**Church Going**

Part IV

**“What Do the Scripture Say About NOT Going to Church Today”**

Ok, so we know we ought to be a member of a local ‘church’ assembly. I figure most of the readers have been a member of a local church – or still are. But what if you can’t find one designed and based on those scriptures?

What if you can’t find one that follows Paul’s purpose in **Ephesians 4** – what if you can only find one that is based on **Acts 2**?

Is ‘still going to church’ something that pleases God today?

Is ‘still going to church’ something that is beneficial for you today?

Do the Scriptures say anything about NOT going to church… and if so, on what is it all based?

**Answers? You bet there are… and here they are!**

P.S. – I have presented these ‘verses’ a number of times in my sermons and commentaries over the years, so there is nothing ‘new’ here, actually. However, it took me 25 years after I first heard about following ‘the teachings of Paul’ vs ‘the teachings of Jesus’ to wise up to this stuff so I understand how hard it is for even many of us to grasp what we really need to do when it comes to the RISEN SAVIOUR!

Of course, the person who first told me about following Paul didn’t clarify that following the teachings of Paul meant following the teachings of the RISEN Jesus Christ. I often wonder what a difference that would have made in my life and my parenting and concerning my family for their sakes had I been more willing to listen to that man. I do know what I see today – and I don’t like some of it – but I certainly can’t blame anyone other than myself as a father and husband for not reading my Bible myself and coming to this ‘simple’ conclusion. Anyway – back onto the trail – let’s get right to it!

*(And I must say, each one of these ‘points’ could have its very own lengthy sermon!)*

*Paul was never one to ‘mince’ words, ya know! These are some serious verses!*

**Avoid:**

**Romans 16:17-19 *- Now I beseech*** (Paul is always sober-minded – and seriously concerned for us) ***you, brethren,*** (that’s us! – not the average church goer but US!) ***mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine*** (that doctrine is Paul’s, not from John, Peter, etc.) ***which ye have learned*** (that is one of the problems, most folks really haven’t learned enough nor have the pastors taught all of Paul’s doctrine)***; and avoid*** (there it is – AVOID – when we go to ‘church’ with them, we are not ‘avoiding’ them) ***them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly*** (think about that one and how true that really is… nice people and all, but they are the ones who really get the glory from going to church…); ***and by good words and fair speeches*** (the pastors are usually good speakers, etc. and have some ‘good’ sermons – no doubt! Going to church for the ‘good’ words in their fair speech is a lot like looking at a certain magazine for the articles!!!) ***deceive the hearts of the simple.*** (note that Paul says in **Ephesians 4:14** that we should ***“be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine…”*** and then Paul nails the ‘good’ pastors when he says, ***“by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive***… - have you ever tried to talk to your pastor about Paul ONLY? ***For your obedience*** (this is not meaning ‘obedience in baptism’ [there is no such thing, by the way], the obedience here is marking these churches and staying away!) ***is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf***: (we not only want to please the Lord, of course, but I like to think after what Paul went through in his life, that I heeded his words and warnings, too) ***but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil***. (so, do I think going to a church that doesn’t preach Paul properly, etc. is evil and me ‘not’ going to the average Bible believing-claiming church is good? Yes - exactly! Just me doing this small segment in this bible study article proves to myself once again – I am doing the right thing by NOT going.)

*Man, that was a lot to consider, just in those few verses, eh! But, let’s keep going!*

**II Timothy 2:15-19 - *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.*** (look at what ‘christians’ consider to be ‘godly’ these days – clothing? Music? Language? Entertainment? etc.) ***And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his***. (I ask, are only those that know the RISEN Saviour His? How about all the rest? How about the Great Commission crowd following the Jewish Doctrine of the gospels? Are all those other bibles still the ‘word of truth’ – the ‘gospel of their salvation’ – the ‘sword of the Spirit’?) ***And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ*** (not simply the name of Jesus – like you hear so many say these days…) ***depart from iniquity.*** (Apparently sitting under false teaching, you know, those good words and fair speeches that are considered profane and vain babblings, is described as ‘iniquity’ and that is from what we are to depart!)

**I Timothy 6:20,21 *- O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings***, (we saw in **2:15** that anything that is not rightly divided and in its proper place within the Scriptures is considered profane and vain babblings!) ***and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith***. (notice the word ‘***the***’ – it isn’t just ‘erred from faith,’ it is ***erred concerning*** ***THE faith***). ***Grace be with thee. Amen.*** (Of course God’s grace is with us and will be with us eternally. It wasn’t that way during the gospels and it won’t be that way during the Tribulation – see what Paul says to the Jews in **Hebrews 4:16**, NOT to the Gentilesand also see what Peter says about that in **I Peter 1:13**! For now, God’s grace is even with the lost person – but alas, only for now! see **Romans 2:5**)

While I am writing this, I just have to take a break – this stuff is so spectacular –

so magnificent – so thrilling – so exciting… and yet so hard for many people!

I simply must get up and move around!

*That happens a lot when I do these sorts of studies!*

**Withdraw From Such:**

**I Timothy 6:3-5 *- If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words,*** (of course we can refer to those modern bible version pastors, authors, etc.) ***even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ,*** (that is obviously referring to what Paul writes – as he is the one to whom the NT was directed to!) ***and to the doctrine which is according to godliness*** (and Paul is the ONLY apostle who teaches the doctrine of godliness)***; He is proud*** (see **Romans 11:25** to see that this conceit / pride is based on NOT knowing Paul’s teachings!), ***knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,*** (have you ever tried to tell these guys about following the risen Saviour through Paul only?) ***Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness*** (numbers - how many people go their church – how big and fancy is their building – how much money do they make – how much fun do they have, etc If they claim to be blessed from God, they believe that it is because of what THEY do in their own lives as well as at their church!) ***: from such withdraw thyself.*** (There ya go – **withdraw**!!)

**II Timothy 3:5-7 – (vs 1 *- … in the last days…) …Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth***. (boy, could I preach awhile on these verses. A ‘form of godliness’ – but powerless, even though they talk about having the power of God in their life – they have no idea what that means nor do they really experience what they think it means! And ‘silly women’? Duh! Look at ALL the cults – all started by women! Look at who really runs the family these days! And then there is ‘education’ but not learning anything. Yup, I could talk on this stuff forever!).

(…and yes, while we are not in the ‘last days,’ we certainly can see those days fast approaching as more and more of those warnings geared to the last days are coming around the corner one by one!)

**II Thessalonians 3:6 *- Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly*** (is their Christian walk based on the Beatitudes or Paul’s manner of life. Is it based on the Jewish law of the gospels or the grace of God from Paul’s teachings?)***, and not after the tradition which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;*** (“US” means Paul and his followers / helpers. See **Romans 16** for some specific names. Note in**verse 15**that we are not to consider them our enemy, but have you also noticed, **WE** become their enemy, instead! ***Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?*  Galatians 4:16**)

**Neither Give Heed:**

**I Timothy 1:4 *- Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do***. (Do you remember all the questions you had when you sat under the Great Commission baptistic, etc. pastors? And then, when you first heard of following Paul ONLY that you had ALL your answers answered almost instantly?)

**Purge**

**II Timothy 2:20,21 *- But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.***

That set of verses speak for themselves, eh!

**Reject**

**Titus 3:10,11 *- A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;*** (we all have tried – and still continue to try, but there does come a time to reject and move on! As nice as they are, God considers them a heretick – at times that is hard to accept, but accept it!)

**Have No Company**

**II Thessalonian 3:14,15 *- And if any man obey not our word by this epistle*** (‘THIS’ is, of course, referring to Paul’s epistles! – and not just ‘*believe*’ but ‘***obey***’)***, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed*** (it seems that WE are the ones they want to feel ashamed. I am not ashamed, nor will I ever be ashamed of the risen Saviour AND of Paul. See **II Timothy 1:8a *–*** what a great verse! It is them who should be ashamed for rejecting and/or mixing the teachings of the risen Saviour. And sadly, it appears to be harder for us to choose to have no company with them than it is for them towards us. They can drop us in a heartbeat – especially if we don’t go with them in their way!). ***Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother*** - **Galatians 4:16** (and believe me, if you do ‘***note that man***, then he/she will treat you like you are their enemy – no matter how nice you are to them as you try to speak the truth in love!).

**Be Not Partakers:**

**Ephesians 5:6-11 *- Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.***

That can be understood with no question and doubt - and is as plain and simple as a blizzard in North Dakota in the wintertime!

**Mark:**

**Romans 16:17-19 *- Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*** (and yet, they accuse us of causing divisions – because truthfully, we are… but only in divisions and offences contrary to the apostles doctrine from the gospels along with James, John, Peter and Jude)***; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*** (I was there once – the simple minded guy falling for the good words and fair speeches of all of my previous pastors) ***For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.***

**Cast Off – Have No Fellowship**

**Ephesians 5:11 - *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*** (This verse speaks for itself, don’t you think?) (Apparently, however, it is a hard thing to deal with the term, “***works of darkness***.” Is your local ‘church’ actually a ‘*work of darkness’*?)

**Rebuke:**

**Titus 1:13-16 *- This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables,*** (and when I first read this, it boinged in my mind instantly – the great commission being preached today is nothing but a Jewish fable!) ***and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.*** (that is serious, is it not?) ***Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*** (that is another set of words that is tough to swallow – I mean, those folks in that people friendly church – your friends who simply reject Paul and the teachings of the risen Savour - and that wonderful pastor and his ‘wonderful’ wife – all professing that they know God… but in works they deny him. Their mind and conscience is defiled! They are abominable, disobedient and every good work is reprobate – what a waste, isn’t it!)

Bonus at the end of this trail:

**Does your pastor:**

* **Follow Paul** in **Ephesians 4:11-16** for his local church purpose and objectives and reject **Acts 2:41-47** as having anything to do with ‘church’ today?
* **Follow Paul** in **Ephesians 6:21,22** when he states: ***But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.***
* **Follow Paul** when he states in **I Corinthians 4:17** - For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.
* **Follow Paul** in **II Timothy 4:2-**4 knowing what the truth will do to his congregation?
* Follow Paul in Titus chapter two, as he teaches ‘sound doctrine in detail and for all age groups?
* **Follow Paul** when he teaches to women the truth **in I Timothy 2:9-14** along with **I Timothy 2:5:11-14** – as well as to men **I Timothy 6:1,2** and all the other verses that tend to ‘hit home.’
* **Follow Paul** when it comes to teaching the goodness of God according to **Romans 2:4** and how THAT is what would lead people to the risen Saviour – NOT the severity of God which was reserved for the JEWS ONLY!
* **Follow Paul** teaching the dispensation of grace, according to **Ephesians 3.**
* **Follow Paul** teaching that the people should follow Paul’s walk, according to **Philippians 4:9**, teaching that if they do, then the God of peace shall be with them?

If not, then you ought not be going to that church!

You then ask, “***What then shall I do if I do leave my church***?”

See **Part V** and don’t panic - I will try to make some suggestions to help you and your family along! It really isn’t that scary – but it has everything to with the riches of understanding and having a peace that passeth all understanding and experiencing freedom and liberty - FINALLY – and without any guilt! It is OK in God’s eyes today!

**And you certainly are not alone making that decision!**

There are many of us at

 [**www.scatteredchristians.org**](http://www.scatteredchristians.org) and [**www.paulson1611rd.org**](http://www.paulson1611rd.org)

that made that decision and do not regret it!

It isn’t easy – but it is the right thing to do!

If you have already made that decision,

hopefully your decision was reinforced in this series!

And if you don’t want to make that decision – we all understand…

…it really isn’t any of our business, anyway.

There is so much more I could say – but that is what the websites are for.

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Now, **Part V** & the conclusion will give you a few suggestions on what to do if you choose to leave your local assembly / church.