

Understanding the Church

A Definition of the Church and
its Purpose for Southern Baptist

Dr. Marshall Dean Whitaker

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About the Author

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Preface

This is a work of necessity. Over the previous years, the Lord has blessed in our ministries and a number of new families have come to know Christ. Other believers have joined our church family. As a result, the need for education surrounding the church, its purpose, and its polity became evident. This study is the product of our effort to meet that need and further the work of our church with regard to its mission and its association with other Southern Baptist Churches.

Introduction

This is a manual for helping the membership of a Southern Baptist Church understand the role and function of the church. The average Southern Baptist is a person of faith and devotion to Christ, but often a misguided understanding of the church. This usually results from the lack of clear communication in this area. The purpose of this work is to provide the necessary clarity for proper orientation to the identity, work, and function of the local church.

Three phases make up the content of this manual. These are essential for proper education of the church. The first phase focuses upon the church itself by defining the church and its purpose. The matter of disciple-making fills the second phase of the manual. If the church is called to make disciples, then we must understand just what a disciple is and how one is made. This phase allows the learners to discover a standard by which their personal discipleship can be measured and the efforts of their church can be evaluated. Understanding Southern Baptist life and work makes up the final phase of instruction. One needs a clear understanding of Southern Baptist activity if one will remain a faithful Southern Baptist.

The leader guides provide sound leadership for the teachers. However, they are not designed to be a manuscript. Preparation is essential for sound instruction. The learner guides are fill-in-the-blank worksheets that correspond to the bold-faced words in the leader guides. Take time as an instructor to

acquaint yourself with the material prior to teaching it. Use personal illustrations from your church to flesh out the material provided. Ask questions of your learners for clarity and provide opportunities in each phase for your learners to ask questions and make comments.

At the end of the course, one may wish to add a final lesson regarding the activity of your local church. Instruction on how decisions are made within the church and how ministry is performed provide a wonderful overview of the local church and its work. This also allows you to make sure that your learners understand how what they have learned applies to their local church and not just too some imaginative perfect church.

I hope that this material helps your church in its disciple making efforts. You are granted permission to copy this material and distribute it freely (Do Not Sell My Work as Yours) to anyone who may find use for it. This material can be used for Sunday School, Discipleship Training, Small Group studies, New Members Class, Church Leadership Training, or any other way that you see fit. I pray that God will continue to bless your active efforts in making disciples of the world.

Phase 1: What is the Church?

There are numerous ways to define a church. One may define the church by its purpose and mission, its historical impact, or the nature of its ministries. However, to biblically define the church one must accept some common elements that are necessary for a proper definition.

Matthew 16:13-20: All Churches are built upon the foundation that **Jesus is the Messiah**. The fact that this confession is stated as the foundational tenet of the church emphasizes the essential nature of Jesus Christ to the church. The **Messianic** role of Jesus must be the **foundation** of any definition of the church.

Luke 9:23-27: All Churches are composed of people who have **committed to follow** Jesus Christ. Since Jesus Christ is the Messiah is the foundation of the church, then the **entirety** of the church must contain those who have committed to follow him. Jesus states in this passage that any who wish to follow him must deny themselves, take up the cross daily, and follow him. Let's examine those three statements.

Deny Yourself: This idea contains within it the principle of **repentance**. This also illustrates the **high cost** of following Jesus. To deny yourself, you must be willing to give up all that you are and desire to be. The cost of following Jesus is not simply surrendering the bad things within our lives, but we must also be willing to surrender the **good** things we desire as well. Denying ourselves forces us to give up our goals, hopes, desires, and plans in order to follow

wherever Jesus Christ may lead. For Peter and John the cost was to give up their occupation as anglers. For William Carey the cost was a life of missions in India. For you it may be anything, but in order to follow Christ one must begin by denying themselves.

Take up the cross daily: This statement lightens the further from Jesus we get. However, the fact that we see the statement differently does not change its **original meaning**. The cross was a tool of humiliation and death in the ancient world. The cross to the audience of Jesus' day would be the guillotine, gallows, or electric chair in subsequent generations.

The cross stood as a **public punishment** for rebellion against the empire of Rome. Thus, for Jesus to call for his disciples to take up the cross daily was a call to **public rebellion** each day against the wicked system of this **world**. To daily take up the cross one would have to bear the public shame and humiliation daily of following a leader whose teachings oppose the **principles** and **values** this world holds so dear. To daily take up the cross requires us to accept the teachings of Christ to the **death** in opposition to a world corrupted by the nature of sin. The cross is public, humiliating, and fatal. These are the requirements of one who will follow Jesus.

Follow Me: These words call us to **obedience**. You cannot be a member of the church and a follower of Christ and walk in constant **disobedience**. Following Jesus calls us to accept his **authority** over our lives as both **Savior** and **Lord**. This call to obedience is a charge we cannot ignore if we are truly to be members of the church.

John 13:34-35: All churches are **identified** by their **love for each other**. Jesus states in this passage that the world will know that we are his disciples because we **love** one another. Without love for each other the world will not know that we follow Christ. We are not identified by our **denomination, attendance, or knowledge**. Rather love is the birthmark of the disciple. A church that is not identified by love is not truly a church.

Matthew 28:18-20: All churches are **united** by their **mission**. Jesus Christ calls on his followers to go and make disciples of the entire world. Thus, all churches are in the disciple-making business. Everything the church does should tie back to the **mission** of the church. Whether the church is teaching, singing, working, or playing the purpose behind these activities should be to make a **disciple**. The church makes an intentional effort to make disciples of the entire world.

So how do we define a church? Each of these elements are essential to the church and thus must be reflected in the definition of the church. With that under consideration, the best definition of the church that I can provide is that **a church is a group of people who have given their lives to God through a commitment to follow Christ, and who have shared their lives with each other through a loving family relationship for the purpose of making disciples of the world.**

In today's world, the church exists in two forms. The church is both an **organism** and an **organization**. As an organism, the church is alive and consists of people. The church is not a building or a structure, but rather the people who meet in those places. The

church is both **local** and it is **global**. The members who meet together in specific places for the purposes of the church make up a **local** congregation of believers or a local church. The members who unite through the work and purposes of the church make up the **global** church. This organism is identified by the characteristics previously identified.

The church as an organization serves as the **channel** through which the work of God flows. The organization serves to provide **structure** and **order** to the congregations that meet under the banner of a specific heading. The organization operates under **cultural norms**. Officers of the organizations serve to represent the church in legal and financial matters, and governing documents provide format to the work of the church as its people strive to accomplish its purposes.

These two halves of the church make one whole. The church cannot exist without **both** elements being present. Both halves must work as a **team** to accomplish the purpose of the church if they are to provide harmony to the work of the church.

Finally, membership within the church exists in two forms. Any person who has accepted the call to follow Jesus is a member of the **universal** church. However, to be a member of a local church one must meet the requirements of membership as they have been set forth in the church's **governing documents**. To join a Southern Baptist church one must have **accepted** Jesus Christ as their personal savior and have been **baptized** by **immersion** by a church of like faith and order. Unless these two requirements are met, one cannot be a member of a **Southern Baptist Church**.

These elements provide a **basic** understanding for the church. A definition of the church allows us to recognize what is necessary to have a church. Understanding the fact that a church is both an organism and an organization enables us to recognize the need for harmony within the church around its purpose. A discussion of church membership recognizes what is essential to be a part of both the global and local church. These are the essentials necessary for understanding the church.

Phase 2: The Church in Action: Disciples Making Disciples

In the previous lesson, we focused on the church. One of the areas we focused upon was the purpose of the church. This purpose was to make disciples. An organization that fails to make disciples fails to qualify as a church.

That statement requires us to examine discipleship and determine a **definition** and **process** for disciple making. This lesson will provide us with the necessary information to continue the purpose of the church as the chief agent for forming new followers of Jesus Christ.

According to William Mounce, a disciple is a **learner**¹. In its most basic form a disciple is one who learns from a teacher. This learning is not simply to acquire knowledge, but rather to **shape** and **mold** the life of the learner. This is learning to make a difference in the **daily living** of the disciple. Thus, the church must be actively involved in changing the **thinking** and the **activity** of its membership from the ways of the world to the ways of God.

This is the foundational component for making disciples. If the church is not changing the lives of those it touches, then the **organization** is not a

¹¹ William Mounce, "Disciple," *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 183.

church. The standard for this change is the **Bible**. **Every** believer's life should be changed by the Word of God, and **every** believer should be using the Bible to change the lives of others.

So what is the process for disciple making? If we are to truly be molded into disciples and we are also to mold others, then we need to understand how one is made. There are **five** steps in the disciple making process. These steps are not necessarily **consecutive**, but each is essential in the process. To fail to grow in each of these areas creates an imbalance in our daily walk with Christ and our discipleship efforts.

Step One: **Conversion**

John 14:6: In this passage, Jesus makes plain that no one comes to God except through **Jesus Christ**. The first step in discipleship is conversion through Jesus Christ. No person can truly be a disciple if they have not **surrendered** to Jesus Christ as both their savior and their Lord.

Romans 6:1-10: As a result of conversion, believers are **dead** to sin and are **alive** with Jesus Christ. Prior to our conversion, we were separated from God and we were dead in our sins. Now because of our conversion we are alive with Jesus Christ. Our sins have been **crucified** with Jesus Christ on the cross and we are raised with a new life that sin and death have no hold on.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21: Conversion has also provided for us to be a **new creation**. All that we are, was made new in Christ Jesus. Paul states explicitly that everything we are comes from God because we are reconciled to him. Thus, we have **power** over sin and

relationship with God because of Jesus Christ. However, we also have the charge to be Christ ambassadors because of the fact that we are a new creation in Jesus Christ. Since we have been converted we are called to **aid** in the conversion of others.

Step Two: **Worship**

Romans 12:1-2: True **worship** is the giving of oneself **completely** to God, and growing in the **knowledge** of God. In this passage, we find both the expectation of God for our worship and the call to total discipleship.

If we desire to truly worship God then we must be willing to give him all that we are. There are four key areas of our lives that must be surrendered to God in order to fulfill our reasonable act of worship as a living sacrifice to God.

TIME: Christ does not call for us to give him our Sundays, but rather he calls for us to give him **all** of our time. Matthew 4:18-22 provides a picture of discipleship and the time commitment. Both sets of brothers realized from that point forward that they were no longer fishermen, but rather they were followers of Jesus Christ. We must be **willing** to give all of our time to Christ as he calls for it. Our hopes and desires are **secondary** to that.

TALENT: Christ does not call for us to give him the **excess** of our gifts, but rather he calls for us to give him all of our gifts. Galatians 1-2 is a short biography of the apostolic credentials of Paul. He was a well respected scholar and teacher. He was a man of reputation and learning. However, when the gospel of Jesus Christ was revealed to him by the Son of God he

left all that he had obtained in order to use his **talents** and **skills** to reach the world. Acts 9:15-16 states the Paul was God's chosen **instrument** to carry the gospel to the Gentiles. All the gifts, talents, and skills that Paul had were simply **preparation** for the day Paul would begin the process of discipleship. Our gifts and talents are not for our **own** use, but rather they stand as tools in the toolbox of discipleship for God to call upon for the purpose of making disciples.

TEMPLE: Our bodies are an element of worship as well. 1 Corinthians 3:16-23 makes plain that our bodies are both the sanctuary of God, and the property of God. How many of us have ever heard this passage quoted for health reasons? This is a misuse of the passage. This does not call us to refrain from smoking, drinking, or to be healthy. While those are worthwhile things to do, the passage does not find its meaning in that interpretation. Rather the passage calls upon us to use our bodies for God's **glory** rather than to glorify our **flesh**. Our worship to God through our bodies is to be **faithful** to God. We are not to indulge our bodies in sin and wickedness simply because our sins are paid for, but rather we are to glorify God in all that we do because he has **purchased** all of us with his blood. Our spirits have not only been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, but our bodies also. As a result, we are called to walk in **obedience** to Christ because we are God's temple.

TREASURE: The worship of the Lord also extends to our **wallets**. 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 illustrates the Christian's practice of giving. Christians are called to provide for the **ministry** that Christ has called them to. How much of your **money** is God's money? All of it

belongs to God. Consequently, your reasonable act of worship is to use what God has given you to support the ministry and the work of Christ based on the abundance of what God has given to you. Mark 12:41-44 provides Jesus' teaching on giving. The widow is held as a testimony because she surrendered all that she had to God. Many people believe that as long as they pay their **tithes** they have given God what he is **owed**. That is flawed thinking. **All** that we have comes from God, and so all that we have is owed to him. True worship in **giving** is not in paying a tithe, but rather in the willful surrender of **all** of our material goods for the call to faithfulness.

We are called to be a living sacrifice to God. If we are to truly be his disciple and to make other disciples then all that we sing, teach, and do must reflect the sacrifice he has called us to undertake. Matthew 19:16-24 provides us with a **warning** about who will be Christ disciple. The man who is **unwilling** to surrender all that he has to follow Jesus is **unworthy** to be called his disciple.

Step 3: **Service**

Revelation 1:9: Service is the act of doing what is **necessary** rather than what is convenient. John is on the Isle of Patmos because of the testimony of Jesus Christ. Disciples take **action** because they are in the **service** of Jesus Christ.

Our service is based on two platforms. The first platform is one of **gratitude**. Matthew 10:24-42 contains the words of Jesus and a warning to those who would be his disciples. He calls us to **faithfulness** and **boldness** because he has the power to cast the soul into Hell. We serve him out of gratitude that he has

saved us from such a horrible fate, and because he has promised that we have an eternal reward in Heaven even if we lose everything here on earth. Secondly, we serve him because of his **authority**. Hebrews 1:1-3 focuses upon Christ's completed work over sin and the fact that he has sat down in authority at the right hand of God. He stands complete in his authority over all and consequently he has the right to call us to **service**. That service is expressed through faithful activity in the **kingdom**.

What are some of ways that you are currently serving Christ?

Step 4: **Fellowship**

Acts 4:32-35: Fellowship is the sharing of our life with **others**. We see the love of the early believers as they gave to meet the needs within their congregation. This is a model of fellowship that comes from the love believers have for each other through Jesus Christ. This is a love that only exist between those who know **Christ**, and this is demonstrated through the actions of our people.

How is fellowship demonstrated in our church family?

Step 5: **Reproduction**

Matthew 28:18-20: A disciple is not complete until a new disciple has been made. The final step for a disciple is not **personal** growth and fulfillment, but rather **reproduction**. We are not called to grow until we burst. We are to faithfully make disciples as we go that has been converted, worships completely, serves faithfully, and fellowships lovingly. The joy of any true disciple is to see that disciple graduate into a mentor for a new disciple and to witness the kingdom's continued expansion. This is the personal mission for all believers. This is the measure of **effectiveness** for any church. Are we disciples making disciples?

Phase 3: What Is a Southern Baptist? Addressing Southern Baptist Life and Work

Believe it or not a Southern Baptist Church is not a Baptist Church located in the **South**. Rather a Southern Baptist Church is a Baptist church that has chosen to **associate** itself with other churches through the Southern Baptist Convention. These churches do not generally associate on grounds of **doctrine, location, or financial influence**. Instead, these churches associate for the purpose of **missions** and **education**.

Southern Baptist life and work exist in four forms: the local church, the local association, the state convention, and the national convention. These serve as **outlets** for disciples of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. An examination of these four forms provides an understanding of their function and purpose within the Convention.

Matthew 16:17-18: In this passage, we see Jesus Christ state that he would build his **church**. Jesus did not come and build denominations or parachurch ministries. Jesus came to establish his church, and the Gates of Hell will not overpower his church. Jesus established the church through his work and for his **purpose**. As a result, the local church is the established institution of God on the earth.

As the institution of God on the earth, the church stands totally free from outside pressure. Each

individual church stands apart from all other churches and organizations. The only **influence** that is exerted over a single church is that which the church **allows**. In some churches that means that they have allowed themselves to come under the umbrella of a denomination. In Southern Baptist life and work each church remains completely **independent** of outside authority.

This is because of a key Baptist belief. The **Priesthood** of the believer is the foundation for all that a Southern Baptist does. John 16:20-24 states that after the death of Christ, his disciples would stop seeking guidance from Jesus and that they would find guidance from the **Father** through Jesus Christ. No longer would there be a barrier of sin between man and God, but to those who believe in Jesus Christ there is **access**. Matthew 27:51 recalls that at the death of Jesus the curtain of the sanctuary was torn in two further illustrating that Jesus Christ had provided access to God through his death to those who believe.

Since each believer is able to go to God and to hear from God, each believer is **equal** in the eyes of God. There is no person who stands above another person in the kingdom. As a result, all church members are of equal **authority** and importance before God. Thus, each church has the right to determine the will of God for themselves. Consequently, each church is **responsible** for determining the will of God for their congregation with regard to the work and purpose of Jesus Christ in their community and for their congregation.

1 Corinthians 12:12-31: Paul states that the church of Corinth was made up of many **different** parts but only **one** body. The church could not function

without the **diversity** within its congregation. An expansion of this principle is that no single church in a community can accomplish all that is necessary to make disciples of their entire community. The local **association** is a fellowship of churches who work together for the purpose of missions and education within a geographic area to aid in the disciple making process.

The love of believers for each other provides a basis for this effort. Local churches working **together** to accomplish what they cannot do on their own is the foundation for an association. Each church provides **financial** support for the work of the association to enable the ministry to take place. Ministries such as church construction, food pantries, clothes closets, counseling centers, and leadership training and development are all examples of how a local association provides ministry in a **community**. This effort does not **replace** the work of the local congregation, but rather serves as an **extension** of the local church ministry through **partnership**. Whether the ministry is training for making disciples or is an outreach for obtaining new disciples the association provides a ministry outpost for cooperation.

What are some of the ministries of our local association?

The state convention is an extension of the local association. No church is able to do all that is necessary to make disciples of its community so

associations provide an avenue to accomplish that task. No association is able to do all that is necessary to make disciples of their entire **state or region**. The state convention serves as an association of **churches** working together to make disciples.

The state convention serves as a **resource** for missions and education to regions and associations across the state. It also serves as an **evangelistic** strategist for unreached areas within the state as well. By evaluating needs and designating resources, the state convention provides the local church with the opportunity to make **disciples** all across the **state**. Ministries such as church planting, health and dental fairs, leadership training and development, church revitalization, and disaster relief are all examples of state convention disciple-making efforts.

What are some of the ministries of our state convention that we have benefitted or participated with personally?

Finally, the national convention serves as the extension of the state convention. No state convention is capable of reaching the entire **United States** or the **world**. As a result, the Southern Baptist Convention works to extend the influence of the local church across the globe. This influence is reflected in the purpose to reach people for the purpose of **making** disciples and to **train** leaders to make disciples in the local context. This is accomplished through the work of the International Mission Board, the North American

Mission Board, and through the six Southern Baptist Seminaries in the United States.

These mission boards prepare missionaries for the mission field and provide the opportunity to make disciples around the world. Whether the person is a **church planter** in Wyoming or an **English teacher** in Indonesia the **cooperative** efforts of the local church have provided for them to be there. Every Southern Baptist who attends a Southern Baptist Seminary receives a scholarship funded by the efforts of the local church. Every missionary on the field and every seminary graduate is directly **tied** to each individual local **church**, and serves as an extension of that church's **ministry**.

Each year churches send messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention to handle the **annual** business of the Convention. The Convention's **Executive** Committee, who are elected at the annual convention, handles the day-to-day activity of the Convention. This meeting also provides for the election of the convention's **officers**. Everything is decided by vote of the membership which is made up of local members of local churches. Once again demonstrating that the national convention just like all other Southern Baptist ministries are an extension of the local church.

What are some of the ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention that we have personally experienced?

How does all of this come together? In Southern Baptist life and work the tool of choice for making all of this ministry happen is called the **Cooperative**

Program. Genesis 11:1-9 recounts the Tower of Babylon. Men had determined to work together to build a great monument to **themselves**. The Lord states plainly that this kind of cooperation is **unstoppable**. That principle is the heart and soul of the Cooperative Program. If these men could build a monument to themselves that would be unstoppable through cooperation, then how much more can the Church of Jesus Christ do by **working together**. Each church gives from their **collection** for the purpose of making disciples beyond themselves. Each church does not give the same **amount**, but rather each church is called to give an **equal sacrifice** for the purpose of fulfilling the work God has called his church to fulfill. Thus, each church determines what the Lord desires them to give and **provides** that for the purpose of expanding the kingdom through the Cooperative Program. As Southern Baptist, we understand that working together for the kingdom enables us to **accomplish** far more than we could ever do on our own.

Being a Southern Baptist is not a **denominational** title nor is it a call to a **theological** creed. Being a Southern Baptist means that we are united together for the purpose of **missions** and **education** in order to make **disciples** of Jesus Christ around the world.

Learner Guides

Phase 1: What is the Church?

There are numerous ways to define a church. One may define the church by its purpose and mission, its historical impact, or the nature of its ministries. However, to biblically define the church one must accept some common elements that are necessary for a proper definition.

Matthew 16:13-20: All Churches are built upon the foundation that _____.

The fact that this confession is stated as the foundational tenet of the church emphasizes the essential nature of Jesus Christ to the church. The _____ role of Jesus must be the _____ of any definition of the church.

Luke 9:23-27: All Churches are composed of people who have _____ Jesus Christ. Since Jesus Christ is the Messiah is the foundation of the church, then the _____ of the church must contain those who have committed to follow him. Jesus states in this passage that any who wish to follow him must deny themselves, take up the cross daily, and follow him. Let's examine those three statements.

Deny Yourself: This idea contains within it the principle of _____. This also illustrates the _____ of following Jesus. To deny yourself, you must be willing to give up all that you are and desire to be. The cost of

following Jesus is not simply surrendering the bad things within our lives, but we must also be willing to surrender the _____ things we desire as well. Denying ourselves forces us to give up our goals, hopes, desires, and plans in order to follow wherever Jesus Christ may lead. For Peter and John the cost was to give up their occupation as anglers. For William Carey the cost was a life of missions in India. For you it may be anything, but in order to follow Christ one must begin by denying themselves.

Take up the cross daily: This statement lightens the further from Jesus we get. However, the fact that we see the statement differently does not change its _____. The cross was a tool of humiliation and death in the ancient world. The cross to the audience of Jesus' day would be the guillotine, gallows, or electric chair in subsequent generations.

The cross stood as a _____ for rebellion against the empire of Rome. Thus, for Jesus to call for his disciples to take up the cross daily was a call to _____ each day against the wicked system of this _____. To daily take up the cross one would have to bear the public shame and humiliation daily of following a leader whose teachings oppose the _____ and _____ this world holds so dear. To daily take up the cross requires us to accept the teachings of Christ to the _____ in opposition to a world corrupted by the nature of sin. The cross is public, humiliating, and fatal. These are the requirements of one who will follow Jesus.

Follow Me: These words call us to _____. You cannot be a member of the _____.

church and a follower of Christ and walk in constant _____ . Following Jesus calls us to accept his _____ over our lives as both _____ and _____. This call to obedience is a charge we cannot ignore if we are truly to be members of the church.

John 13:34-35: All churches are _____ by their _____. Jesus states in this passage that the world will know that we are his disciples because we _____ one another. Without love for each other the world will not know that we follow Christ. We are not identified by our _____, _____, or _____. Rather love is the birthmark of the disciple. A church that is not identified by love is not truly a church.

Matthew 28:18-20: All churches are _____ by their _____. Jesus Christ calls on his followers to go and make disciples of the entire world. Thus, all churches are in the disciple-making business. Everything the church does should tie back to the _____ of the church. Whether the church is teaching, singing, working, or playing the purpose behind these activities should be to make a _____. The church makes an intentional effort to make disciples of the entire world.

So how do we define a church? Each of these elements are essential to the church and thus must be reflected in the definition of the church. With that under consideration, the best definition of the church that I can provide is that **a church is a group of people who have given their lives to God through a commitment to follow Christ, and who have shared their lives with each other through a loving family**

relationship for the purpose of making disciples of the world.

In today's world, the church exists in two forms. The church is both an _____ and an _____. As an organism, the church is alive and consists of people. The church is not a building or a structure, but rather the people who meet in those places. The church is both _____ and it is _____. The members who meet together in specific places for the purposes of the church make up a _____ congregation of believers or a local church. The members who unite through the work and purposes of the church make up the _____ church. This organism is identified by the characteristics previously identified.

The church as an organization serves as the _____ through which the work of God flows. The organization serves to provide _____ and _____ to the congregations that meet under the banner of a specific heading. The organization operates under _____. Officers of the organizations serve to represent the church in legal and financial matters, and governing documents provide format to the work of the church as its people strive to accomplish its purposes.

These two halves of the church make one whole. The church cannot exist without _____ elements being present. Both halves must work as a _____ to accomplish the purpose of the church if they are to provide harmony to the work of the church.

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However, to be a member of a local church one must meet the requirements of membership as they have been set forth in the church's _____ . To join a Southern Baptist church one must have _____ Jesus Christ as their personal savior and have been _____ by _____ by a church of like faith and order. Unless these two requirements are met, one cannot be a member of a _____ .

These elements provide a _____ understanding for the church. A definition of the church allows us to recognize what is necessary to have a church. Understanding the fact that a church is both an organism and an organization enables us to recognize the need for harmony within the church around its purpose. A discussion of church membership recognizes what is essential to be a part of both the global and local church. These are the essentials necessary for understanding the church.

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In the previous lesson, we focused on the church. One of the areas we focused upon was the purpose of the church. This purpose was to make disciples. An organization that fails to make disciples fails to qualify as a church.

That statement requires us to examine discipleship and determine a _____ and _____ for disciple making. This lesson will provide us with the necessary information to continue the purpose of the church as the chief agent for forming new followers of Jesus Christ.

According to William Mounce, a disciple is a _____². In its most basic form a disciple is one who learns from a teacher. This learning is not simply to acquire knowledge, but rather to _____ and _____ the life of the learner. This is learning to make a difference in the _____ of the disciple. Thus, the church must be actively involved in changing the _____ and the _____ of its membership from the ways of the world to the ways of God.

This is the foundational component for making disciples. If the church is not changing the lives of

²² William Mounce, "Disciple," *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 183.

those it touches, then the _____ is not a church. The standard for this change is the _____. _____ believer's life should be changed by the Word of God, and _____ believer should be using the Bible to change the lives of others.

So what is the process for disciple making? If we are to truly be molded into disciples and we are also to mold others, then we need to understand how one is made. There are _____ steps in the disciple making process. These steps are not necessarily _____, but each is essential in the process. To fail to grow in each of these areas creates an imbalance in our daily walk with Christ and our discipleship efforts.

Step One: _____

John 14:6: In this passage, Jesus makes plain that no one comes to God except through _____. The first step in discipleship is conversion through Jesus Christ. No person can truly be a disciple if they have not _____ to Jesus Christ as both their savior and their Lord.

Romans 6:1-10: As a result of conversion, believers are _____ to sin and are _____ with Jesus Christ. Prior to our conversion, we were separated from God and we were dead in our sins. Now because of our conversion we are alive with Jesus Christ. Our sins have been _____ with Jesus Christ on the cross and we are raised with a new life that sin and death have no hold on.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21: Conversion has also provided for us to be a _____. All that we are, was made new in Christ Jesus. Paul states explicitly that everything we are comes from God because we are reconciled to him. Thus, we have _____ over sin and _____ with God because of Jesus Christ. However, we also have the charge to be Christ ambassadors because of the fact that we are a new creation in Jesus Christ. Since we have been converted we are called to _____ in the conversion of others.

Step Two: _____

Romans 12:1-2: True _____ is the giving of oneself _____ to God, and growing in the _____ of God. In this passage, we find both the expectation of God for our worship and the call to total discipleship.

If we desire to truly worship God then we must be willing to give him all that we are. There are four key areas of our lives that must be surrendered to God in order to fulfill our reasonable act of worship as a living sacrifice to God.

_____: Christ does not call for us to give him our Sundays, but rather he calls for us to give him _____ of our time. Matthew 4:18-22 provides a picture of discipleship and the time commitment. Both sets of brothers realized from that point forward that they were no longer fishermen, but rather they were followers of Jesus Christ. We must be _____ to give all of our time to Christ as he calls for it. Our hopes and desires are _____ to that.

_____ : Christ does not call for us to give him the _____ of our gifts, but rather he calls for us to give him all of our gifts. Galatians 1-2 is a short biography of the apostolic credentials of Paul. He was a well respected scholar and teacher. He was a man of reputation and learning. However, when the gospel of Jesus Christ was revealed to him by the Son of God he left all that he had obtained in order to use his _____ and _____ to reach the world. Acts 9:15-16 states the Paul was God's chosen _____ to carry the gospel to the Gentiles. All the gifts, talents, and skills that Paul had were simply _____ for the day Paul would begin the process of discipleship. Our gifts and talents are not for our _____ use, but rather they stand as tools in the toolbox of discipleship for God to call upon for the purpose of making disciples.

_____ : Our bodies are an element of worship as well. 1 Corinthians 3:16-23 makes plain that our bodies are both the sanctuary of God, and the property of God. How many of us have ever heard this passage quoted for health reasons? This is a misuse of the passage. This does not call us to refrain from smoking, drinking, or to be healthy. While those are worthwhile things to do, the passage does not find its meaning in that interpretation. Rather the passage calls upon us to use our bodies for God's _____ rather than to glorify our _____. Our worship to God through our bodies is to be _____ to God. We are not to indulge our bodies in sin and wickedness simply because our sins are paid for, but rather we are to glorify God in all that we do because he has _____ all of us with his blood. Our _____

spirits have not only been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, but our bodies also. As a result, we are called to walk in _____ to Christ because we are God's temple.

_____ : The worship of the Lord also extends to our _____. 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 illustrates the Christian's practice of giving. Christians are called to provide for the _____ that Christ has called them to. How much of your _____ is God's money? All of it belongs to God. Consequently, your reasonable act of worship is to use what God has given you to support the ministry and the work of Christ based on the abundance of what God has given to you. Mark 12:41-44 provides Jesus' teaching on giving. The widow is held as a testimony because she surrendered all that she had to God. Many people believe that as long as they pay their _____ they have given God what he is _____. That is flawed thinking. _____ that we have comes from God, and so all that we have is owed to him. True worship in _____ is not in paying a tithe, but rather in the willful surrender of _____ of our material goods for the call to faithfulness.

We are called to be a living sacrifice to God. If we are to truly be his disciple and to make other disciples then all that we sing, teach, and do must reflect the sacrifice he has called us to undertake. Matthew 19:16-24 provides us with a _____ about who will be Christ disciple. The man who is _____ to surrender all that he has to follow Jesus is _____ to be called his disciple.

Step 3: _____

Revelation 1:9: Service is the act of doing what is _____ rather than what is convenient. John is on the Isle of Patmos because of the testimony of Jesus Christ. Disciples take _____ because they are in the _____ of Jesus Christ.

Our service is based on two platforms. The first platform is one of _____. Matthew 10:24-42 contains the words of Jesus and a warning to those who would be his disciples. He calls us to _____ and _____ because he has the power to cast the soul into Hell. We serve him out of gratitude that he has saved us from such a horrible fate, and because he has promised that we have an eternal reward in Heaven even if we lose everything here on earth. Secondly, we serve him because of his _____. Hebrews 1:1-3 focuses upon Christ's completed work over sin and the fact that he has sat down in authority at the right hand of God. He stands in complete in his authority over all and consequently he has the right to call us to _____. That service is expressed through faithful activity in the _____.

What are some of ways that you are currently serving Christ?

Step 4: _____

Acts 4:32-35: Fellowship is the sharing of ones life with _____. We see the love of the early believers as they gave to meet the needs within their congregation. This is a model of fellowship that

comes from the love believers have for each other through Jesus Christ. This is a love that only exist between those who know _____, and this is demonstrated through the actions of our people.

How is fellowship demonstrated in our church family?

Step 5: _____

Matthew 28:18-20: A disciple is not complete until a new disciple has been made. The final step for a disciple is not _____ growth and fulfillment, but rather _____. We are not called to grow until we bust. We are to faithfully make a disciple that has been converted, worships completely, serves faithfully, and fellowships lovingly. The joy of any true disciple is to see that disciple graduate into a mentor for a new disciple and to witness the kingdom's continued expansion. This is the personal mission for all believers. This is the measure of _____ for any church. Are we disciples making disciples?

Phase 3: What Is a Southern Baptist? Addressing Southern Baptist Life and Work

Believe it or not a Southern Baptist Church is not a Baptist Church located in the _____.

Rather a Southern Baptist Church is a Baptist church that has chosen to _____ itself with other churches through the Southern Baptist Convention. These churches do not generally associate on grounds of _____, _____, or _____.

Instead, these churches associate for the purpose of _____ and _____.

Southern Baptist life and work exist in four forms: the local church, the local association, the state convention, and the national convention. These serve as _____ for disciples of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. An examination of these four forms provides an understanding of their function and purpose within the Convention.

Matthew 16:17-18: In this passage, we see Jesus Christ state that he would build his _____.

Jesus did not come and build denominations or parachurch ministries. Jesus came to establish his church, and the Gates of Hell will not overpower his church. Jesus established the church through his work and for his _____.

As a result, the

local church is the established institution of God on the earth.

As the institution of God on the earth, the church stands totally free from outside pressure. Each individual church stands apart from all other churches and organizations. The only _____ that is exerted over a single church is that which the church _____. In some churches, that means that they have allowed themselves to come under the umbrella of a denomination. In Southern Baptist life and work each church remains completely _____ of outside authority.

This is because of a key Baptist belief. The _____ of the believer is the foundation for all that a Southern Baptist does. John 16:20-24 states that after the death of Christ, his disciples would stop seeking guidance from Jesus and that they would find guidance from the _____ through Jesus Christ. No longer would there be a barrier of sin between man and God, but to those who believe in Jesus Christ there is _____. Matthew 27:51 recalls that at the death of Jesus the curtain of the sanctuary was torn in two further illustrating that Jesus Christ had provided access to God through his death to those who believe.

Since each believer is able to go to God and to hear from God, each believer is _____ in the eyes of God. There is no person who stands above another person in the kingdom. As a result, all church members are of equal _____ and importance before God. Thus, each church has the right to determine the will of God for themselves. Consequently, each church is _____

for determining the will of God for their congregation with regard to the work and purpose of Jesus Christ in their community and for their congregation.

1 Corinthians 12:12-31: Paul states that the church of Corinth was made up of many _____ parts but only _____ body. The church could not function without the _____ within its congregation. An expansion of this principle is that no single church in a community can accomplish all that is necessary to make disciples of their entire community. The local _____ is a fellowship of churches who work together for the purpose of missions and education within a geographic area to aid in the disciple making process.

The love of believers for each other provides a basis for this effort. Local churches working _____ to accomplish what they cannot do on their own is the foundation for an association. Each church provides _____ support for the work of the association to enable the ministry to take place. Ministries such as church construction, food pantries, clothes closets, counseling centers, and leadership training and development are all examples of how a local association provides ministry in a _____. This effort does not _____ the work of the local congregation, but rather serves as an _____ of the local church ministry through _____. Whether the ministry is training for making disciples or is an outreach for obtaining new disciples the association provides a ministry outpost for cooperation.

What are some of the ministries of our local association?

The state convention is an extension of the local association. No church is able to do all that is necessary to make disciples of its community so associations provide an avenue to accomplish that task. No association is able to do all that is necessary to make disciples of their entire _____ . The state convention serves as an association of _____ working together to make disciples.

The state convention serves as a _____ for missions and education to regions and associations across the state. It also serves as an _____ strategist for unreached areas within the state as well. By evaluating needs and designating resources, the state convention provides the local church with the opportunity to make _____ all across the _____. Ministries such as church planting, health and dental fairs, leadership training and development, church revitalization, and disaster relief are all examples of state convention disciple-making efforts.

What are some of the ministries of our state convention that we have benefitted or participated with personally?

Finally, the national convention serves as the extension of the state convention. No state convention is capable of reaching the entire _____ or the _____. As a result, the Southern Baptist Convention works to extend the influence of the local church across the globe. This influence is reflected in the purpose to reach people for the purpose of _____ disciples and to _____ leaders to make disciples in the local context. This is accomplished through the work of the International Mission Board, the North American Mission Board, and through the six Southern Baptist Seminaries in the United States.

These mission boards prepare missionaries for the mission field and provide the opportunity to make disciples around the world. Whether the person is a _____ in Wyoming or an _____ in Indonesia the _____ efforts of the local church have provided for them to be there. Every Southern Baptist who attends a Southern Baptist Seminary receives a scholarship funded by the efforts of the local church. Every missionary on the field and every seminary graduate is directly _____ to each individual local _____, and serves as an extension of that church's _____.

Each year churches send messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention to handle the _____ business

of the Convention. The Convention's _____
Committee, who are elected at the annual convention,
handles the day-to-day activity of the Convention.
This meeting also provides for the election of the
convention's _____. Everything is decided by
vote of the membership which is made up of local
members of local churches. Once again demonstrating
that the national convention just like all other
Southern Baptist ministries are an extension of the
local church.

What are some of the ministries of the Southern Baptist
Convention that we have personally experienced?

How does all of this come together? In Southern
Baptist life and work the tool of choice for making all
of this ministry happen is called the _____
_____. Genesis 11:1-9 recounts the Tower of
Babylon. Men had determined to work together to build
a great monument to _____. The Lord states
plainly that this kind of cooperation is _____.
That principle is the heart and soul of the Cooperative
Program. If these men could build a monument to
themselves that would be unstoppable through
cooperation, then how much more can the Church of Jesus
Christ do by _____. Each church
gives from their _____ for the purpose
of making disciples beyond themselves. Each church
does not give the same _____, but rather
each church is called to give an _____
for the purpose of fulfilling the work God has called
his church to fulfill. Thus, each church determines
what the Lord desires them to give and _____

that for the purpose of expanding the kingdom through the Cooperative Program. As Southern Baptist, we understand that working together for the kingdom enables us to _____ far more than we could ever do on our own.

Being a Southern Baptist is not a _____ title nor is it a call to a _____ creed. Being a Southern Baptist means that we are united together for the purpose of _____ and _____ in order to make _____ of Jesus Christ around the world.