

# PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path"  
Psalm 119:104*

May 22, 2016

## The Perfect Church

by Frank Himmel

The perfect church is the perfect size: not too large, not too small. It has perfect togetherness: everyone is close friends who share many daily activities together. The perfect church is made up of perfect workers: every member is a perfect example, always busy visiting and teaching, never missing an opportunity to encourage others. Every member takes his or her turn teaching a Bible class, and every student (adults as well as children) always comes to class prepared.

The perfect church has perfect leaders. The elders are all perfectly qualified on every point and are excellent teachers. They never miss a thing. While few adverse situations arise in the perfect church, when they do the elders handle each one flawlessly. The deacons are models of efficiency. And the preacher? Why...he's perfect! Every sermon is a home run. He is just the right age (no matter how long he has been there), and he has a perfect family. He is at the same time deep, simple, entertaining, practical, and never long-winded.

The perfect church consistently has perfect worship: perfect attendance, spirited singing, eloquent prayers, and moving Lord's Supper remembrances. There is deep reverence, yet all are excited. There is never a distraction, no one wanders in and out. Every visitor is warmly greeted and always wants to return.

The perfect church has the perfect building. It is nice but not gaudy, it is always the right temperature for everyone, it is conveniently located no matter where you live, and it is paid for.

There is perfect unity in the perfect church: no one disagrees, there are no offenses, and there are no signs of spiritual immaturity, even in young Christians.



### Where?

Where is this perfect church located? I don't know. It isn't in the Bible. The Jerusalem church had many good qualities, but they also had a couple of famous liars (Acts 5:1-11), and soon after that incident they had a disagreement because some members were being neglected (6:1). Antioch was a fine congregation, yet some of them exhibited racial prejudice (Galatians 2:11-13).

Galatia? Some in the churches there deserted Christ for a different gospel (Galatians 1:6-8). Philippi? Two sisters didn't get along (Philippians 4:2). Thessalonica? Some of its members were lazy and needed to be disciplined (2 Thessalonians 3:6). Corinth? No church was more imperfect (see the entire book of 1 Corinthians). Ephesus? They left their first love (Revelation 2:4). Several other churches addressed in Revelation 2-3 compromised, went to sleep, or were lukewarm. ▶

If there was no perfect church under the guidance of the apostles, it should be no surprise that there is no perfect church today. You see, the church is people, and people aren't perfect!

**Application**

The point of this article is not that we should ignore or even minimize church problems.

The Lord and His apostles certainly did not do that!

We must correct them to the extent we can. The point is to suggest a few practical reminders for us all. Among them...



*Do not look for a perfect church.* No one would admit he is doing that, yet some habitually leave and go to another congregation at the first sign of trouble. While there may be times when a change is necessary, it should be thought-provoking that there is no example in the New Testament of someone changing churches because he was dissatisfied about something.

*Do not try to redesign the church.* Deficient or domineering elderships do not justify majority rule or other substitutes. Dull sermons do not justify a new message (the problem is sometimes dull hearers [Hebrews 5:11]). Ineffective singing and prayers do not justify revamping worship to suit us: applause, testimonials, singing groups, women speakers, etc. Lack of conversions (regardless of the reason) does not justify carnal add-ons. Lack of brethren getting

together does not justify church dinners, recreation, etc. The church is perfectly designed: God designed it! The problem is in our execution.

*Do all that you can to make the church what it ought to be:* live a godly life, worship regularly and fervently, grow, care, work, be a peacemaker, etc.

*Be patient with others.* Not all grow at the same rate, not all are capable of the same things, not all approach work or react to situations the same. "So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you" (Colossians 3:12-13).

*Do not use imperfections as an excuse.* My faults don't excuse yours, and yours don't excuse mine. "No one is perfect," but that doesn't lower God's standard. Each of us must continually work to be the best we can be in God's service. And church problems never justify someone quitting altogether. Remember, Jesus, not the local church, is the Savior. He is Lord, and we must serve Him regardless of the challenges before us.

"We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone" (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

"But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good" (2 Thessalonians 3:13).

**Service Leaders for the Week**

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	David Gray	Chris Brooks	Adam Gibson
SONG LEADER	William Lefort	Gary Hagler	Gary Hagler
OPENING PRAYER	Carlos Garcia	Bruce Williams	
LORD'S SUPPER			
BREAD	Chad Brock	Chad Brock	
CUP	Greg Winget	Greg Winget	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Paul Richmond		
SERMON/INVITATION	Steven Turner	Brian Wilson	Greg Winget
CLOSING PRAYER	Mark Clifton	David Gray	Adam Wilson