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WHY GO TO CHURCH?



*I was glad when they said to me,
“Let us go into the house of the Lord.”*

Psalm 122:1

Why should I read anything about going to church?

That’s a fair question since the odds are extremely high that you *do* go to church—otherwise you probably wouldn’t be reading this book. But here’s why even the most faithful churchgoer should know what’s in this chapter.

First, if God has spoken in the Bible about going to church, then His Word on this matter deserves to be proclaimed faithfully and to be received reverently.

Second, those of us who attend church need to evaluate our reasons and make sure that our basis for going is not habit alone. Do you go to church for biblical reasons? Do you *know* the biblical reasons? We’ve all heard that we should go to church, but have you ever heard that appeal based upon Scripture?

Third, church attendance may be a settled matter for many Christian adults reading this, but your children may not be convinced that going to church is for them. So although *you* may not need persuading in this matter, the information in this chapter can be useful for you in talking to them.

Fourth, some who are reading these words attend church only occasionally. A survey conducted in 1991 reported that one of every eight people who describe themselves as “born-again Christians” do not go to church.¹ Anyone who claims to follow Christ but seldom, if

ever, attends His church needs to be challenged with what the Bible says about going to church.

Fifth, there may be others turning these pages who are thinking about giving up on church altogether. Even though you may have been faithful in church for a long time, you are no longer sure about continuing. You, too, need the biblical challenge and reasoning to stay in church.

Did you go to church last Sunday? If you did, you are in the minority of Americans. Although America has one of the highest percentages of churchgoers of any nation, more than half the people in this country did not go to church this past Lord's Day.

Ask why people don't attend church, and you'll get a variety of responses, but most of them fall into about a dozen categories. Some say they don't go to church because they are turned off by what seems an endless asking for money. Others stay away because church services bore them. A percentage of those who have no interest in church say the sermons are irrelevant to their lives. Some refuse to go because when they do attend they leave feeling guilty.

Numbers of people stay home because Sunday is their only day off and they want to spend it doing other things. On the other hand, some can't be at church because they are working. Additionally, there are always those who are absent from church because of bad experiences with churches in the past. Many say that the only reason they do not go is that they have not been invited, and they would feel uncomfortable going alone.

A few stay away because they think their lifestyle is too unacceptable to the expectations of churchgoers. A lot of folks are convinced the church simply has nothing to offer them. Similarly, many admit that they don't have enough interest in religion to attend church. And one of the most common reasons given why people don't go to church is that there just isn't time.

It doesn't take all twelve of these arguments to keep someone from church. Usually *one* of them weighs heavily enough on the scales of a person's judgment to decide the issue. But even for the believer who is persuaded by one of these, with the happiness of this life and all eternity at stake, it's worth considering what the Bible has to say on the other side of the matter.

Here are twelve biblical reasons for going to church.

GOING TO CHURCH IS A BIBLICAL REQUIREMENT FOR ALL CHRISTIANS

A recent major survey of a cross section of Americans shows that almost half (47 percent) agree that “the Bible does not command people to attend a church; that is a man-made requirement.”² In fact, the Bible is very plain: “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some*, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24–25, italics added).

Referring to the public meeting of the church body, this verse clearly tells believers not to forsake the regular assembly of fellow Christians, but rather to go to church.

This command wasn’t given whimsically. The author recognized what these Jewish Christians were facing. In their place and time, to identify themselves openly (as through church attendance) with other followers of Christ meant persecution, the seizure of property, and possibly imprisonment (Hebrews 10:34). But the inspired writer of this letter knew that more important than those potential losses were the certain benefits gained through gathering with God’s faithful.

If this chapter ended here, no further proof would be needed concerning God’s will about church attendance. God has spoken in this passage about the matter, and the issue should be settled. Ultimately, whether or not you go to church is a question of whether you will obey God and submit to the authority of His Word.

Do you profess to be a Christian? It is dangerously deceptive to think, “as is the manner of some,” that you can get the salvation and security of heaven you need through the message of the church and then withdraw, “forsaking the assembling” of the fellowship. The church is not a department store where you come and get the spiritual commodity you want, then go your way. To speak of loving Christ while neglecting His body, the church (Ephesians 1:23; 4:12, 15–16; 5:29–30), is hypocritical.

GOING TO CHURCH HELPS PREVENT BACKSLIDING AND APOSTASY

The great concern of the writer of Hebrews 10:25 was that a spir-

itual erosion was taking place within those who had gotten into the habit of neglecting the meetings of the church. He knew that if they continued to shun the public worship of God with the people of God they would be in danger of spiritual ruin.

Neglect of church attendance is almost always one of the first outward signs of backsliding and one of the initial steps taken by those whose path ends in complete apostasy. Statistics show that if you don't go to church for a month, the odds are almost two-to-one that you won't go for more than a year.³ Without the encouragement to persevere that is provided by the public worship of God, the preaching of the Word of God, and the fellowship of the people of God, there is a much greater tendency to drift spiritually.

A couple in our church recently told me how several years of infrequent church attendance had withered their spiritual lives. A family tragedy prompted them to return to faithfulness. Once back in church, a spiritual snowball effect has happened. Their personal devotional lives, family relationships, service for the Lord, and more have all experienced renewal as by-products of the biblical exhortation and Christian encouragement they've received by returning to active involvement with the church family.

Of course, church attendance is no automatic guarantee against spiritual setbacks. No Christian progresses in faith with perfect consistency. But without going to church, backsliding—or worse—is almost a certainty. In fact, based upon Hebrews 10:25, “forsaking the assembling of ourselves together” actually *is* backsliding. If you can miss church and not *miss* church, then something is absent from your heart and faith.

GOING TO CHURCH BRINGS SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP AND ENCOURAGEMENT

A summary of the regular activities of the first-ever Christian church (which was in Jerusalem) is recorded in Acts 2:42: “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” This verse tells us that one of the four main characteristics of the church's gatherings was “fellowship.”

In Hebrews 10:25 again, when we're told, “Let us not give up meeting together,” the desired contrasting response is “but let us

encourage one another” (NIV). No Christian can thrive without the two spiritual nutrients mentioned here of *fellowship* and *encouragement*. God has made us to need them. And it is also God’s plan for us to receive most of our fellowship and encouragement from the local church family.

Fellowship is more than socializing; it is qualitatively different. Any two people can socialize. Only Christians can fellowship, at least in the biblical sense. Socializing is a gift from God. It is the setting where fellowship happens; nevertheless, fellowship exceeds socializing in beauty and enjoyment as does spring’s tulip over winter’s bulb.

New Testament fellowship involves the sharing of the Christian life with other followers of Christ. Talking about the things of God with each other, telling and hearing testimonies of the work of the Spirit of God in our lives, serving the Lord and His people together, worshipping God and praying as one people, extending to and receiving from one another the love of Christ—these are the fibers of the fabric of fellowship. The best way for it to be woven into our lives is through involvement with a church family.

When we go to church, we can receive encouragement from the preaching and the teaching of God’s Word (see Romans 15:4–5). We can be encouraged by the perseverance of other believers who are buoyant in their faith despite discouraging circumstances, by the example of more mature believers, by other church members who struggle successfully with some of the same daily issues we face, and by praying and singing the praises of God with others.

If a child is going to be emotionally healthy, he needs the socialization and encouragement a family can provide. In the same way, every child of God needs the fellowship and encouragement that God intends for him to receive from a church family if he is going to be spiritually healthy.

GOING TO CHURCH EXPRESSES OBEDIENCE TO THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

In Mark 12:28–30, a man asked Jesus, “Which is the first commandment of all?” And Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul,

with all your mind, and with all your strength.” This is the first commandment.’”

How can we believe we’re trying to fulfill the greatest of all God’s commandments, and how can we say we want to love the Lord our God with all that we are, if we won’t even obey His command to meet regularly with other Christians? How can we say that we love Him with everything that’s in us if we can’t get out of bed to worship Him with His people?

Is God your greatest love and highest priority? Going to church is one way of demonstrating that. A quick, unreluctant willingness to turn your back on the worship of God in order to work, attend ballgames (including children’s ballgames), entertain guests, participate in recreational sports, and so forth, may indicate to family, friends, and others that God really is not your first love. Or it may indicate that you are willing to let those who do not love God or care about His kingdom’s activities determine your priorities, set your schedule, and keep you from the worship and work of God.

In high school I played four sports. My parents came to every game in every sport, no matter how inconvenient the timing or how far the drive, *except* the out-of-town Sunday baseball games that were scheduled at a time requiring that they miss church. Because they came to all other games, I knew they loved me. But because they didn’t come to the ones that conflicted with the worship of God, I knew they loved Him more than they loved me, and that was critical for me to know and see.

Francois Fénelon was the court preacher for King Louis XIV of France in the 1600s. One Sunday the king and his attendants made their grand entrance into the chapel, only to discover that no one else was there.

“What does this mean?” King Louis demanded.

“I had published that you would not be here today,” Fénelon replied, “in order that Your Majesty might see who serves God in truth and who flatters the king.”⁴

We should go to church because we love God more than anyone or anything else.

GOING TO CHURCH FOLLOWS JESUS’ EXAMPLE

Do you want to be like Jesus? Do you realize that Jesus made it

His regular practice to attend the public worship of God the Father with the people of God?

The Bible tells us in Luke 4:16, “And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day . . .” Granted, Jesus was participating in the *Jewish* worship of God, but it was the way God had ordained worship at the time. The principle remains the same: If we are to be like Jesus, then like Him we will attend the public worship of God as ordained by God for our day, along with others who want to obey God and be like Jesus.

Many people who don’t go to church object that they have many other things to do. Yet the people who are the most faithful in church attendance have as much to do as anyone else. Everyone *always* has *something* that needs to be done at home, at school, at work, in the yard, with the car, with the children, etc. If people came to church only when they had nothing else to do, most churches would be empty on Sundays!

But considering Jesus’ example of attending public worship eliminates the excuse of being too busy for church. Jesus also had countless crucial things He could have been doing rather than attending worship. He even had *spiritual* and *eternal* reasons He could have given for not having time for corporate worship. Jesus had the kingdom of God to build, many people to change, needs to meet, diseases to heal, and numberless other demands upon His time. People by the thousands were almost always clamoring for His attention, pleading for His mercy, begging for His help, and crying for Him to heal them. And yet, Jesus refused to let these incessant and very important supplications keep Him from attending public worship. He did not use this daily, unrelenting job stress as an excuse to avoid crowds and to stay away from the group of people gathered to worship God.

If Jesus believed that participating in public worship was that important, so should we.

GOING TO CHURCH IS A TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT FOR GOD’S WORK IN THE WORLD

Jesus taught this by implication when He said in Matthew 12:30, “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.”

Are you with Christ or against Him? Are you with Him in gath-

ering people into His family—the church—or are you scattering people from Him? Jesus allows for only two kinds of people in this statement. Each of us is either with Him as a gatherer or against Him as a scatterer.

“I’m not against You, Jesus!” many nonattenders would protest. But the example of their lives denies their professed loyalty. The work of the church is the work of gathering. Going to church testifies that you support such work. When you stay away, you not only fail to support this work of gathering, you actually work against it like a scatterer. You scatter those such as your family and friends who might be gathered under the influence of Christ’s work if you attended church.

“I don’t have to go to church to show that I support Christ’s work!” comes the objection. “I give to Christian causes and do Christian service.” But people know where you go Sunday morning. They see you going to church while they are out exercising, gardening, or getting their newspapers. They see by this what’s important to you and that you are committed to the support of God’s work in this world. This is part of the work of gathering. Staying away from church does not help gather people to Jesus.

GOING TO CHURCH ENABLES YOU TO HEAR IN PERSON THE PREACHING OF GOD’S WORD

God has ordained preaching. To those He has called to this ministry He gives the command: “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Timothy 4:2–4).

Since God commanded that His Word be preached, then He means for the preached Word to be heard. Going to church is the best way to listen to the preaching of God’s Word.

“But,” someone objects, “I can hear God’s Word preached just as well on radio or television or tapes!”

Yes, Christians (as well as non-Christians) who are unable to attend church can experience the proclamation of the truth of God when they might have missed it otherwise. Through such ministries

many Christians find additional edification to supplement the preaching and teaching they hear in church.

However, there are many reasons why no Christian should substitute a media ministry for attendance at, and participation in, a local church. (Of course, if a person is physically unable to attend church, that is a different matter.) We have room here to consider only a few reasons that listening to preaching in person is preferable to any other method of hearing God's Word.

For one thing, inherent in the convenience of media preaching is the ability to turn it off if the message becomes too uncomfortable or "uninteresting." The ease with which the channel may be changed to a more pleasing or entertaining speaker also increases the temptation for people to "gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear" (2 Timothy 4:3 NIV) and to "turn their ears away from the truth" (v. 4). Sometimes what is uncomfortable or what seems at first uninteresting proves to be exactly what we need to hear. When we control the messenger and thus the message, we often miss that which God would have us hear, but which we would never choose.

Another problem with not hearing preaching in person is that the sense of immediacy is absent in media preaching. There is a dynamic element in preaching that simply cannot be communicated through the media. Think, for instance, of the difference between hearing your fiancé say "I love you" on videotape and hearing the same message in person.

A third difficulty with substituting media ministry for church attendance is the inevitable individualization it fosters. The more accustomed you grow to sermon-tasting with your remote control, the more satisfied you become with this kind of fast-food, have-it-your-way Christianity.

Theologian and former editor of *Christianity Today* Kenneth Kantzer has observed that watching church instead of attending "tends not only to breed disloyalty to the church but to foster an isolated, private, and individualistic kind of Christianity; and that is not the kind of Christianity nourished in the Bible."⁵

I should mention here one underlying assumption that relates not only to this point, but to the whole idea of attending church. *Make sure that the church you attend believes the Bible, and that in the*

preaching and teaching of the church the Bible is openly emphasized. (I will deal with this further in the last chapter.)

The Bible exhorts the children of God in 1 Peter 2:2, “As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.” Christians should desire more of God’s Word than they get in preaching at church, but they should at least desire it enough to want to come for it at church. I can understand the Christian who can’t get enough of the Word from the sermons at church, but not the one who gets enough without church.

GOING TO CHURCH ALLOWS YOU TO TAKE THE LORD’S SUPPER

Jesus Himself said concerning the Lord’s Supper, “Do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19). It is the will of God, made clear by direct command, that we are to participate in the Lord’s Supper, or Communion.

The Lord’s Supper was given to the *church* for observance, not to individual Christians. This is an ordinance of Christ that should be celebrated in the fellowship of a local church. Thus it is by attendance at the setting where the Lord’s Supper is offered that we can obey the Lord and share in this memorial to Him.

The apostle Paul said of this special event, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26). Surely taking the Lord’s Supper, and thereby proclaiming the death of the Lord, is not something a true Christian would want to do infrequently, much less ignore altogether. Does any Christian want to say, “I don’t care to proclaim the death of Christ; I don’t care to participate in the memorial of what Jesus has done for me”? That’s exactly what we do if we do not go to church.

GOING TO CHURCH ENABLES YOU TO EXPERIENCE SPECIAL BLESSINGS FROM GOD

Although it’s true that there are spiritual experiences God gives only in private worship, it is also true that, despite the depth of your personal devotional life, there are blessings the Father gives only in the context of *public* worship.

That's illustrated in the following two verses in which Paul describes something of the worship of God in a particular church: "Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. . . . For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged" (1 Corinthians 14:26, 31).

Although there may be some disagreement about the meaning of several things in this passage, this much is clear: all these things could not have happened in an individual's *private* worship. Paul reminds these Christians that this spiritual "edification" or strengthening and the benefits that come when "all may learn and all may be encouraged" occur only "whenever you come together."

The same is still true for us as well. In ways that He does not do when we worship Him alone, God blesses us with strength, instruction, and encouragement when we come together at church to worship Him.

GOING TO CHURCH HELPS PREVENT AN UNBALANCED CHRISTIAN LIFE

Christians who do not attend church are usually the most unbalanced Christians. The difficulty, however, is that they don't realize it. It's not easy to discern when your Christian life is unbalanced. Others can usually detect a lack of balance in us better than we can see it in ourselves. That's another reason it's crucial for us to attend church. The Lord uses His body, the church, to protect us against the common temptations that lead to imbalance.

In Ephesians 4:11–16, we're told that God gives gifted individuals to the church to equip and strengthen it. One result of their work is a more healthy spiritual balance for those in the church, as described in verse 14: "That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting."

Those who are not an active part of a local church body are much more susceptible to being blown back and forth by spiritual fads. Apart from the care and discernment of a family of believers, they become easier targets for teachers who have no doctrinal accountability.

In a local church, not only are ministry leaders shepherding the

flock, there is also the added protection of fellowship with other members. Fellow church members have spiritual gifts and insights you do not have. Other members may spot doctrinal error or a tendency to be unbalanced in priorities when you do not see it. Furthermore, they can provide ready counsel when you encounter questionable teaching from books, radio, or other ministries outside the church.

Ephesians 4:16 speaks of Christ—“from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Notice that this growth, which is stable and balanced, happens as “every part does its share.” If you aren’t a “part” of a church body, it’s unlikely that this balanced spiritual growth will happen for you.

GOING TO CHURCH IS ONE INDICATION OF ETERNAL LIFE

Church attendance is not *proof* that a person has eternal life, but it is one favorable indication. First John 3:14 leads us to believe that those with eternal life will want to go to church. That verse says, “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.”

In other words, one way we can know we have passed out of spiritual death into spiritual life, and one way we can confirm we have the eternal life of a Christian, is that we possess a new, active love for our brothers and sisters in Jesus. We discover in ourselves a God-given love for them that’s more cohesive than that which we have for those who are not Christians.

How can anyone say he has this kind of heaven-generated love for the “brethren” when he doesn’t even love them enough to be with them? How can anyone who truly has this love for the family of God have no desire to gather with his brothers and sisters at the “family reunions” each Sunday when they meet with their Father?

Can you imagine any person affirming his love for his family, but then saying that he doesn’t care if he ever sees them again? Such “love” is a contradiction in terms. But that is the kind of “love” many professing Christians demonstrate for their spiritual family.

Those who “have passed from death to life” are compelled by a

oneness with others who have eternal life. They are one in their love for God, one in their love for His Word and work, one in their worship of Him, one in their purposes. And they do not want to stay away when the others gather together.

NOT GOING TO CHURCH IS ONE INDICATION OF NOT BEING IN GOD'S FAMILY

While church attendance typically characterizes Christians, people who aren't interested in going to church may have that attitude precisely because they are *not* Christians.

I make such a bold statement based upon God's Word in 1 John 2:19. In this verse, the apostle John clarifies for his readers why some people had stopped being a part of their fellowship. "They went out from us," he explains, "but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us." If they really belonged to the Christian family, John reasons, they would show it by their presence with the family. Their absence reveals the spurious nature of their Christianity.

Anyone who, without regret, is persistently willing to disobey the Lord's command to meet with the people of God when they gather for public worship (Hebrews 10:25), and who is willing to forsake all the privileges and blessings God provides through the local church, may have some "religion," but he or she does not have biblical Christianity.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Going to church does not make you a Christian.

You must know Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, through repentance and faith in order to be right with God. Church attendance does not gain favor with God. There are many in hell who went to church all their lives. Regular church attendance is meaningless without a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the church (Ephesians 4:15).

Until we know Jesus, our sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2; Romans 3:23) and leaves us "having no hope and without God in the

world” (Ephesians 2:12) and unprepared to stand before God at the Judgment (Hebrews 9:27).

Here’s why knowing Christ is so crucial. It is His sacrificial death as a willing substitute for the sins of others that makes believers in Him to be right with God (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18). The appropriate response by us to the work of Christ is, according to Jesus, to “repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15).

To repent involves a change of mind toward God that results in a change of life. Repentance means to turn from loving yourself more than God, and to turn from living for yourself more than for God. Genuine repentance is expressed in a new love for God, a new affection for the things of God, and a new desire for obedience to God and His Word.

To believe is to trust Jesus Christ and His work to make you right with God. It involves faith that God will forgive your sins and accept you forever, not because of any work you have done, but on the basis of what Jesus alone has done. Biblical belief also includes the confidence that Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is the evidence that all that Jesus did and said is true and from God.

Have you repented and believed biblically?

Make sure that the church you attend believes and proclaims this message; otherwise, your attendance there is a waste of time.

Going to church is vital for Christians.

Some people think of going to church the way they think of taking bad-tasting, but necessary, medicine. Instead, we need to view God’s will about being at church as an expression of His kindness and care. The “church experience” is good for us and needed by us, or our loving Father wouldn’t have stressed it so strongly and promised so much grace through it.

Every command of God is a law of love. He tells us to congregate with Christians because He intends to strengthen and bless us lovingly through one another. Sometimes homeless people refuse offers of care and protection by good people only because a long, familiar loneliness is preferable to the strangeness of family love. They cannot see how much they really lose because of what they imagine they would lose in giving up their rootlessness. Some “homeless” Christians think the same way. However, there is no benefit, real or imagined, in alienation from the body of Christ.

Not going to church is self-centered and foolish.

This is based upon Proverbs 18:1: “A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment.”

The person who isolates himself from church involvement conveys that he’s self-centered rather than God-centered. He obviously isn’t making his reclusive choice based upon the teaching of Philippians 2:3–4: “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (NASB). We don’t go to church merely for what it does for us, but also as a ministry to others.

And it’s not wise judgment, but foolish pride which makes a person think, “I don’t need those people at church.” It’s pride that says, “I don’t need what all other believers need. *They* may need worship and preaching and corporate prayer, but I don’t.” There also can be a bit of spiritual snobbery involved, as though the person has a private connection to God that other believers lack.

Such isolation is also a failure to love, a selfish individualism demonstrated by the habit of some who neglect meeting together as God has ordained. This is true even if you are worshiping God at home while others are at public worship. Your exclusionist worship only proves the proverb: “A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire.” You may be building yourself up as you are worshiping alone, but you could also be encouraging others and the preacher by your presence, words, and actions if you were worshiping God with them. If private worship were sufficient, God wouldn’t have commanded public worship.

Not going to church is willful disobedience to the authority of God.

Regardless of feelings and reasons to stay away, we must face the fact that avoiding church is a willful repudiation of the authority of God, who explicitly commands us not to forsake the public assembly of believers (Hebrews 10:25). When God says to draw near to Him with His people, we disown both Him and His family when we refuse to come.

No church will be perfect or free from offensive things.

Because they are comprised of people, even the best churches have times when they do not live up to what they profess. Those who

dwelling on the imperfections of churches can convince themselves that the “organized church” is unworthy of their support. The best families have problems, too, but the benefits of being part of a good family with problems are much preferable to the handful of hollow advantages of having no family at all. True, you don’t have to look long or hard to find valid criticisms of any church. But mature thinkers realize this and love God’s church anyway. That’s because they know that, with all its flaws, God still loves the church.

As the apostle Paul asked in 1 Corinthians 11:22, “Do you despise the church of God?” If not, will you commit yourself to attend the services of your church faithfully?