things.

During the 64 Days, listen to the weekly messages with an open heart and an open Bible . . . Spend a few minutes each day to study on your own, using the devotional guides in this booklet . . . Spend an hour or so each week with a discussion group, talking about the importance of what you learn.

Most of all, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen" (2 Peter 3:18).

Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.

DAY 43: Wednesday Message, "Your Spiritual Family"

If you can, take notes, and pay special attention to these key points. (When you get to your discussion group, compare notes to help each other get it all.)

What metaphor is used only for the Church (never used for Israel in the Old Testament)?

What is the 4-word summary of how the church works?

It is _____ composed of _____ working in _____, designed by the _____ of God.

What is the basis of true spiritual unity?

What is a spiritual gift?

Who possesses a spiritual gift?

Who do spiritual gifts benefit?

Begin memorizing Romans 12:4-5: *For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*

DAY 44: Thursday. Do You Know What You Belong To?

The church is a *body*. God designs for us to work together as a unit. Our job is not to *create* unity; it is to *preserve* the unity which God creates. Read Ephesians 4:1-3.

How many "ones" are in Ephesians 4:4-6? You cannot create any of those things—they are all God's work. Notice "Spirit . . . Lord . . . God and Father." The example of unity is the Trinity. All are equal, yet all fulfill different roles. That's how it should be in the church as we preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

How do we stay on track so that we maintain unity? It isn't hard to see the basis of our oneness.

How are we sanctified (John 17:17)? What did Jesus pray for next (17:21)?

What sets us free (John 8:32)?

What delights spiritual leaders (3 John 3-4)?

True unity (the unity of the Spirit) is unity of people who *walk in the truth of Scripture*. Unity which sets aside doctrine is counterfeit unity.

Fill in the blanks: _____ and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

DAY 45: Friday. You're Different!

The unity we are called to preserve is unity which is composed of great diversity. The analogy of the body of Christ comes from your physical body, with different parts all working as a unit. Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-27.

Read 1 Peter 4:10-11. Some have gifts that involve *speaking*; others have gifts that involve primarily *servicing*. Which category do you think you belong to?

How are you serving in the church? List things you do.

If you're satisfied with your previous answer, skip to the memory work for today. If not, continue on . . .

What task(s) in the church could you be doing or helping others do?

Do you see a need or an opportunity our church is not meeting? Is there anything you could do about it?

The most important part of serving the Lord in His church is getting started. If you need suggestions, see an elder.

Fill in the blanks: _____
_____, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

DAY 46: Saturday. Are You In Tune?

The *unity* of the church, the body of Christ, is composed of great *diversity* of the members working in *harmony*.

An heirloom in our family is the piano built in 1884. I love to hear my wife play (and our dog "sings" along!), and I love the harmony of the notes working together. But when one of the keys went dead, it didn't sound right. All 88 keys need to be functioning for the pianist to make good music.

If one member of the church "goes dead" by not attending, or not serving, or complaining about being a "G" key instead of "C-sharp," we can't produce the kind of unity God wants because our diversity isn't working in harmony. Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-27 again today.

Who are you "harmonizing with" (serving alongside)?

Is there a note you should be playing (a way you can serve), but you've "gone dead?"

Read Hebrews 10:24-25. What is the responsibility we have toward each other in the church?

Fill in the blanks: _____
_____, _____, _____, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

DAY 47: Sunday. The Church: The Work of the Master

In the church our *unity* (in the truth) is composed of all our *diversity* (different gifts), working in *harmony* (cooperating), by the *sovereignty* of God (the Holy Spirit, who puts the body of Christ together).

If you see the church as a human institution, you'll quickly notice its problems. After all, it includes people like you! But if you realize it is far more than a human institution, you will see that it is God's chosen way to spread the gospel and to help conform us to the image of His Son. He has been working through His church for almost 2000 years.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:11 and 12:18. Who puts together the parts of the body of Christ?

Read Matthew 16:18. Who builds the church? (It's *not* just another human institution!)

Read Ephesians 4:1-3 (again) and 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12. In light of those passages, pray for your church and pray about the role(s) you can have in the body of Christ.

Fill in the blanks: _____
_____, and individually
members one of another.

DAY 48: Monday. Do You Belong Here?

It's popular these days to minimize "becoming a member" of a church. When you trust Christ to save you, He places you into His body and gives you His Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). No passage says "Join your local church." So, why should you make formal and official your relationship to a local church?

Let's turn the question around . . . In light of what you've learned about God's precious church, why would you withhold any amount of commitment? What does it say about you if you don't want to make a full commitment to the work Christ is doing on earth?

Read Ephesians 4:16. What is your responsibility to the church?

Read Hebrews 10:24-25 (again). Same question.

What would you say to a person who claims to belong to Christ, but does not join and commit to a local church? (Remember, speak the truth in love—Ephesians 4:15.)

Fill in the blanks: _____

_____ *another*.

DAY 49: Tuesday. Review/Prepare

1. Write out the memory item for this week (as many times as you need to, until you know it by heart).

2. Tomorrow's message is about angels and demons. Can you answer these questions from Scripture?

Where do angels come from?

What do angels do?

Do you have a guardian angel?

Where do demons come from?

Who is Satan?

What do demons do?

Can demons attack Christians?

Should you pray to angels?

Should you rebuke Satan or demons?

DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH
THINGS TO REMEMBER

The Church began on the day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2.

The Church consists of every believer in Jesus Christ from that day until the rapture of the church.

The Church is distinct from Israel. Both are special creations of God, but they are not the same.

The local church is the "visible" work of Christ on earth.

The local church should have *unity*, composed of the *diversity* of its people, working in *harmony*, orchestrated by the *sovereignty* of God.

Every Christian has a spiritual gift (ability to serve, enabled by the Holy Spirit) which must be used in order for the church to be healthy (Ephesians 4:16).

"Membership" in the local church is not specified in the New Testament, but total commitment to the body of Christ is not negotiable. Make your commitment obvious and lasting.

Romans 12:4-5 (memorized)

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Your Spiritual Family
64 Days of Truth, Days 43-49: Ecclesiology
Discussion Guide

1. What is the significance of each of these descriptions of the church?

1 Timothy 3:15

Romans 12:4-9

Ephesians 1:22-23

2. What "spiritual gifts" are listed in the two lists in Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:8-10?

3. What verse tells you to identify your spiritual gift?¹

4. So, what should you do in order to use your spiritual gift?

Hebrews 10:24-25

1 Corinthians 14:12

Romans 15:2

5. As a group, review all your memory verses so far.

¹1 Corinthians 12:31 isn't it. See the explanation of that verse on the back of this sheet.

1 Corinthians 12:31

1 Corinthians 12:31 is an interpretive battleground. We know it forms the transition from the content of chapter 12 to the content of chapter 13. But what does it mean, and how should it be applied?

We know that the meaning cannot possibly be "*Seek to obtain the best spiritual gifts you can.*" That meaning would contradict everything else in the chapter. 12:11 and 12:18 are clear that it is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit to give gifts as He chooses. We cannot overrule the plan of God.

The actual meaning can be either of two possibilities, based on the intended meaning of the Greek word *zeloute*, translated "seek." This verb can be either in the indicative mood (a direct statement) or the imperative mood (a command). In this kind of Greek verb, it is impossible to tell which is intended because the forms are identical. Context must determine which it is, but in this context it is difficult to know which interpretation is correct. Here are the possibilities which do not contradict the rest of the passage:

1. As an indicative, it is a sarcastic indictment of the Corinthians. The meaning would be: "You are playing the pseudo-spiritual game of seeking superiority by seeking gifts you believe are superior, and you are seeking them for fleshly reasons. I am going to show you a more excellent way (love, as described in chapter 13)."
2. As an imperative, it is a command to the entire church.² It is addressed to the assembled body of believers. Taken this way the meaning is "As an assembled church, when you are gathered together, follow the priorities described in verses 28-30. Seek that which edifies the entire body, not that which pleases your fleshly desire to be the center of attention. I am going to show you a more excellent way (love, as described in chapter 13)."³

The grammar and the context do not allow 1 Corinthians 12:31 to mean that you should seek to possess and use certain spiritual gifts. You should seek to serve in whatever ways you can, by the enabling the Holy Spirit gives you. Whatever of service you render, it must always be done in love (chapter 13).

²The form of the word is plural, so it is not proper to interpret it as a command to individuals. It far better fits the context of addressing the whole church.

³The tradition of translating *zeloute* as a command has contributed to misunderstanding because many abuse it by making it into a command to seek out certain gifts. Paying attention to the context refutes that interpretation. It is better to translate it as an indicative in order to better agree with the rest of chapter 12.

The Truth Shall Set You Free
64 Days of Truth, Days 36-42: Soteriology
Discussion Guide

1. Observe how each of these passages describes what it takes in order to be saved:

John 3:16 Believe in the only-begotten Son of God.

Romans 10:9-10 Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Believe "the gospel" that Christ died for you sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Acts 16:30-31 Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 20:30-31 Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; trust Him.

Ephesians 2:8-9 Receive the grace of God by faith.

Luke 24:46-47 Repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

2. Observe how each of these passages describes a person who is saved:

Ephesians 2:10 Walks in good works which God prepared beforehand.

John 13:34-35 Loves other believers.

Acts 2:42 Continually devoted to teaching, fellowship, eating together, and praying.

1 John 3:17-18 Helps other believers in need.

Luke 6:46-49 Listens to Christ, obeys His words by acting upon them.

John 8:31-32 Continues to stand on the word of God.

Hebrews 10:24-25 Consistent in the fellowship of the church.

3. What should you tell someone who says "How can I be saved?" or "How can I become a Christian?" Tell the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), and ask him or her to turn from their sin, confess it, and put their trust in Jesus Christ.

4. What would be your counsel to a person who claims to be a Christian, but does not attend church, doesn't like Christians, and doesn't read the Bible? You should challenge such a person with the Scriptures above. A philosopher once said "Show me your redeemed life, and I may tend to believe in your Redeemer."