

I Am a Church Member Chp. 6: I Will Treasure Church Membership as a Gift

~ Chapter 6 Summary for Devotions, Bible Study or Small Group

Our very salvation is a gift from God.

Read: Romans 3:23, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Acts 3:19

We have been given the gift of salvation, the gift of Christ's work for us and the gift of salvation free from our own works.

Read: Ephesians 2:8-9

This gift of free Salvation (the high cost was paid by Christ), includes the following: - eternal salvation

- forgiveness of sins

- adoption by God the Father

- the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

- becoming a part of the body of Christ

When we accept this gift, we become a part of Christ's body (I Corinthians 12:27-28)

Becoming part of Christ's body does NOT include a legalistic obligation. It is not about country club perks. It is not a license to entitlements.

It is a gift; a gift from God. This gift is to be treasured with great joy and anticipation.

Some may argue that we become part of the universal church, the body of all believers in Christ, across eternity. These might argue that this excludes the need for participation in the local church.

However, scripture demonstrates the validity and need for the local church. Consider the fact that the majority of the New Testament books are written about, and to, local churches. The book of Acts mentions no less than 18 local churches. Consider also the New Testament books written directly to local churches: Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and 1 & 2 Thessalonians.

Four of Paul's books were written to individuals in local churches: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus & Philemon. The Bible gives a clear message of the roles of individuals in specific local churches.

We have been given a gift. Beyond our eternal salvation through Christ, we have been given the gift of church membership (in the Body of Christ and a local body of imperfect, yet forgiven believers).

We must treasure that gift. We must express our genuine gratitude and appreciate for this gift.

True appreciation, of any gift, results in a response to the giver. Our perspective of the giver and the gift also change as a result of true gratitude.

Our perspective of service to God, our church and each other, also change as we seek to genuinely respond to the joy of our salvation and the joy of our membership in our church.

Membership and service becomes a privilege, rather than an obligation or right.

The Sixth Pledge:

This membership is a gift. When I received the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, I became a part of the body of Christ. I soon thereafter identified with a local body and was baptized. And now am humbled and honored to serve and to love others in our church. I pray that I will never take my membership for granted, but see it as a gift and an opportunity to serve others and to be a part of something so much greater than any one person or member.