

Essentials: Growing in Christ in the Church Part 2 | June 14, 2020

Introduction: This week we consider the following essentials of the Christian life:

1. Attend Your Church Regularly (Hebrews 10:24-25)
2. Study Your Bible (Acts 2:42; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17)

Note: These topics are addressed on pages 23-32 of *What Should I Do Now That I'm a Christian?* You can request a free copy of this book by contacting the Church Office at office@calvarygeorgetown.com.

Discussion Questions:

1. In his book, *What Should I Do Now That I'm a Christian?* Sam Emadi says, "The local church is the primary context where [we] live out [our] Christian discipleship." In last week's study, we talked about the importance of joining a local church. This week, we focus on attending our church regularly. The order of topics may seem counterintuitive.
 - Why do we need to emphasize church attendance even after we become church members?
 - According to Hebrews 10:24-25, what does God intend to do in the life of a church through the consistent gathering of its people?

2. Emadi equates consistent church attendance with Christian obedience. He says, "We can't claim to love God if we only occasionally gather with His people to worship Him and hear from His Word."

- Do you agree with this statement? (If not, what Scripture supports your thinking?)

- Why is it more tempting to say things like, "I love Jesus, just not His Church?"

- How does regular church attendance help us grow closer to the Lord and our brothers and sisters in Christ?

3. The reality is that many, if not all, church members experience hurt from other church members. Certainly, some offenses cut deeper than others (e.g., someone intentionally sits in "your seat" vs. someone breaks confidence by sharing your personal struggles). In his book, *How Church Can Change Your Life*, Josh Moody offers seven suggestions for those who have been hurt in the church (pgs 57-50). Read the adapted list below, and discuss which suggestion you find to be most helpful.

- **Don't just join *any* church. Make sure your church is healthy.**
For example, the Bible should be clearly taught, the Gospel should be clearly presented, and the people should be committed to Christ-like love and authentic discipleship.
- **Guard your heart against cynicism, remembering we are all sinners**
- **Practice a biblical authenticity**
Authenticity ought to be defined by God, not ourselves. While we should strive to be genuine in our relationships, we should also strive to grow more into the image of Christ.
- **Understand the difference between friendship and fellowship**
We are called to love our brothers and sisters in Christ. This does not mean we will like all of them. Church is family; that doesn't mean everyone will be close friends, and that's okay.
- **Don't import the baggage from your last church into your next one**
Once you've been hurt, it can be easy to characterize others as hurtful, even in a new setting. A fresh start in a new church may begin with some hard conversations with those from your old church, including repenting or forgiving people.
- **Take commitment slowly but steadily**
Healing takes time, but, "don't get into the habit of never committing. Take it slowly. Keep progressing steadily. Start with attending. Then find a small group. Then get involved in serving. Give of your time, your talent and your treasure. Bit by bit, slow but steady wins the race."
- **Guard your ultimate center of loyalty for no one else but Jesus**
Being in a church—frankly, being a believer—"requires a degree of trust, commitment, loyalty and involvement, but it does not require the deepest degree of trust. Only God is worthy of that sort of worship. ...Keep Jesus in the center, and our love and commitment to one another grows as we are all connected in him."

4. Returning to Hebrews 10:24-25, Emadi rightly observes that, “The opposite of ‘neglecting to meet together’ isn’t ‘meeting together.’ Instead, it’s ‘encouraging one another.” How can you encourage someone (in this sense) from our church this week? Share your answer with your group and follow-up next week.

5. In our second point, we consider the “spiritual food” of God’s Word. Based on verses like Jeremiah 15:16, Matthew 4:4 and 1 Peter 2:2, what is the intended result of “feeding on” (i.e., studying) the Bible?

6. To tie our two points together, how does accountability from our brothers and sisters in Christ (particularly those from our local church) help us stay consistent in our Bible reading?

7. Which of the following habits seem most helpful to you as you study the Bible regularly? Discuss these with your group and make a plan.

- Following a Bible Reading Plan
- Reading the same passage repeatedly, a few days in a row
- Reading at a designated time of day, perhaps at a specific location
- Making notes or journaling as you read
- Reading aloud or listening to an audio recording
- Reading with another person or doing a meeting with another person who is reading the same passage(s)
- Other: _____