



IMPARTING  
**GOD'S WISDOM...**

1COR.2:6-7

**APOLOGETICS 3**







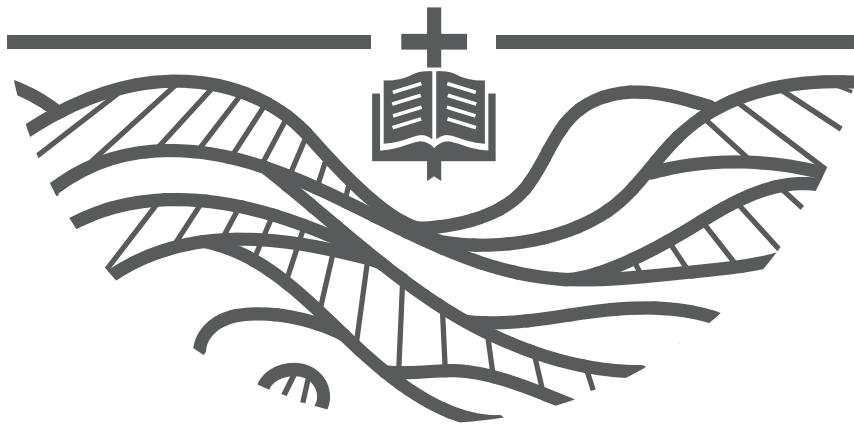
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750 S. Pear Orchard Road | Ridgeland, MS 39157  
601-519-8423 | [www.onestoryministries.org](http://www.onestoryministries.org) | [info@onestoryministries.org](mailto:info@onestoryministries.org)

# LESSON SEQUENCE

- 01** LESSON **ONE**  
What is the church?
- 02** LESSON **TWO**  
Visible or invisible?
- 03** LESSON **THREE**  
Why denominations?
- 04** LESSON **FOUR**  
Why church membership?
- 05** LESSON **FIVE**  
Apostles and prophets today?
- 06** LESSON **SIX**  
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- 07** LESSON **SEVEN**  
Why worship on Sunday?
- 08** LESSON **EIGHT**  
Permissible on the Lord's Day?
- 09** LESSON **NINE**  
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- 10** LESSON **TEN**  
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- 13** LESSON **THIRTEEN**  
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NOTES

# PREPARING TO TEACH

Congratulations! What an awesome responsibility it is to participate in the discipleship and education of adult believers. By His amazing grace, our triune God moves His people from death to life through the process of justification and sanctification. We are in constant need of heart transformation, mind renewal, and behavior change. The Christian life is to be one of growth and maturity in order to glorify God by loving Him and other people. To that end, God has given His people His Word and all truth to learn and to apply. And, He has blessed us with gifted teachers like you.

This Teacher's Manual is designed for a 13-week adult discipleship class or Sunday School. The format is mainly lecture, but can include as much discussion as your context allows. Each lesson is divided into three segments: **Opening, Rewind,** and **Bible Implementation.**

The **Opening** is where you start. It offers introductory information about the theological topic being taught. Each lesson gives important content to increase knowledge of God's truth.

The next section is the **Rewind.** It allows the students to have a brief review, connecting them back to what was previously taught. Context and review is essential when teaching and learning.

The heart and soul of the lesson is the **Bible Implementation** time. Each lesson takes the students through the theological subject by implementing foundational Scriptures. God's Word is read and discussed, making **observations** and **application** along the way. Ultimately, you are teaching the students to develop their theology by a proper study of the Bible.

**Teaching Theological Studies.** Adults need to grow in their love for and understanding of sound theology: truth about God and His work in His world. This curriculum teaches from an evangelical, Christ-centered, Reformed theological perspective. It grounds all of its theological propositions in God's Word, supported by a Biblical theology. Always teach your students how to think Biblically about God and His world. Rather than simply sharing opinions, the goal is to observe, understand, and apply what is true.

Ultimately, you prepare to teach others theological truths by a growing dependence on the Word and the Spirit. Grow in that grace as you teach.

# LESSON ONE / WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

## OVERVIEW

A good starting place for a new round of apologetic questions is by defining the “Church.” What is it? Or maybe the better question is: Who is the Church?

The term “Church” is a translation of the Greek word “ekklesia” which means “gathering” or “assembly.” So the Church is not a building or an activity—it is the assembling of worshipers of God. To use New Testament language, it is the family of God, and the body of Christ!

Since the word Church first appears in the Gospel of Matthew, it is tempting to believe the Church came about in the New Testament. But ever since Adam and Eve, God has been gathering together true worshipers. Israel was described as a “congregation” or assembly of God’s people. So the Church has Old Testament beginnings, yet comes to full flower in the New Testament. It’s built on the prophets and the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, and headed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no human head to the body of Christ. Jesus is the head of the Church, since He is the Savior of the Church. Within the one Church of Jesus Christ, there are many local expressions, or local churches. These churches are not to be factions, but unified under the one Head. And, the Church is here on earth to proclaim Christ, the wisdom of God to a watching world!

## APPLICATION ▶

- Knowing the right definition of the church will enable you to defend the church.
- We read in the Book of Acts how Jesus built His Church on the work of the apostles (like Peter) and the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Always remember that wherever and whenever God’s people gather, there you have the Church!
- The Church is the people whom Christ has saved. It is the body that submits to Him.
- Divisions make it difficult to defend the truth of the one Church of Jesus Christ.



## OPENING

**Greet the students. Welcome visitors. Open with prayer.**

*Over the next several lessons, we will talk about some of the obstacles to apologetics—attitudes that keep Christians from defending the faith.*

*A first major obstacle is INDIFFERENCE. Many Christians today just don't seem to care that Jesus and Christianity is regularly mocked and ridiculed in our culture. They might be slightly offended, but not enough to actually go out and defend the faith.*

**So, what are some reasons Christians become indifferent to what the world says about Christianity?** *This sort of passivity keeps our mouths shut when we should speak up about who Jesus is and what He has done.*

*Instead of being indifferent, we should follow the apostle Paul's example who was "greatly distressed" when he witnessed the idolatry in Athens. Paul became an incredible apologist partly because he was so upset about what people believed and how they lived. He was never indifferent to the culture around him!*

*So, in order to become an active apologist, you must have a zeal for the Word of God and for the state of the world around you. If you are indifferent to the plight of others, you will never be motivated to tell them the truth of Christ. And, if you are indifferent towards the Bible, you will not be prepared to talk to people who oppose it.*



## REWIND

*Each week, we will review what we have learned in the past. Today, we will remind ourselves of the definition of APOLOGETICS again. **Who can give me a good definition of apologetics?***

*The Greek word "apologia" often refers to the activity of giving a verbal defense. So, apologetics is the discipline of defending one's beliefs.*

*Or, to put it another way, apologetics is the work of convincing others to change their beliefs. Christian apologetics is the defense of the Christian faith, doctrine, and practice.*



# BIBLE IMPLEMENTATION



**Introduction:** *Today, we will start a new section of apologetic questions—ones having to do with the CHURCH. So, we begin with the most basic question of all:*

## **What is the Church?**

**Observations:** *That's an easy one, isn't it? So what's your answer? What is the church? We often use the word "church" in reference to a building or an activity. "Let's go to church this Sunday." "It's so good to be able to do church with you today." But is the church really a "thing" or a building or just something we "do?" No! Here, then, is the better question:*

## **Who is the Church?**

**Observations:** *We are going to leave some of this answer for our next lesson, where we consider the distinction between the "invisible church" and the "visible church." So, who is the Church? Yes, Christians make up the church. But there's a bit more to it than that. Is the church just defined only as all Christians? What about children of Christians--are they part of the church? What about the local church as distance from the universal church? Again, we will leave some of those questions until our next lesson.*

▶ **Application:** *Knowing the right definition of the church will enable you to defend the church. Too many Christians don't understand WHO exactly the church is!*

*So let's move on to our all-important definitions:*

### **Definition #1: Church.**

**Observations:** *The Greek word EKKLESIA is typically translated as "church" in the New Testament. Ekklesia literally means "gathering" or an "assembly" of people. That's why the church is not a building, but really a group of worshipers. For Christians, then, the "church" is the assembly of followers of Christ, who gather to worship the one, true God.*

### **Definition #2: Church beginnings.**

**Observations:** *Since we first see the word ekklesia in the New Testament, we may be tempted to think that the church began then.*



After all, we read these words of Jesus in Matthew 16:18.

**Matther 16:18.**

<sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

- ▶ **Application:** *We read in the Book of Acts how Jesus built His church on the work of the apostles (like Peter) and the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the beginning of the New Testament Church.*

*But, what about the Old Testament? Consider this verse from the Book of Genesis...*

**Read Genesis 28:3.**

<sup>3</sup> God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples.

**Observations:** *These are words spoken to Jacob, later renamed Israel. The phrase “company of peoples” is the Hebrew word QAHAL, which is also translated as CHURCH! Jacob and his twelve sons were to become a church, a community of worshipers as they settled into the Promised Land! So, is this when the Church began?*

*What about Adam and Eve? They were created by God to be a worshiping community, right? Then in Genesis 12, Abraham was promised to become a great nation and a blessing to all nations. This nation of worshipers was the Old Testament Church!*

*So, the Church didn't just begin in the New Testament or in the Book of Acts. From the beginning of Creation, it has been God's purpose to gather to Himself a community of worshipers. His people Israel were sinful and rebellious, yet they were His covenant people. When Jesus took on flesh and came to earth, He embodied Israel and gave birth to the New Testament expression of the Church.*

- ▶ **Application:** *Always remember that wherever and whenever God's people gather, there you have the Church!*

*That leads us to our next definition.*

**Definition #3: Who is the head of the Church?**

**Observations:** *Did I just give it away? Who is the head of the Church? Jesus Christ! Let's read these verses together...*



### Read Ephesians 1:20–23.

<sup>20</sup> that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup> And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

**Observations:** *So, Christ as King rules over all things, which makes Him head over His body, the Church. **What does it mean that Christ is head of the Church?** In the first place, it means that He has ALL authority over it.*

*Let's look at another passage in Ephesians.*

### Read Ephesians 5:23-24.

<sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

**Observations:** *That's pretty clear, isn't it? **Why is Christ the head of the Church?** Because it is His body. Because He saved it!*

- ▶ **Application:** *These verses also help us define the Church. It is the people whom Christ has saved. It is the body that submits to Him.*

*Which brings us to verses in Colossians 1.*

### Read Colossians 1:18-24.

<sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. <sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, <sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. <sup>24</sup> Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church...



**Observations:** *There is a lot of rich theology in this letter to the Colossian Church. Did you hear how Christ is the head of the church? And, that all those whom Christ died for are reconciled to Himself and become part of the Body of Christ! So, we can accurately say that the Church is the Body of Christ, made up of all true worshipers of God throughout all human history. But we must also answer this question:*

### ***Is there just one church or many churches?***

#### **Read Romans 16:16.**

<sup>16</sup> Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

#### **Read 1 Corinthians 7:17.**

<sup>17</sup> Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.

#### **Read 1 Thessalonians 2:14.**

<sup>14</sup> For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews,

**Observations: So, what do these verses tell us?** *The one Church of Jesus Christ is manifested in many, many, many local churches. We will go into this distinction more in detail when we talk about the various denominations in Christianity; and, again, when we discuss the distinction between the invisible and visible church.*

*But, just because there are many churches, we must still be careful of what Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 11.*

#### **Read 1 Corinthians 11:18-22.**

<sup>18</sup> For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, <sup>19</sup> for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. <sup>20</sup> When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. <sup>21</sup> For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. <sup>22</sup> What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

► **Application: What problem is Paul describing?** *Divisions in the Church! We will also talk more about this in the future. These divisions make it difficult to defend the truth of the one Church of Jesus Christ!*

Let's end with one last verse. **Read Ephesians 3:10.**

<sup>10</sup> so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

**Conclusion:** *Wow! Jesus has a big purpose for His Church doesn't He? What is the Church? It is a community of worshipers of King Jesus which is used to show off the manifold wisdom of God! It isn't just some social organization. It isn't just a group of people deciding to gather for religious purposes. It is the organic body of Christ, submitting to the Lordship of Christ, which displays Christ to the watching world!*

