

Things God Does Not Know

2 - God Knows No Other Way To Grow Spiritually but in His Church

1 Tim. 3:14,15 / Eph. 5:25-31

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / May 11, 2014

The Word of God shows us just how important the church is.

A. God's Word tells us the church is the pillar and foundation of the truth.

1 Tim. 3:14,15 (HCSB)

¹⁴ I write these things to you, hoping to come to you soon.

¹⁵ But if I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to act in God's household, **which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.**

Remember—Paul was writing to Timothy, who was his protégé in Ephesus, where the temple of the goddess Diana (Artemis) was located. When Paul wrote “pillars,” Timothy (and any Ephesian, for that matter) would've had a very real idea what he was talking about.

“One of its features was its pillars. It contained one hundred and twenty-seven pillars, every one of them the gift of a king. All were made of marble, and some were studded with jewels and overlaid with gold.”

William Barclay

The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon
[Philadelphia; Westminster, 1975], 89

Paul draws a word-picture for Timothy of the local church being the very foundation and pillar that is to hold up the truth of God.

1 Tim. 3:16 (HCSB)

¹⁶ And most certainly, the mystery of godliness is great: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

B. The church is Christ's one and only bride—His one, true love. (Eph. 5:25-31)

1. Christ loves the church with a sacrificial love.

Eph. 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church **and gave Himself for her,**

2. Christ loves the church with a purifying love.

Eph. 5:26,27

²⁶ that He might **sanctify 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.**

3. Christ loves the church with a caring love.

Eph. 5:28-30

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, of His flesh and of His bones.

4. Christ loves the church with an unbreakable love.

Eph. 5:31

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.**”*

**The truth is held up by one pillar, built upon one foundation—the church.
Jesus is the husband to one bride—the church.**

C. Oftentimes, people substitute that which is supplemental in place of that which is essential when it comes to their allegiance to the local church.

1. “It’s just me & Jesus.”
2. “It’s just me & my Bible.”
3. “It’s just me & my family.”
4. “It’s just me & my home group.”
5. “It’s just me & my mission.”
6. “It’s just me & _____.”

D. What steps do we take to grow spiritually in God’s church?

1. Join the church!

We commit ourselves to the local church by being willing to be counted among them.

Acts 2:41

Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to *them*.

In so doing, we submit ourselves to the church leaders God has ordained to watch out for our souls and give an account.

Heb. 13:17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

2. Join a Small Group!

We participate in Small Groups so we can help one another grow to be more like Christ.

Acts 2:46,47 ⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

3. Join a Serve Team!

We serve each other and the church-at-large by using the gifts, talents, skills & abilities God has given us to benefit the body of Christ.

Rom. 12:3-6a ³ For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. ⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. ⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them...*