

AWVBS graphic
Series graphic

{put these 2 pics on one slide}

Church sign image

<https://www.safetysign.com/images/source/product-grid-images/C1744BTWK.png>

Church image

<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/11/30/1d/11301d2ea23723574a0b90397b663305.jpg>

However you and I **define church**, is how you and I will **do church**.

{One slide; come up one at a time}

2 Powerful Forces Affecting the Definition of Church:

- 1) The **Jesus & Me** gospel
- 2) The influence of **consumerism**

However you and I **define church**, is how you and I will **do church**.

Many definitions of church lack the following:

- The purposes of God the Father
- The power of the Holy Spirit
- The blood of Jesus

Ephesians 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will: To the faithful **saints in** Christ Jesus **at** Ephesus.

1 Thessalonians 1:1

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy: To the **church** of the Thessalonians **in** God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to you and peace.

{Come up one at a time}

God's Definition of Church: CONNECTION & LOCATION

- **Connection to Christ**
- **No "me" but "we" □ Connection to people**
- **Location**

Ephesians 1:20-21

He exercised this **power in Christ** by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavens— ²¹ **far above** every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

{all together; one slide}

The Church's Connection to Christ:

- In salvation
- In power & authority □ Supremacy

Ephesians 1:22

And “*He subjected everything under His feet*” and appointed Him as **head** over everything for the **church** ...

Ephesians 1:23

... the church, ²³ which is **His body**, the **fullness** of the One who **fills all things** in every way.

4 Things God the Father Does for God the Son:

- 1) He raises Him from the dead (v. 20)
- 2) He gives Him the seat of kingly authority (v. 20)
- 3) He put everything in the cosmos in subjection to Him (v. 21-22)
- 4) He gives Him headship over the church as His body (v. 23)

Ephesians 4:10

The One who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, to **fill all things**.

Ephesians 4:11-13

And He himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to **build up the body** of Christ, ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into **maturity** with a stature measured by **Christ's fullness**.

Ephesians 3:10-11

This is so that God's multi-faceted wisdom may now be made known **through the church** to the rulers and authorities in the heavens. ¹¹ This is according to His **eternal purpose** accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus came near and said to them, “All **authority** has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make **disciples** of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ **teaching** them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

How Does God Define the Church?

CONNECTION + LOCATION + DEMONSTRATION

{one slide; keep formatting}

A community of Christ-followers who live as ...

***the on-the-ground expression of the supremacy of Jesus
by advancing His gospel
in distance and depth
through disciple-making.***

{come up one at a time}

What if ... we made God's definition our definition?

How will we be the church?

{All one slide}

A PRAYER:

Lord God Almighty—

***Let everything—from the highest heaven to the lowest hell—be filled with a
revelation of Your glorious perfections in the form of an adopted, destined,
blood-bought, justified, sanctified, glorified and infinitely & everlastingly
satisfied people—Your body, the church of the living God! AMEN***

1) We prioritize God's glory and the apex expression of it—the gospel of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:5-6

For we are not proclaiming ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus's sake. ⁶For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 14:25

The secrets of his heart will be revealed, and as a result he will fall facedown and worship God, proclaiming, "God is really among you."

2) We practice "one-another-ing" (>50) as a new humanity in a unified community.

□ "Love another as I have loved you." -Jesus

{come up one at a time}

1st Race: the ethnicity I am born into; my "tribe"

2nd Race: the ethnicities I am not; "they" and "those people"

3rd Race: the new person God has made me in Christ

Galatians 3:28

There is **no longer** Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all **one in Christ Jesus**.

Revelation 5:9-11

And they sang a new song: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slaughtered, and you purchased **people** for God by your blood from **every tribe and language and people and nation**.¹⁰ You made them a **kingdom** and priests to our God, and they will **reign** on the earth.¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels around the throne, and also of the living creatures and of the elders. Their number was **countless** thousands, plus thousands of thousands

We have to serve, we have to edify ... to build up the church in faith & unity.

3) We pursue the "1" over the "99"

Luke 15: lost sheep, lost coin, lost son

1 Corinthians 10:33 (NLT)

I don't just do what is best for **me**; I do what is best for others so that **many may be saved**.

4) We value **disciples over **decisions**.**

5) We know we are not **perfect but we must be **dependent**.**