

# **WE PRESS ON, LAYING HOLD OF THE PRIZE LOVING GOD, LOVING CHURCH**

*Jason Willock*

*I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. (Philippians 3:14, NLT)*

## **Why We Need A Relationship With God**

We need a personal relationship with God because being religious and following a set of rules will not be enough to get us into eternity. God showed us how much He loves us and wants a relationship with us by dying for us (Romans 5:8). A relationship with God is the basis of our faith. It is the basis of everything we do, we experience, and we believe.

## **Ways We Can Develop Our Relationship With God:**

1. Read the word: We need to know His word. Not only to know it in the sense of being able to recite verses but mediate on it, understand it and live it. (Joshua 1:8)
2. Prayer: Communication is a key component to the success of any relationship and with God it is no different. (Mark 11:24)
3. Worship: A mind that is fixated on worshipping God has no room for anything else.

It is easy for us to say that we love God but we also need to show it. Our actions need to match what we are confessing.

## **How Do We Show God That We Love Him?**

1. Obey Him: Our obedience to God blesses Him. When it comes to obedience what matters most is what God says not what we think or feel, it is what we read in the word and not what we read in the world. (1 Samuel 15:22)
2. Put Him first: God wants first place in our lives not only on the days when we are in church but every day of the week. (Matthew 6:33)
3. Trust Him: This verse is encouraging us to trust God no matter our situation or circumstance. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

## **Why Is Church Important?**

To understand why church is important we need to understand what church is. The church is not a building, a YouTube page or website, the church is the people, we are the church. (1 Peter 2:9)

1. The world needs it: Our lives as individuals and a group is the only reflection of Jesus many of the world will ever see. (Philippians 2:15)
2. Increases our faith: Hearing the word increases our faith but we must be careful who we let speak into our lives. (Romans 10:17)
3. Renews our minds: The more we hear the Word of God, the more our minds are strengthened in new and better patterns of thinking. (2 Corinthians 10:5)
4. Corrects and protects us: The pastors and leaders are there to protect and guide us. (Ephesians 4:14)

### **Practical Steps We Can Take To Love Our Church:**

1. Be in church: The best place to be is in church. Due to current events it's easier than ever to attend all of the services and we need to be taking advantage of that. We should not be missing church. (Psalm 122:1)
2. Get involved: Loving church means serving and being obedient. One of the best ways that you can love your church is by serving and getting involved. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)
3. Giving: Giving of your tithe, offerings and first fruits will enable you to walk into the full blessings of God. (Matthew 6:21)

In conclusion, every pandemic, every problem in life is an opportunity for God to shine brighter. An opportunity for Him to show his power, but for God to be able to shine in our lives we need to make sure that we are waiting in the right place to receive His blessings, which is in His presence and in His church. Let us all use this time to draw closer to God, to strengthen our faith and to build his church.