

## 8-11-24 How to Be a Perfect Christian

### Week 2

**Text: Acts 2:40-47**

**Book Reference:** “Chapter One: Joining the Right Church”

**Topic(s):** Unity, Church, Believers

**Big Idea of the Message (Satire):** Perfect Christians, “it’s impossible to get to the maximum level of holiness if you’re currently attending a church that is focused on the wrong things, namely, on anything other than you” (page 11).

**Application Point (Not Satire):** The local church should be a place of sacrifice, selfless love, and commitment to the teachings of Jesus.

The book, ‘How to Be the Perfect Christian,’ states *“it’s impossible to get the maximum level of holiness if you’re currently attending a church that is focused on the wrong things, namely, on anything other than you”* (page 11).

Paul David Tripp wrote that better and is a place “where flawed people place their faith in Christ, gather to know and love him better, and learn to love others as he designed.”

Again, while it is satire, sarcastic and facetious, there are some thought provoking statements that many of us have heard or even thought. *“Some of the most common warning signs that your church isn’t conducive to your personal growth into a perfect Christian included a pastor who preaches sermons that make you feel uncomfortable, a worship experience that centers your attention more on God than on your own feelings, and a church staff who refuse to incorporate the advice from the thousands of helpful comment cards you’ve left over the years”* (page 12).

This passage is humorous because it’s often true in our own lives. We want church to be about us! We want to be comfortable, sometimes (too often) even when our comfort gets in the way of biblical teaching, deep relationships, and sacrificial love.

So, let me ask you some questions.

What is the reason to be in church or have an active part in it?

How do you determine what the right church is to partner and or participate in?

**Read Acts 2:38-47.**

What is the first duty of every God fearing, God honoring church to be known for? What is our purpose? The word “purpose” is defined as, “the reason for which something exists or is done,” and “an intended or desired result.” Based on the definition of the word “purpose,” we can see how we need to consider the reason why we do certain things, in order to plan for a more productive outcome.

In the scripture we just read (**Acts 2:38-47**) we see at least five purposes of what God's church should be known for and doing. And we, followers of God must be looking at doing them. I made it really easy to remember and they all start with an E.

### **1. Evangelize. (share the good news)**

#### **• Verses 38-41.**

- What is the church's first purpose? Our first purpose is "outreach." In **Matthew 28:19**, **Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."**
- The word '**Go**' in the Great Commission is [what's termed] a present participle in the Greek text. It should be read 'as you are going.'" The Great Commission doesn't say, "If you choose to go."
- Notice how Jesus says "Go", He doesn't say for unbelievers to come or come to church. We must take the initiative and go. We must take the message of Jesus Christ out into the world, wherever we find ourselves daily. It's called "outreach," not "inreach."
- Making disciples and teaching them about Jesus Christ is done through outreach, which is accomplished through "Evangelism."
- My mission is to build caring relationship with the hope of gaining permission to share the life changing good news of Jesus Christ in a non-threatening way.
- We must be careful that we aren't so locked into our priorities and our preferences that we lose focus on why we are here.
- Every born-again, follower of Jesus has the responsibility to evangelize the world around them. It is our job to keep our head on a swivel and look for opportunities to share the good news. To BE the good news!
- If Jesus says, "Go" and we don't, are we listening to Him? If we aren't listening to Him, are we sinning?

We should be doing all five of these continually (daily) and steadfastly (with great determination) and with one accord (unified).

### **2. Edify. (to build up, to be disciplined and to disciple)**

- We edify God by continuing steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine.
- The great commission, "**Go therefore and make disciples.**" The word disciple means, "the pupil of the teacher." Discipleship has to do with teaching.
- "**And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine.**" (**Acts 2:42**) The work "**continued**" means they studied the doctrine, the teachings of the apostles.
- Discipleship serves to "Edify" believers.
- Edify means, "to build up." Edification through discipleship serves to build up believers in the knowledge of God and His Son, Jesus Christ; and edifying believers in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ is accomplished through Bible study.

**"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" 2 Timothy 2:15 "**

- Studying the Word, or the Scripture, strengthens the faith of believers, and it gives them a foundation on which to stand and principles to live by.

**“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established [or grounded] in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.” Colossians 2:6-7**

- Discipleship builds people up in the Christian faith; therefore, another aspect of the church’s purpose is “Edification” of believers especially, new or young believers, through discipleship.
- Who are you edifying? Who are you discipling, mentoring in the faith? We are called to Go and make disciples.
- So, if we aren’t going and aren’t edifying are we sinning.... I mean isn’t disobedience a sin?

“As the church we are called not only to reach people, but also to teach them. After someone has made a decision for Christ, he or she must be discipled. It is the church’s responsibility to develop people to spiritual maturity. This is God’s will for every believer, Paul writes, ‘so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ’ -Rick Warren

### **3. Encourage. (to hold up, strengthen another’s faith)**

- **“... and fellowship, in breaking of bread...”**
- We see this purpose mentioned in **Acts 2:42** and **44. Verse 42** says, **“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship.” Verse 44** tells us, **“Now all who believed were together.”**
- The people were gathered together; or gathered in fellowship. Whenever we fellowship with other believers, we “encourage” one another.

**For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— 12 that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. Romans 1:11-12**

- As Christians we’re called to belong, not just to believe. We are not meant to live our lives alone; instead, we are to belong to Christ’s family and be members of His body . . . We have each other for support.
- Who are you encouraging? Look around, is there someone in this room you don’t know very well? Do you think they could use some encouragement?
- If you could use some encouragement, please raise your hand.
- **Verse 46**, what we will be doing at 4pm is a picture of what we should be doing as often as possible. **“... continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food...”**

### **4. Exalt. (through worship and prayer, lifting our praises of gratitude to God)**

- **“... and in prayers.” (v.42)**
- “To raise up, elevate, lift up, to praise”.
- We must come to church ready to worship through songs of praise, grateful hearts and prayer.

- Whenever we worship the Lord, we lift Him high as a banner.
- We “Exalt” Him. If we exalt the Lord, then the church will grow. If we lift high His holy name, then all people will be drawn to Him. So, another aspect of the church’s purpose is “Exaltation” through worship.
- We aren’t just to exalt Him when we come to church, but every day, continuously. It is repeated in **verse 42** and **47**, that these are to be done repeatedly, daily, often and with a unified mission.
- God puts a song in my heart and head almost every single day and I spend the rest of the day driving my wife nuts with mutilating it.
- Who are you annoying today through your exhalation of God?

##### **5. Equip. (to serve and minister to others)**

- **Verse 45, “and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need,”**
- We see here that they “gave,” and giving is an act of service. It is looking beyond ourselves and our own desires to provide for the needs of others. Service, or servanthood, is commanded in the Bible.

#### **Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. 1 Corinthians 10:24 ESV**

- The Bible says that pastors are to equip the saints for the work of the ministry (**Eph. 4:12**).
- Remember, “ministry” is “service.” Paul’s servanthood made it possible for him to win more people to Christ. We know that Jesus was a servant too.
- **2 Corinthians 8:9** reveals this fact, for we read this: **“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor [or a servant], that you through His poverty might become rich.”**
- As believers, we’re supposed to follow Christ’s example of servanthood, so that we can make people spiritually rich just as Jesus did. Paul did this exact thing.
- We are here for others; our lives are to be used to serve and draw others to Jesus. Remember, service is ministry.
- Are you a giver or a taker? Do you give financially to the Lord’s work out of a place of obligation or a place of opportunity to show your appreciation?
- Maybe right now you are a tipper, and you need to take that next step of being all-in for God.
- Are you a giver of your time and talents, which are not a substitute for giving financially. God wants the best of us in all areas of our life. It is not biblical to trade time and talent for what you should be giving financially.
- Are you actively serving God’s local New Testament church? How? Filling a chair on Sunday morning isn’t serving, that is worshipping.
- Maybe you don’t know how or where to serve, come see me, a deacon, trustee or anyone else in leadership and we would love to help you.

## Conclusion

We started with a question, why do you come to church? What is God's purpose in you coming to church?

- Evangelize (share the good news)
- Edify (to build up, to be discipled and to disciple)
- Encourage (to hold up, strengthen another's faith)
- Exalt (through worship and prayer, lifting our praises of gratitude to God)
- Equip (to serve and minister to others)

The local church should be a place of sacrifice, selfless love, and commitment to the teachings of Jesus.

Sought after (Isa. 62:12) Precious in his sight (Isa. 43:4) A new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) Not condemned (Rom. 8:1) Forgiven (Col. 1:14) Loved (1 John 3:1) Accepted (Rom. 15:7) A child of God (John 1:12) Jesus' friend (John 15:14) Free (John 8:36) The temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19) God's treasured possession (Deut. 7:6) **Complete in Christ** (Col. 2:10 NLT) Chosen (Col. 3:12) Called (2 Tim. 1:9) An ambassador of the Most High God (2 Cor. 5:20) God's masterpiece (Eph. 2:10 NLT) Able to do all things through Christ, who gives you strength (Phil. 4:13) More than a conqueror through Jesus, who loves you (Rom. 8:37)