

WORK

1. The church is the pillar and ground (foundation) of the _____. (1 Timothy 3:15)
2. The church in Antioch sent _____ to the brethren in Judea who were facing famine. (Acts 11:29)

DESIGNATIONS

Individually:

1. Disciples were called _____. (Acts 11:26)
2. If any man suffers as a _____ he should not be ashamed. (1 Peter 4:16)

Collectively:

1. Groups of Christians assembling in various cities were called churches of _____. (1 Thessalonians 2:14)
2. They were also called churches of _____. (Romans 16:16)

Please complete, detach, and mail this question sheet back to the return address below. After grading it we will return it to you with Lesson Seven. We commend you for your interest in learning more about Jesus.

To continue learning more about JESUS—THE WAY, complete your contact information below and mail to:



**826 Liberty Pike
Franklin, TN 37064**

Name: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____
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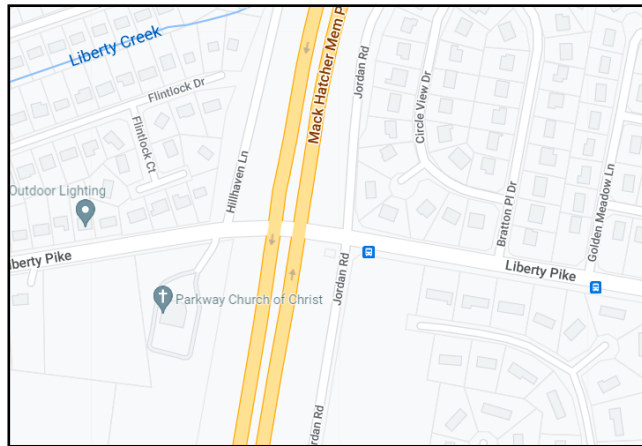
**Find out more about the
Christians meeting at Parkway
on our website!**

parkwaychurchofchristfranklin.net

The Christians at Parkway Welcome You!

OUR LOCATION

**826 Liberty Pike
Franklin, TN 37064**



OUR SERVICES

**Sunday Bible Study
9:00 a.m.**

**Sunday Worship
10:00 a.m.**

**Wednesday Bible Study
7:00 p.m.**

CONTACT US

615-595-9818

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LESSON SIX

JESUS, THE WAY OUT OF RELIGIOUS CONFUSION

When God gave the Old Testament law to Israel, He made no provision for the division of His people into sects and parties. But by the time Jesus came into the world, sects and parties were well entrenched. There were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and doubtless others. It was assumed that all who were serious about religion would be associated with one of these.

To which of these parties did Jesus belong? All must agree that He belonged to none of them. He maintained His independent, non-sectarian relationship with God to the very end. For this reason, they all opposed Him.

Jesus did not provide for His followers to be divided into sects and parties. Rather, He desired that they might be united. After praying for His apostles, He added:

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in you; that they also may be one in Us...." (John 17:20-21)

Through the years, however, divisions have developed and these have been perpetuated by the writing of creeds and the formation of denominational organizations. The result is that now among professed followers of Jesus there are many bodies (denominations), many lords (religious authorities), many faiths (creeds), and many baptisms.

How different the present situation is from the unity described in the New Testament:

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

Many today regret the division among believers and wish it did not exist. They desire the uniting of all the great denominations and are working diligently to that end. But they assume that until this is accomplished, there is nothing an individual can do but to join one of the existing divisions and maintain a tolerant spirit. Nothing in the teaching or practice of Jesus supports this approach to unity.



Jesus did not undertake to convene a unity conference designed to effect a merger of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes into one super sect. Neither did He pray that His disciples might be united into one super denomination. He prayed rather that individual believers might be united in Himself and in the Father. His teaching was designed to turn individuals from the doctrines and traditions of men to the simple word of God. Through His teaching and example, He surely can be for us THE WAY OUT OF RELIGIOUS CONFUSION.

THE LORD'S CHURCH

Jesus promised to build His own church. He said:

"... on this rock I will build My church...." (Matthew 16:18)

He promised to build only one church and it was to be His. The rock on which it was to be built was not the apostle Peter, but the truth Peter confessed. As the apostle Paul said:

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11)

The word *church* means "called out." By preaching the gospel on the day of Pentecost, Peter and the other apostles "called out" from the world those who were willing to believe in Jesus.

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:37-38)

Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. (Acts 2:41)

This was the beginning of the Lord's church. It was composed of all who were saved by Jesus Christ, and it continued to grow as others were saved.

And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47)

Groups of these saved people met in various cities and each group was a church of Christ. Though united in Christ, they were independent of any human association or

federation. Christ directed them through His inspired apostles, teaching them how they were to worship and work together.

AVOID DIVISION BY FOLLOWING JESUS

If we obey the same instructions that Peter gave on Pentecost, repenting of our sins and being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, we too will be saved. When we are saved, the Lord will add us to His church just as He added them. They joined no other religious organizations and neither should we.

In Christ, we are united with all others who are in His church. As members of the Lord's church, we must then carefully study the New Testament description of that church. This is found in the book of Acts and in the letters which follow it. Since the apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit, we may be sure that their instructions were exactly what Jesus wanted them to be. If we follow the apostolic teachings and examples, we will replicate these early churches today and the Lord will be pleased with us.

Being a New Testament church may not be as difficult as one might think. It may be possible to find an independent group of Christians following the New Testament pattern already assembling in one's community. If not, just two or three who are of common purpose can meet and worship together acceptably. No great church building is necessary. In fact, many churches in Bible times met in homes (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19). No humanly ordained priesthood is required since all Christians are priests (1 Peter 2:5). No charter from any earthly headquarters is needed since the presence of Jesus exists whenever individuals gather in His name. Jesus said:

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20)

LESSON SIX ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT JESUS.

Use the quotations in the lesson or find the verses in your own Bible to answer the following questions:

MEMBERSHIP

1. Peter told believers to _____ and be _____ for the remission of their sins. (Acts 2:38)
2. Those who received the word and were _____ were added to the disciples. (Acts 2:41)
3. The Lord added to the church daily those that were being _____. (Acts 2:47)

DOCTRINE

1. They continued in the _____ doctrine or teaching. (Acts 2:42)

WORSHIP

1. In addition to the teaching, they also continued in breaking of _____ and _____. (Acts 2:42)
2. Every person should _____ as he purposes. (2 Corinthians 9:7)
3. Christians are to _____ and make melody (music) in their hearts. (Ephesians 5:19)

DAY OF WORSHIP

1. On the _____ day of the week, disciples came together to break bread and Paul preached. (Acts 20:7)

ORGANIZATION

1. Christ is head of His body which is the _____. (Colossians 1:18)
2. When local churches which Paul established had time to mature, Paul returned to them, ordaining _____ in every church. (Acts 14:23)
3. The church in Philippi had saints with _____ and _____. (Philippians 1:1)

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO COMPLETE THE REMAINING LESSON!

