
“Come, Let Us Reason About the Bible”
What Is the Church of the New Testament?
Bible Study Series

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”—(Matthew 16:18)

LESSON SEVEN — What About Membership In the Church?

Estimated Reading Time for this Lesson: 10-12 minutes

Lesson Seven: What About Membership in the Church?

Membership in the church of the New Testament is both personal and vital. When you open the Bible and read about the church Jesus established, you will find that **membership isn’t about joining a club**, signing a form, or being voted in by a group of people. It’s something far more spiritual—and far more meaningful.

How Does One Become a Member of the Church?

Beginning in the book of Acts, right after the first gospel sermon was preached by Peter on the Day of Pentecost, notice how Peter boldly proclaimed that Jesus, whom the people had crucified, was both Lord and Christ—the very Son of God. He said:

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (Acts 2:36)

Those who heard this were cut to the heart. Many were convicted in their hearts and asked, *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37)*. Peter responded:

“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 2:38)

Those who gladly received his word were baptized, and then you read something powerful in verse 47:

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

Did you catch that? They weren’t **voted in**, and they didn’t **sign up**—**the Lord Himself added them to the church**. That’s an important distinction. People today often talk about “joining a church,” but biblically, **one is added by the Lord to His church—not a denomination**, but **the one true body of Christ** (Ephesians 1:22–23).

Added to the One Body, Not a Denomination

Paul describes the church as **the body of Christ**:

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 1:22–23)

There’s only **one body**, not many different kinds of churches each teaching different doctrines. Paul says plainly:

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling.” (Ephesians 4:4)

So when someone is saved—when they believe, repent, confess Christ, and are baptized—they are **added to that one body**. Not a denomination, but the **church Jesus built** (Matthew 16:18).

What Must One Do to Remain a Member?

Now, just as there is a way to enter the church, there’s also a way to remain a faithful member. Being added is only the beginning. Jesus said:

“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Revelation 2:10)

Remaining in the church means living a life of **faithfulness**, continuing in **sound doctrine**, and striving to **walk in the light**. John writes:

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)

What About Falling Away?

Sometimes people ask, “Once someone is saved and added to the church, is it possible for them to lose their salvation?” The New Testament makes it clear: **Yes, it is possible to fall away**. That’s why Christians are constantly encouraged to remain faithful.

Paul gives a direct warning in 1 Corinthians 10:12:

“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” (1 Corinthians 10:12)

Think about that. If it were impossible to fall, why would Paul issue such a warning? The truth is, **salvation can be forfeited** by choosing to return to a life of sin and turning away from the truth.

Peter gives another sobering picture of this in 2 Peter 2:20–21:

“For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.”

That’s not a hypothetical—it’s a real danger. But it’s not about living in fear—it’s about being diligent. God doesn’t expect perfection, but He does expect **faithfulness**. That’s why Jesus said:

“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Revelation 2:10)

God has done His part. He’s given us His Word, His Spirit, His church, and the continual cleansing power of Christ’s blood (1 John 1:7). But you must keep walking in the light, day by day.

If someone does fall away, it’s not the end of the road. God is always ready to forgive the one who repents. As James wrote:

“Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.” (James 5:19–20)

So yes, it’s possible to fall—but with love, accountability, and humility, it’s also possible to return.

Can Someone Be Removed from the Church?

Yes, sadly, it is possible for someone to **fall away** and be excluded from fellowship with the Lord’s church. The church has a responsibility to help restore those who stray, but in cases where a Christian continues to walk in sin without repentance, **discipline may be necessary**. This isn’t about being harsh—it’s about preserving the purity of the church and encouraging repentance.

Paul addresses this in 2 Thessalonians 3:6:

“But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.”

And again, read verses 14–15:

“And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” (2 Thessalonians 3:14–15)

What Does “Walking Disorderly” Mean?

To walk disorderly means to **persist in sinful behavior** that contradicts the teachings of Christ—whether that be moral failure, false teaching, divisiveness, or rebellion against authority in the

church. This isn't about perfection—everyone will stumble—but it's about someone **refusing to repent** and continuing in open sin.

Who Makes the Decision to Withdraw?

The decision to withdraw from a disorderly member is made by the **local congregation**—typically with the **guidance of the elders**. It's not a rash or private decision, but one made **prayerfully and carefully** after all attempts at restoration have failed.

Paul dealt with a similar issue in Corinth:

“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together...deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (1 Corinthians 5:4–5)

The goal isn't punishment—it's **restoration**. It's about helping that person see the seriousness of their condition and encouraging them to repent.

Questions to Confirm Understanding

Estimated Time to Answer the Questions: 4 – 7 minutes; With Scripture Lookup: 30 minutes

Read and answer the following set of questions about this lesson, and circle your answer: “True | False” or “Yes | No”. Look up the scriptures provided to confirm your answers. Then compare your answers with the Answer Key provided after these questions.

1. The Lord adds saved individuals to the church. (Acts 2:47)
True | False
2. Peter preached that Jesus, whom the people crucified, is both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:36)
True | False
3. Peter instructed the people to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38)
True | False
4. A person is voted into the church by other members.
True | False
5. There is only one true body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:4)
True | False
6. Christ is the head of the church, His body. (Ephesians 1:22–23)
True | False
7. A Christian must remain faithful until death to receive the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)
True | False

8. Walking in the light keeps one in fellowship and allows continual cleansing from sin.
(1 John 1:7)
True | False
 9. It is impossible for a Christian to fall from grace. (1 Corinthians 10:12)
True | False
 10. Returning to a life of sin after knowing the truth is described as being entangled again.
(2 Peter 2:20–21)
True | False
 11. If someone falls away, there is no hope of returning. (James 5:19–20)
True | False
 12. The church is commanded to withdraw from those who walk disorderly.
(2 Thessalonians 3:6)
True | False
 13. A disorderly member is to be treated as an enemy. (2 Thessalonians 3:15)
True | False
 14. The purpose of church discipline is to save the sinner’s soul. (1 Corinthians 5:4–5)
True | False
 15. Is being faithful a condition for remaining a member of Christ’s church? (Revelation 2:10)
Yes | No
 16. Can a Christian fall away from the truth and be lost? (1 Corinthians 10:12)
Yes | No
 17. According to Peter, is it worse to turn away after knowing the truth? (2 Peter 2:20–21)
Yes | No
 18. Can someone be restored after falling away? (James 5:19–20)
Yes | No
 19. Should church discipline be carried out with love and prayer?
Yes | No
 20. Does Jesus desire a pure and holy church? (Ephesians 5:25–27)
Yes | No
-

Answer Key

Estimated Time to Read the Answers: 8 – 10 minutes; With Reflection and Contemplation: 30 – 40 minutes

1. **The Lord adds saved individuals to the church. (Acts 2:47)**

Answer: True

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

This verse clearly teaches that it is the Lord—not man—who adds those who are saved to His church.

2. **Peter preached that Jesus, whom the people crucified, is both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:36)**

Answer: True

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (Acts 2:36)

Peter declared this truth to convict the people of their sin and reveal Jesus as the promised Messiah.

3. **Peter instructed the people to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38)**

Answer: True

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” (Acts 2:38)

This shows how individuals responded to the gospel and were saved through obedience.

4. **A person is voted into the church by other members.**

Answer: False

There is no biblical example of being voted into the church. The Lord Himself adds those who are saved.

5. **There is only one true body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:4)**

Answer: True

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling.” (Ephesians 4:4)

Paul emphasized the unity of the body—there is only one true church, not many.

6. **Christ is the head of the church, His body. (Ephesians 1:22–23)**

Answer: True

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body.” (Ephesians 1:22–23)

Christ has all authority over the church, and it is identified as His body.

7. **A Christian must remain faithful until death to receive the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)**

Answer: True

“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Revelation 2:10)
Eternal life is promised to those who continue in faithfulness throughout life.

8. Walking in the light keeps one in fellowship and allows continual cleansing from sin. (1 John 1:7)

Answer: True

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)

Ongoing fellowship with God depends on a lifestyle of faithfulness and obedience.

9. It is impossible for a Christian to fall from grace. (1 Corinthians 10:12)

Answer: False

“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” (1 Corinthians 10:12)

Paul warns that even those who think they are secure must be watchful to avoid falling.

10. Returning to a life of sin after knowing the truth is being entangled again. (2 Peter 2:20–21)

Answer: True

“They are again entangled in them and overcome; the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.” (2 Peter 2:20–21)

Peter strongly warns of the danger and consequences of falling away after coming to Christ.

11. If someone falls away, there is no hope of returning. (James 5:19–20)

Answer: False

“Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back... he who turns a sinner... will save a soul from death.” (James 5:19–20)

Restoration is not only possible but encouraged when someone repents and returns to the truth.

12. The church is commanded to withdraw from those who walk disorderly. (2 Thessalonians 3:6)

Answer: True

“Withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.” (2 Thessalonians 3:6)

This is a divine command to preserve the spiritual purity of the church and lead the sinner to repentance.

13. A disorderly member is to be treated as an enemy. (2 Thessalonians 3:15)

Answer: False

“Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” (2 Thessalonians 3:15)

Even in discipline, love and hope for restoration should be maintained.

14. The purpose of church discipline is to save the sinner’s soul. (1 Corinthians 5:4–5)

Answer: True

“Deliver such a one to Satan... that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (1

Corinthians 5:4–5)

Discipline aims not to harm, but to bring the individual to repentance and salvation.

15. Is being faithful a condition for remaining a member of Christ’s church? (Revelation 2:10)

Answer: Yes

“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Revelation 2:10)

Membership in the church involves ongoing faithfulness, not a one-time act.

16. Can a Christian fall away from the truth and be lost? (1 Corinthians 10:12)

Answer: Yes

“Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” (1 Corinthians 10:12)

This passage plainly teaches that falling from a saved condition is possible.

17. According to Peter, is it worse to turn away after knowing the truth? (2 Peter 2:20–21)

Answer: Yes

“The latter end is worse for them than the beginning... it would have been better... not to have known.” (2 Peter 2:20–21)

Peter expresses the serious consequences of turning back after becoming a Christian.

18. Can someone be restored after falling away? (James 5:19–20)

Answer: Yes

“He who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death.” (James 5:19–20)

Restoration is always possible for the one who repents and returns.

19. Should church discipline be carried out with love and prayer?

Answer: Yes

Although not quoted directly in the lesson, other scriptures such as Galatians 6:1 teach that correction should be done in a spirit of gentleness, love, and care.

20. Does Jesus desire a pure and holy church? (Ephesians 5:25–27)

Answer: Yes

“That He might present her to Himself a glorious church... holy and without blemish.”

(Ephesians 5:27)

Jesus died to sanctify and cleanse His church, and He desires that it remain pure.
