

**LAYMAN'S SCHOOL OF TRAINING**  
**COURSE/HOLE 1 - CHRISTIAN GROWTH SEMINAR**  
**LECTURE 8 - DISCOVERING GOD'S LOCAL CHURCH FOR ME**

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## 1. WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH?

To continue Christ's ministry on the earth by preaching the Gospel, giving people an opportunity to experience eternal life, deliverance from satan's bondage, and train them to become committed producing disciples.

**Matt 28:18-20 (NAS)** "And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

**19 Go therefore and make disciples** (pupil, student, follower of Christ) **of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,**

**20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'**"

**Mark 16:15-18 (NAS)** "And He said to them, '**Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.**

**16 He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.**

**17 And these signs will accompany those who have believed in My name: they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues;**

**18 they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.'**"

**John 10:10 (NAS)** "The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; **I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.**"

**John 14:12,15 (NAS)** "Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in Me, **the WORKS that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father.**

**15 If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."**

**2 Tim 4:5 (NAS)** "But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry."

This commission is not for Pastors only, but for ALL BELIEVERS.

## 2. HOW HAVE MANY CHURCHES DEVIATED FROM THIS COMMISSION?

Many churches are preaching a social gospel for fear of losing members. They are man pleasers and not God pleasers.

**2 Tim 4:3-4 (NAS)** "For the time will come when they **will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires;**

**4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths** (fable, legend, non-factual story handed down by tradition and popularly accepted as true)."

Other churches are holding onto man made traditions and customs that are contrary to the word of God.

**Mark 7:6-9,13 (NAS)** "And He said to them, 'Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you **hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honours Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me.**

**7 But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'**

**8 Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.'**

**9 He was also saying to them, 'You nicely set aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.**

**13a...thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down..."**

Some are withholding the truth of God's word from their members and even discourage (or forbid) the reading of the bible at home.

**Luke 11:52 (NAS)** "Woe to you lawyers (students and judges of the Old Testament Law)! For you have

**taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."**

**Matt 23:13 (NAS)** *"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in."*

They have a **form of religion** but have **denied its power** to deliver, save, heal and set the captives free.

**2 Tim 3:5 (NAS)** *"Holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and **AVOID SUCH MEN AS THESE.**"*

**Matt 15:14 (NAS)** *"Let them (the Pharisees) **alone**; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit (hell)."*

### 3. WHICH CHURCHES ARE KEEPING THIS COMMISSION?

Firstly, we must understand there are **no perfect churches**. Divinity is perfect - humanity at best is striving for perfection.

However, it becomes obvious that **some churches** only have a **form of godliness** while **others** have the **saving, healing, delivering power of Jesus Christ** freely operating in their midst.

Some are doing their best for God, while others are doing nothing to extend God's kingdom and many others are somewhere inbetween. What is the **DIVIDING LINE** between the true and the false?

Very simply to look **who is doing and fulfilling the commission of Jesus Christ** and who is not.

Those that **unashamedly have alter calls** to bring souls to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ are on the right side of the dividing line.

**Matt 4:17 (NAS)** *"From that time Jesus began to preach and say, '**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"*

**Luke 13:5b (NAS)** *"... unless you **repent**, you will all likewise perish."*

**Rom 10:9 (NAS)** *"That if you (openly) **confess** with your mouth **Jesus as Lord**, and believe in your heart that God raised Him for the dead, **you shall be saved.**"*

### 4. HOW CAN I POSITIVELY DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE GENUINE AND THE IMITATION?

Jesus said you will **know them by their fruits**.

**Matt 7:15-21 (NAS)** *"Beware of the **false prophets** (or teachers or pastors), who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.*

**16** *You will **know them by their fruits**. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they?*

**17** *Even so, every **good tree bears good fruit**; but the **bad tree bears bad fruit**.*

**18** *A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.*

**19** *Every **tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire**.*

**20** *So then, **you will know them by their fruits**.*

**21** *Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; **but he who DOES THE WILL of My Father who is in heaven.**"*

There are many **churches** with ministers who are **dressed like sheep**, but **inwardly are wolves** leading souls to hell.

Many church goers are living with a **false security** that one day they will go to heaven.

Those churches that really love God, do His will and keep the commission of Jesus Christ (*vs 21b*).

If there is **no fruit of changed lives** in the **members** of a congregation which makes them live differently from the people of the world then the **tree and root is bad**, because the fruit is bad.

The **good fruit** I should see in Bible believing practicing churches are **found in Christ's words** in **Mark 16:15-18**. (See 2nd scripture in point 1).

i) They should be **preaching the gospel** and having **alter calls** for souls to be saved.

ii) They should be practicing **praying for the sick** by the **laying on of hands**.

iii) They should be **setting people free from satan's bondages** by **casting out of demons** in Jesus' name.

iv) They should be **demonstrating the power of God** and not just have persuasive words.

**1 Cor 2:4-5 (NAS)** *"And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,  
5 that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God."*

## 5. WHOM MUST I FOLLOW?

None other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Where can I see the Lord Jesus Christ in order to follow Him? In the **lives of dedicated Christians** who are striving to walk in the footsteps of Jesus by **fulfilling His commission**, walking in **faith** and showing His **love** to his fellow man.

**1 Cor 12:27 (NAS)** *"Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it."*

**1 Cor 11:1 (NAS)** *"Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ."*

Who has earned the right to **echo these words** with the Apostle Paul? Those who are obeying Christ's commission.

**Phil 3:17 (NAS)** *"Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us."*

**1 Thess 1:6a (NAS)** *"You also became imitators of us and of the Lord."*

## 6. WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF A SPIRITUAL HOME?

Every **new born baby** must have **parents** to love and care for him if he hopes to have any chance of surviving.

To **leave home at an early age** would be **foolish** and equivalent for committing **suicide**.

There are no perfect parents as there are no perfect children.

**Children** need to learn to **trust their parents'** wisdom, guidance and **submit to their discipline**, which is always the hardest part.

An **undisciplined child** inevitably turns out to be a **brat** in early years and a **rebellious washout** in later life.

**1 Cor 15:46 (NAS)** *"However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual." (I.e. As in the natural, so also in the spiritual).*

The Bible clearly makes the **analogy** (similarity, comparison) **between natural and spiritual parents**.

**Matt 7:11 (NAS)** *"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him."*

God **disciplines us** as sons through **His word**, by **His Spirit** and by **spiritual parents** who have grown and matured in the ways of God through years of learning and living for Jesus Christ.

**Heb 12:5-11 (NAS)** *"And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, 'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him;*

**6** *For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.'*

**7** *It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?*

**8** *But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children (bastards - KJV) and not sons.*

**9** *Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?*

**10** *For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.*

**11** *All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness."*

In an **atmosphere** of warmth, love, care and provision in **our parents' home** we were able to **come to maturity**, to become **supportive individuals**, instead of needing to be supported.

Similarly in a **spiritual home** we can come to **maturity**, where one day we will no longer need to be disciplined, but **will be discipling others**.

A person who never learns to support himself, but always needs to **hang onto his parents apron strings** is looked down upon in society. What about the Christian, who because of not submitting to the discipline of a spiritual home never grows up to spiritual adulthood and self sufficiency in Christ?

**Eph 4:13 (NAS)** *"Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a MATURE MAN, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."*

## 7. WHERE IS MY SPIRITUAL HOME?

Everyone can only have one spiritual home and **one set of parents**.

**Your spiritual home is where you were born again** and found Christ as your Saviour.

**1 Cor 4:14-17 (NAS)** *"I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as MY beloved children."*

**15** For if you were to have countless tutors (teachers) in Christ, yet you would **not have many fathers**; for in Christ Jesus I **BECAME YOUR FATHER through the GOSPEL**.

**16** I exhort you therefore, **be IMITATORS of me**.

**17** For this reason I have sent to you **Timothy**, who is my beloved and faithful **child in the Lord**, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church."

We can only have **one spiritual father**, whom we are exhorted to follow and imitate.

**Gal 4:19 (NAS)** *"My children, with whom I am again in labour until Christ is formed in you."*

**Philem 10 (NAS)** *"I appeal to you for my child, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, Onesimus."*

**Children** are the **spiritual responsibility of their parents** and the Bible tells us we are to **be obedient** to them.

**Eph 6:1-3 (NAS)** *"Children, obey 'your' PARENTS IN THE LORD, for this is right."*

**2** Honour your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise),

**3** that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth."

**Parents will not allow their children to leave home** for whatever reason, until they know they have **reached maturity** and will be able to make it as responsible productive members of society.

The **decision to leave home lies with the parent** - not the child.

**Rebellious children** who have **left home against the will** of the **parents** have usually **suffered shipwreck**.

In the spiritual realm, **Christians** who have **left their spiritual home without the blessing of their pastor** have usually **drifted** from church to church, never settling down anywhere, **never submitting to discipline** and have consequently never grown spiritually. They have been **easy targets for satan** and in most cases have ended up as **spiritual hobos**, destitute and fruitless Christians.

It's the wise child who listens to his parents counsel and advise. (See *Prov 4:1-4* Read at home).

Every man has an **angel**, dispatched by God to help, protect and guide him to avoid satan's snares and choose the right ways of the Lord.

**God's angel divinely directed you to this church** and it is therefore **His will** that **you make this your permanent spiritual home**.

**Acts 10:22 (NAS)** *"And they said, 'Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely directed by the holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear a message (of salvation) from you.'"*

There are some Christians who have not been born again at this church, but have been **abandoned** by their spiritual parents. They are not caring or providing for them spiritually or teaching and training them to fulfil the commission of Jesus Christ.

They have found this love, care and training here at Christian Family Church and have therefore rightly been **adopted** into this family.

## 8. WHAT IS GOD'S PLAN FOR MY LIFE?

God wants **our plans to fit in with His overall plan** because He's not going to change His plans to fit in with ours.

If we want **God's blessing** on our plans then **our plans must first fit in with His plans.**

**Matt 6:33 (NAS)** *"But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."*

Every mature Christian has made **God's will for his life his own** as Jesus also did.

**John 6:38 (NAS)** *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him (the Father) who sent Me."*

**NB. God's priority needs to become our priority.**

**God's priority is the saving of the lost** - that is why He sent Jesus Christ to this earth.

God wants us to **grow to maturity** so that **we all can assist with this mission.**

However, many Christians have the idea that **their work and person goals are more important** - consequently **they don't plan to fit time in for God's priorities** which include:-

- i) Going to **church regularly.**
- ii) Being **trained** for a ministry on the Layman's School of Training.
- iii) Becoming as **actively involved** as possible in the church of Jesus Christ.

We need to **commit ourselves tonight** to do the next course on the Layman's School of Training, which is Hole 2 - **The Advanced Bible Study Seminar.**

Those who have made God's priority their own, will be **eternally rewarded** by Jesus Christ for being good and faithful servants.

**NB. Every Christian must know God's will** regarding which is his **spiritual home** and **take up his duties** as a responsible member of that family.

## 9. WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF ME AT MY CHURCH?

To be **faithful to Him**, to the **spiritual leaders** and to the **family members of my spiritual home.** Just as I would like to know the **leaders and members are committed to me** and can be relied upon, so they need to know **I am committed to them** and can be relied upon.

When it's time for us to gather together to worship God I should be there.

**Heb 10:25 (NAS)** *"Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the (bad) habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near."*

I should **commit myself to further study** and **grow on the Layman's School of Training courses** so I can come to the place of **spiritual maturity** where I can begin to help others grow in God.

**2 Tim 2:15 (KJV)** *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

**GOD'S ULTIMATE GOAL** in my life is that I **help fulfill the commission** of Jesus Christ by becoming a **trained soulwinner** and **discipler of men.** Hole's 2 (The Advanced Bible Study Seminar) and 3 (Fishers of Men) will give the necessary training for serious disciples of Christ to fulfill God's ultimate goal in their life.

## 10. HOW WILL DOING EVERYTHING IN THIS STUDY MAKE ME EFFECTIVE FOR GOD?

There are **2 kinds of spiritual growth.**

- i) Growth that comes by **being faithful** to God and **attending services** at my spiritual home, by **praying** and **reading my bible.** However, this kind of growth is limited.
- ii) To **reach full maturity** in spiritual growth we must **put into practice** in an **active ministry** what we have learned in theory.

Until we're doing it, we have not learned it.

By being **firmly planted in a spiritual home**, instead of being a spiritual hobo, and coming under training, guidance, shepherding, discipline and active ministry, we will become effective and mature in God by being doers of the Word.

**Eph 4:15 (NAS)** *"But speaking (and doing) the truth in love, we are to 'grow up' in ALL ASPECTS into Him, who is the head, even Christ."*

### HOMEWORK FOR LECTURE 8

1. Spend 10 minutes a day meditating on your notes so that these truths will register on your spirit man and as preparation for a true or false test which must be done at home by this Saturday, and handed in at the Layman's School of Training counter in church on Sunday.
2. Make the quality decision that you are going to commit yourself to God, your spiritual leaders, your spiritual home and become actively involved in God's priority of reaching the lost and discipling them, after first being trained on the Layman's School of Training.
3. Take the necessary active steps to fulfill this quality decision in point 2 above. E.g. Register for the next course, Hole 2 - The Advanced Bible Study Seminar, on the Layman's School of Training.