



Our Church Covenant

By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

*A Study of the Baptist
Church Covenant*

*Given in sermon delivery
2003 - 2004*

Our Church Covenant

I am thankful to be able to have been pastor of First Baptist Church of Harrison, Ohio, for now going on 22 years. This has been a wonderful experience for me, both personally and educationally. I am indebted to the members of this church down through the years who have stayed by my side and have supported every effort that I have endeavored.

This study was recently completed on our church covenant. Many Baptist church members do not even realize that their church has a covenant. It is a shame that such a good document is hidden (purposefully or unpurposefully) from the members of a Baptist Church.

As I have stated in the last lesson of this series, a church covenant is not the word of God and is not to be used as such. If anything in this covenant is contrary to scripture, it behooves us to strike it out and disassociate ourselves from that statement. We believe and practice from God's word, not from a church covenant.

If this study can be helpful to you, may God be blessed and praised. I have tried to simply bring to our minds some things that we need to remember and do as Baptist church members.

Feel free to copy and use this outline without any contact from me. Please, however, copy it without any changes. This is to protect my being misrepresented in my beliefs. Please give me respect in this.

May God bless his churches throughout the time of the world, and may we stay faithful to our covenant as a church of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Pastor Ronnie Wolfe
March 15, 2004

Our Church Covenant

Lesson 1 – By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe - Nov. 26, 2003

*Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive
the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour . . .*

I. “*Having been led ...*”

- A. Definition: to go before or with to show the way; to influence or induce; to guide in direction, course, action, opinion, etc.; bring.
- B. We do not come into covenant relationship as a people without the leadership of God.
- C. No one would on his own bind himself into a relationship with a people who believe and trust in Jesus Christ and who desire to live for the Lord and to propagate his word unless he were led by God to do so.
- D. Man does not have in himself the will or the desire or even the ability to truly and faithfully commit to such a life.
- E. Luke 6:39 *And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?*
- F. Acts 2:41 *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added [unto them] about three thousand souls.*
- G. Our Lord will eventually lead us into a wonderful place: Revelation 7:17 *For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*
- H. Romans 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*
- I. Galatians 5:18 *But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.*

II. “*As we believe ...*”

- A. Faith is the most important thing for a Christian. That is the reason Jesus called his people “believers.” – Acts 5:14 *And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)*
- B. It doesn’t matter what the world may believe. It matters what God’s people believe.
- C. With faith in Christ, we can overcome the harsh beliefs of socialism, materialism, secularism, modernism, rationalism, communism, and other dangerous doctrines.
- D. Galatians 3:26 *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*
- E. Colossians 2:5 *For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.*
- F. Christ is the object of our faith. Without Christ Jesus as our Lord, there would be no reason for us to believe. We would have nothing in which to establish our faith.
- G. Each of us as members of a Baptist church believes that God has led us into this covenant which we are studying at this time.
- H. But then another part of this covenant shows that our faith is to something besides just a church covenant.

III. "By the Holy Spirit of God ..."

- A. We were led, and we believe, but not without the aid of the Holy Spirit.
- B. He is the one who leads us
 - 1. Romans 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*
 - 2. Even Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit.
 - 3. John 16:13 *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*
- C. No other but the Holy Spirit can lead us.
 - 1. Zechariah 4:6 *Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This [is] the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.*
 - 2. Luke 16:13 *No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*
 - 3. We receive the Holy Spirit by asking: Luke 11:13 *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall [your] heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*
 - 4. 1 Thessalonians 4:8 *He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.*

IV. "To receive the Lord Jesus Christ ..."

- A. 1 Corinthians 15:3 *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*
- B. Yes, we have received the Holy Spirit.
- C. We received the Spirit at salvation
 - 1. Romans 8:9 *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*
 - 2. Galatians 3:2 *This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*
- D. The church received the Spirit in a special way on the Day of Pentecost
 - 1. John 7:39 *(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given]; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*
- E. The world cannot receive this Spirit
 - 1. John 14:17 *[Even] the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

V. "As our Saviour ..."

- A. Isaiah 49:26 *And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD*

[am] thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

- B. Jesus was born a Saviour: Luke 2:11 *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*
- C. He is the Saviour of the world: John 4:42 *And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard [him] ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*
- D. As Saviour, he gives repentance: Acts 5:31 *Him hath God exalted with his right hand [to be] a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*
- E. He is the promised Saviour: Acts 13:23 *Of this man's seed hath God according to [his] promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:*
- F. He is the coming Saviour: Philippians 3:20 *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

Our Church Covenant

Lesson 2 - By Pastor Ronnie – Dec. 3, 2003

*... and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ...*

- I. *“On the profession of our faith ...”*
- A. Our profession is before witnesses, our public profession
 - 1. 1 Timothy 6:12 *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*
 - B. Our profession is one of thankfulness and pride, not being ashamed of Him.
 - 1. Matthew 10:32 *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.*
 - C. Our profession is with the mouth.
 - 1. Romans 10:10 *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*
- II. *“Having been baptized ...”*
- A. Every believer in Jesus Christ should be scripturally baptized, confessing their sins.
 - 1. Mark 1:5 *And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.*
 - 2. This is also a public profession or confession before the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - B. The Holy Spirit leads us to baptism through the study and preaching of God’s word.
 - C. Only believers are baptized
 - 1. Acts 8:36 *And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*
 - D. Believers are baptized into one body of believers
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 12:13 *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether [we be] Jews or Gentiles, whether [we be] bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*
 - 2. So, the Holy Spirit leads us to be baptized into one local body of believers.
 - E. The authority for baptism rests in the local church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 1. Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

- F. We are buried with Christ (symbolically) in baptism”
1. Rom. 6:3 *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*
 2. We are buried and raised in his likeness – Rom. 6:5 *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*
- G. Some disagree that baptism is the door into the church. Let’s notice how a person comes into a church.
1. The church, someone in the church, or some other believer witnesses to the sinner. That is the first step to the way into the church.
 2. The sinner confesses Jesus Christ as Savior, thus making him a proper candidate for scriptural baptism. That the second step to the way into the church.
 3. Thirdly, the church agrees to use their authority to baptize that sinner who has been saved by the grace of God. That is the third step to the way into the church.
 4. Then the candidate is baptized. This is the fourth step to the way into the church.
 5. The church, by total agreement, accepts the baptized person into that particular local church, because they have sanctioned his baptism and agreed to accept him upon his baptism, which is required for church membership. This acceptance is done by a vote of the church.
 6. Church membership, then, is entered by a covenant relationship between the members. The new member is joined by covenant relationship with the other members of the church.

III. “*In the name of the Father ...*”

- A. Matthew 28:19 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father ...*
- B. We are baptized in the name of the Father, because John 6:39 says, *And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*
- C. We are baptized in the name of the Father, because of John 6:37 *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*
- D. We are baptized in the name of the Father, because of John 10:30 *“I and [my] Father are one.”*
- E. We are baptized in the name of the Father, because in Luke 22:42 Jesus said, *... not my will, but thine, be done.*
- F. God the Father is intimately involved in our salvation and our welfare.
- G. We are even encouraged to pray in Matthew 6:9 *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

IV. “*And of the Son ...*”

- A. We are baptized in the name of the Son, because he showed us the way to be baptized: Matthew 3:15 *And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer [it to be so] now: for thus it*

becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

1. If we are to fulfill all righteousness, then we are to be baptized; because Jesus said so.
 2. Our life is a life of righteousness: 1 John 3:7 *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*
 3. When we are baptized, it is to a newness of life, a righteous life.
- B. We are baptized in the name of the Son, because he is our Savior, and we are symbolizing his Gospel by doing so.
1. We have already noticed Romans 6:4 *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*
- C. We are baptized in the name of the Son, because it is our faith in Him alone which has saved us, and baptism shows that.
1. Acts 8:12 *But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*

V. “*And of the Holy Ghost.*”

- A. We are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, because we have been led to do so by the Holy Ghost.
1. 1 Corinthians 12:13 *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether [we be] Jews or Gentiles, whether [we be] bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*
- B. We are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost, because water baptism foreshadowed the baptism of the Spirit of God on the church and reminds us of that same baptism in the Spirit today as we look back upon it as it came to the church in the New Testament.
1. Matthew 3:11 *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and [with] fire:*
 2. We notice in this same verse that water baptism is a foreshadowing of the coming baptism of fire upon the lost as they suffer in the Lake of Fire eternally: “*and with fire.*”

Conclusion

So, baptism is a part of the church covenant. As we are baptized, we are covenanting together as members of a local assembly to enact the principles laid down in the New Testament for the Lord’s churches, and we are promising to carrying on his work with the restrictions and commandments of Christ as he has laid them down in the New Testament.

We are brothers and sisters together in the love of Jesus Christ, with the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the blessing of our Father in heaven.

What a fellowship; what a joy divine.

Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Our Church Covenant

Lesson 3 – By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe – Dec. 10, 2003

*... we do now in the presence of God, angels, and
this assembly, most joyfully enter into covenant
with one another, as one body in Christ.*

I. “In the presence of God”

A. The angels stand in the presence of God

1. Luke 1:19 *And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.*

B. Jesus Christ entered into the presence of God

1. Hebrews 9:24 *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, [which are] the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*

C. We are always in the presence of God

1. Psalm 139:7 *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*
2. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord. Genesis 4:16 *And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden*
3. Jonah tried to go out from the presence of the Lord: Jonah 1:3 *But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.*
4. Zephaniah 1:7 *Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD [is] at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.*
 - a. We are to be amazed and terrified at the presence of the Lord.
 - b. Just knowing that he is near gives us comfort and also a reverential fear to be in the presence of such a holy thing as God.
5. In making our covenant together as a church, we are doing so in the presence of God. It is not as though God is far away and we are making this covenant among ourselves alone. God is entering into this covenant, also.
6. God is our provider, our King, our Lord. Jesus Christ is our Savior and Head. We are in his presence.

- II. “... *in the presence ... of angels*”
- A. 1 Peter 1:12 *Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.*
 - B. 1 Corinthians 11:10 *For this cause ought the woman to have power on [her] head because of the angels.*
 - C. In this covenant, God is watching, and even the angels are watching. This, then, should be a very solemn occasion.
 - D. When you become a member of a New Testament Baptist church, you are entering into a solemn covenant with a very specific group of people, people who have been saved by God’s grace without the works of the Law, people who have confessed their sins and have been baptized to show forth Christ’s death, burial and resurrection, and a people who have already entered into a solemn covenant with one another.
 - E. This is a true church of the Lord, Jesus Christ.
- III. “... *in the presence ... of this assembly*”
- A. Most of us already know that the Greek word which is translated “church” in the Bible is the word EKKLESIA, which means “assembly.”
 - B. We as a church are in covenant relationship as a local assembly of believers in Jesus Christ. The members of the local church must be in agreement with the covenant when they are organized and as they receive new members into the congregation.
 - C. So, church membership is voluntary on the part of the person coming into the membership and on the part of the people who are already members.
 - D. A public profession is made in the presence of a local assembly.
 - E. Baptism is performed in the presence of a local assembly.
 - F. The work of the church is done in the presence of the local assembly.
 - G. Communion is taken in the presence of a local assembly.
 - H. We are responsible only to our own local assembly.
- IV. “... *most joyfully enter into covenant with one another*”
- A. Nehemiah 8:10 says in part “... *the joy of the Lord is your strength.*”
 - B. Our covenant relationship with Jesus Christ in our salvation is a very delightful condition. It is “joy unspeakable” – 1 Peter 1:8 *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see [him] not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:*
 - C. John 13:17 *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*
 - D. James 5:11 *Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*
 - E. 1 Peter 3:14 *But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy [are ye]: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;*
 - F. 1 Peter 4:14 *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy [are ye]; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.*

G. Our covenant includes all of the things just mentioned. So, our covenant relationship should be a happy one, a joyful one.

V. “... *as one body in Christ.*”

A. 1 Corinthians 12:13 *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether [we be] Jews or Gentiles, whether [we be] bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

B. Romans 12:5 *So we, [being] many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

C. 1 Corinthians 10:16 *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? This is the physical body of Christ.*

D. 1 Corinthians 12:27 *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

E. Ephesians 4:12 *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

F. Eph. 1:22 *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

G. Ephesians 5:30 *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*

H. Colossians 1:24 *Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:*

Conclusion

As we think of this covenant we have made one with another, we must remember that it was done in the presence of God, the angels and the local assembly. We must remember that it is done joyfully. It is a covenant one with another, not with the world or religion at large. This covenant was entered with the idea and knowledge that this local assembly is “one body of Christ.”

Our Church Covenant

Lesson 4 - By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe - Dec. 17, 2003

*We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit,
to walk together in Christian love ...*

- I. “*We engage ...*”
- A. The word “engage” has one meaning as: “to bind, as by pledge, promise, contract, or oath; make liable: *He engaged himself to repay his debt within a month.*”
 - B. As a church, we bind ourselves together by a pledge, promise or contract and make ourselves liable one to the other.
 - C. Jesus said in Matthew 18:18 *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*
 - D. This is a binding relationship in church membership.
 - E. We have engaged ourselves, or bound ourselves together. to carry on the work of the Lord in preaching the Gospel to every creature, observing the ordinances of the church, performing good works as a result of our salvation in Christ, and, as we shall see shortly, in loving one another.
 - F. This engagement is for every member, not just a few.
 - G. In time of war, if there is not a full engagement of troops at the time of fighting, the army will lose the battle. So it is with the church. If we are not all in full engagement of the work we are to do in the church, the church will lose the battle. We will not accomplish what God has intended for us to do.
- II. “*...therefore, ...*”
- A. The meaning of this English word is “in consequence of that; as a result; consequently.”
 - B. We engage in consequence of the first paragraph of our Covenant. We have received the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; we have a profession of our faith; we have been baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and we have entered into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.
 - C. We have a great cause, because our cause stems from our relationship with Jesus Christ directly. We have a Master in heaven to whom we will answer and to whom we owe everything of any value at all (See Eph. 6:9).
- III. “*... by the aid of the Holy Spirit ...*”
- A. We have already talked some about the Holy Spirit, who led us to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior.
 - B. But here we find that he continues to lead us and to help us as we serve him.
 - C. The Holy Spirit and the believer
 - 1. We cannot abide alone: John 15:4 *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am*

the vine, ye [are] the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast [them] into the fire, and they are burned.

2. Washed: Titus 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*
3. Sealed: Ephesians 4:30 *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*
4. Temple: 1 Corinthians 6:19 *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [which is] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*
5. Quickened mortal bodies: Romans 8:11 *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

D. Holy Spirit and the Church

1. Power: Acts 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*
2. Baptized: Acts 1:5 *For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*
3. Temple: Ephesians 2:21 *In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:*

IV. "... to walk together in Christian love ..."

A. We are in one body:

1. 1 Cor. 12:13 *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body ...*
2. 1 Corinthians 12:27 *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

B. We are to walk together

1. We must be in agreement: Amos 3:3 *Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*
2. We are to walk in newness of life: Romans 6:4 *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*
3. We are to walk honestly: Romans 13:13 *Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.*
4. We are to walk in the Spirit: Galatians 5:25 *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*
5. We are to walk in good works: Ephesians 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*
6. We are to walk in love: Ephesians 5:2 *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*
7. This brings us to our last point.

C. We are to walk in Christian love

1. With one mind: Philippians 1:27 *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*
2. John 13:34 *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*
3. 1 John 3:11 *For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.*
4. 1 John 3:14 *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not [his] brother abideth in death.*
5. Titus 3:2 *To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, [but] gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.*

Conclusion

So, we are to be devoted to one another in the body of Christ—his church. We must have unity in the church. We must have one mind in the church. We must have love in the church. We cannot please God without these.

James 3:14 *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*

Hebrews 12:14 *Follow peace with all [men], and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble [you], and thereby many be defiled;*

There must be a danger of this root of bitterness springing up, so we have to be on guard for ourselves to “live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18).

Our Church Covenant

Lesson 5 - By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe - Jan. 7, 2004

“... to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality:”

I. “To strive ...”

- A. We all know what the word “strive” means. Here is a dictionary definition: **1.** to exert oneself vigorously; try hard: *He strove to make himself understood.*
- B. In 2 Timothy 2:24 we have the word “strive” used like this: *And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all [men], apt to teach, patient,* In this verse, the meaning is be combative, a quarrel, a war of words, etc. We are not to strive in this way.
- C. In 2 Timothy 2:5 we have a different word translated “strive.” *And if a man also strive for masteries, [yet] is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.* This word means “to endure, suffer, or contend for a prize.”
- D. Many people today can work really hard at some things, but most cannot endure. Some begin a job with good vigor and vitality, but they cannot finish the job. That is because they do not strive to do the work in the sense of the meaning “to endure.”
- E. I think the writer of this covenant is speaking of endurance, and that is what we need today.

II. “... for the advancement of this church ...”

- A. The dictionary definition of “advancement” is **1.** an act of moving forward.
- B. So, we must strive for the “moving forward” of this church.
- C. If our church is not moving forward, what direction is it moving?
- D. Some churches just stand still and do not move at all.
 1. Rev. 3:1-3 *And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*
 2. To the Laodacian church he says in Rev. 3:15-16 *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*
- E. Some churches are going backwards.
 1. Jeremiah 7:24 *But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels [and] in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.*
 2. The church at Ephesus in Rev. 2:3 – *thou hast left thy first love.*
 3. The church at Pergamos in Rev. 2:14 – *thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam*

4. The church at Thyatira in Rev. 2:20 – *thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.*
- F. This advancement is for “this church.”
 1. We are not in the business of advancing the ministries of others.
 2. The Bible teaches that we should bring our tithes into the storehouse, which is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 3. The Bible teaches us that we should work together in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. He tells us that it is in the church that we give him the glory – Eph. 3:21.

III. “... *in knowledge* ...”

- A. Colossians 2:3 *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*
- B. We spend years learning to read and write and to speak.
- C. We spend many years learning a trade or a profession.
- D. But most Christians do not spend nearly enough time learning the word of God.
- E. The Bible says that the church of the Lord is the pillar and ground of the truth – 1 Timothy 3:15.
- F. This is the place where God has prescribed that we learn about him.
- G. If you go to a secular school to study the Bible, you will not learn what the Bible says. You may learn some philosophy about the Bible or some so-called history about the Bible, but you will be disappointed if you are looking at a true and genuine look at what the Bible really teaches. Most college professors are interested only in destroying the validity and the trustworthiness of the Bible.
- H. But the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ are in the business of preaching and teaching the word of God. This is where faith in the word of God is strong, and the desire to know and teach a proper interpretation of the Bible is practiced.
- I. We covenant together as members of this church to advance in knowledge of the word of God.

IV. In “... *holiness* ...”

- A. Holiness is the state of being holy or sanctified.
- B. The dictionary definition of “holy” is: **3.** saintly; godly; pious; devout: *a holy life.* **4.** having a spiritually pure quality: *a holy love.*
- C. When we joined the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, we covenanted together to be holy.
- D. Leviticus 20:7 *Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I [am] the LORD your God.*
- E. Peter says in 1 Peter 1:16 *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*
- F. Hebrews 12:14 *Follow peace with all [men], and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*
 1. Hebrews tells us that we are to “follow ... holiness.” This should be the desire of every church member.
 2. Instead of making excuses for all the sinful things we do, let us endeavor, endure or strive to be holy as God is holy.
 3. I know we are all sinners and cannot reach perfection, but we can all be holier than we

are. We should strive together as a church to be holy.

V. In "... *comfort* ..."

- A. Isaiah 40:1 *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.*
- B. We have the comfort of the Holy Spirit – Acts 9:31 *Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.*
- C. We have the comfort of the Scriptures – Romans 15:4 *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*
- D. We have the comfort of one another -- 1 Thessalonians 4:18 *Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

VI. "To *promote* ..."

- A. The dictionary definition of "promote" is: **1.** to help or encourage to exist or flourish; further:
- B. With this definition, then, we are to "help or encourage" our church "to exist or flourish."
- C. Many church members are grumblers and trouble-makers. They want only to start trouble and cause confusion. They always want their way.
- D. We are not here to get our way or to grumble or hinder the work of the Lord.
- E. We have covenanted together in the church to "promote" the church. We are to help the church and encourage the church to flourish, to go forward and not backward or even to stay in the same place.
- F. We can promote our church by telling others about it.
- G. We can promote our church by attending regularly.
- H. We can promote our church by speaking highly of our church.
- I. We can promote our church by praying for the church.

VII. "*Its prosperity* ..."

- A. We are to promote the church's prosperity.
- B. We are not here just for money, but it takes money to carry on the work of the church.
- C. People who are always complaining about how much money the church gets or has or spends usually do not give much, or maybe not any money to the church.
- D. In 2003 First Baptist Church gave \$23,220 to for missionary support. Isn't that wonderful?
- E. We could not have done that if people had not been willing to give, to support the prosperity of the church.
- F. But we do not need only money; we need workers, prayers, helpers, people with talents and knowledge about a variety of things.
- G. All of these things help to prosper the church.
- H. We covenanted together to promote the prosperity of the church.

VIII. Its “*spirituality.*”

- A. The dictionary definition of “spiritual” is: *of or pertaining to the spirit or soul, as distinguished from the physical nature*
- B. We are so faithful to take care of our bodies and our material needs and yet so lax in taking care of our spiritual needs.
- C. So many things come at us in this material world that we live constantly taking care of those things, but we need to remember what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:19 *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*
- D. We are all spiritual beings, and we need spiritual exercise and spiritual food.
- E. We have promised (or covenanted together) in our church to promote the spirituality of our church.
- F. How can we do this?
 - 1. By living a holy life in the presence of the world.
 - 2. By carrying our Bibles to church and using them
 - 3. By picking up a song book and singing the songs with the congregation.
 - 4. By participating in special singing and help in classes and with the young people and many other things.
 - 5. By attending special meetings and gatherings that we have at the church.
 - 6. By talking often about the Lord and striving to understand more about him.
 - 7. By forsaking sin in our lives, repenting of our sins, and pressing forward to the good things God has for us in his service.
 - 8. To look forward to the coming of our Savior from heaven.
 - 9. By telling others how they can be saved through the grace of God by simple faith and trust in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- G. We all made this promise when we became members of this church. How faithful are we to carrying out this promise?

Our Church Covenant

Lesson #6 – Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

... to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines, ...

Introduction:

The word “sustain” means: *to keep up or keep going, as an action or process: to sustain a conversation.*

The word “promote,” remember, means to make to go forward. Compared with the word “sustain,” the idea is to go forward and to keep on going forward. In other words, “keep on keeping on.”

So, we are to keep this thing going, this church that God has put here in Harrison is to continue on to function as a church for many years to come, yea, until the Lord comes again.

The saddest thing a pastor can think is that the church he pastors may one day go out of existence or that the building where it now meets will one day be used for a storage building or even worse.

I. “... to sustain its worship; ...”

- A. The word “worship” is used in the English 102 times in the Bible.
- B. Easton’s Bible Dictionary says about worship: “Homage rendered to God which it is sinful (idolatry) to render to any created being: Exodus 34:14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name [is] Jealous, [is] a jealous God: #Ex 34:14 Isa 2:8 Such worship was refused by Peter #Ac 10:25,26 and by an angel #Re 22:8,9.”
- C. Exodus 34:14 *For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name [is] Jealous, [is] a jealous God:*
- D. Isaiah 2:8 *Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made:*
- E. Acts 10:25 *And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped [him]. 26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.*
- F. Now, the word “worship” in the Old Testament is the Hebrew SHACHAH and means “bow down, bend down, fall down, stoop or crouch.”
- G. We are to sustain worship in our church, bowing to our Savior and worshiping him with
- H. Notice 2 Chronicles 32:12 : Sennacherib said, *Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall worship before one altar, and burn incense upon it?*
 1. We are to worship before one altar, and that is before the altar of our God.
 2. We are not to worship at the altar of worldiness.
- I. Psalms 96:9 *O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.*

- J. Psalms 99:5 *Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; [for] he [is] holy.*
- K. Psalms 99:9 *Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God [is] holy.*
- L. John 4:24 *God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth.*

II. To sustain its “...ordinances; ...”

- A. Romans 13:2 *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*
- B. The word “ordinance” used in this verse means: a disposition, arrangement, ordinance
- C. A dictionary definition to the word “ordinance” is: an established rite or ceremony
- D. Baptists have two ordinances, two established ceremonies which picture the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - 1. Baptism is the first ordinance
 - a. This is an ordinance which portrays the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - b. This ordinance is important to every believer who wants to join himself to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - c. Ordinances do not save; they simply portray truths of the Bible. They have been established by Jesus himself.
 - 2. The Lord’s Supper is the second ordinance
 - a. This is an ordinance which portrays the shed blood and the broken body of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. This is a symbolism which simply shows forth but does not duplicate the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. To sustain its “... discipline; ...”

- A. A dictionary definition of “discipline” is “the system of government regulating the practice of a church as distinguished from its doctrine.”
- B. Discipline has to do, not with believing only, but with practicing what you believe.
- C. To sustain the discipline of a church means to practice what the church teaches.
- D. We have Sunday School classes to teach what we believe and how to practice what we believe.
- E. We have preaching to instruct us and remind us how to practice what we preach.
- F. Attending is not enough to keep a church going. We must practice the principles of the church in order to sustain the church as it should be.
- G. Matthew 28:19 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*
- H. The word “teach” in this verse means to “disciple” or “make disciples.”
- I. The English word disciple means “a follower” or “a pupil.”
- J. We also understand discipline as “punishment inflicted by way of correction and training.”

IV. To sustain its "... doctrines"

- A. Proverbs 4:2 *For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.*
- B. The dictionary definition of "doctrine" is: "something that is taught; teachings collectively"
- C. We as a church have covenanted together to sustain the doctrines of the church.
- D. Our doctrines are from the Bible itself. They are not men's words or thoughts or doctrines.
- E. Titus 2:1 *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:*
- F. Colossians 2:22 speaks about the "*commandments and doctrines of men.*"
- G. People say, "doctrine is not important."
- H. But the doctrines of the church are simply the teachings of the church, and we are to continue in sound doctrine.
 - 1. 2 Timothy 4:3 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*
 - 2. Titus 1:9 *Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*
- I. I love the doctrines of the book. We all should be at least mini-theologians. We should know what the Bible teaches about different subjects.
- J. Titus 1:9 *Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*

These are the things that we are to sustain in our church because of the covenant that we have made with one another. May God give us the wisdom, knowledge and will to sustain these things in our church. That is the only way that First Baptist Church can continue to have a living witness in this world.

Our Church Covenant

Lesson #7 – Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

... to give it a sacred preeminence over all human institutions; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

- I. “... to give it (the church) a sacred preeminence ...”
- A. First, What is the church?
1. It is Christ’s church
 - a. Matthew 16:18 *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*
 2. It is His assembly
 - a. The word “church” means assembly. It is a local assembly of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, covenanted together to preach the Gospel and to carry out the teaching of the word and observe the ordinances.
 3. It is the church of God
 - a. The phrase “church of God” is used eight times in the New Testament to refer to the Lord’s churches individually.
 - b. See Acts 20:28
 4. The church has Christ as its head
 - a. Ephesians 5:23 *For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*
 5. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth
 - a. 1 Timothy 3:15 *But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*
 6. The church is where Christ receives his glory
 - a. Ephesians 3:21 *Unto him [be] glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*
 7. The church is the only institution purchased by God’s own blood.
 - a. Acts 20:28 *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*
 - b. Ephesians 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*
- B. Second, the church is to have a “sacred preeminence.”
1. As the head of the church, Christ is to have the preeminence
 - a. Colossians 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all [things] he might have the preeminence.*
 2. A preeminence of membership

- a. Acts 2:47 *Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*
- 3. A preeminence of authority for mission work
 - a. Acts 11:22 *Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.*
 - b. Acts 14:23 *And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*
- 4. A preeminence of mission reporting
 - a. Acts 15:4 *And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and [of] the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.*
- 5. Such a preeminence that we should not offend the church
 - a. 1 Corinthians 10:32 *Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:*
- 6. A preeminence in edifying
 - a. 1 Corinthians 14:12 *Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual [gifts], seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.*

II. "... over all institutions of human origin ..."

A. Secular Institutions

- 1. These are organizations that have nothing to do with spiritual things.
- 2. Sometimes we make these to have preeminence in our lives and forget the importance of the Lord's church.
- 3. Jobs, sports, hobbies, entertainment, investments, even family and friends.
- 4. The church is to have preeminence over all of these.

B. Charitable Institutions

- 1. Giving to the poor is a very honorable thing.
- 2. Matthew 19:21 *Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go [and] sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come [and] follow me.*
- 3. Sometimes our giving goes beyond the church and becomes more important than the church itself.
- 4. The disciples said in Matthew 26:9 *For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.*
- 5. Feeding and helping the poor is not the church's primary purpose
 - a. 1 Timothy 5:16 *If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.*

C. Lodges

- 1. Many lodges have a religious fringe. They have done good on the humanitarian level, but they are not to replace the church.
- 2. Lodges are man-made institutions, and our covenant says that we are not to give preeminence to "institutions of human origin."
- 3. Some who are members of the Lord's churches make the church secondary to their lodge.

The is contrary to our covenant and the principles of the Bible.

4. Again we may read Ephesians 3:21 *Unto him [be] glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

D. Political Institutions

1. Many religious institutions and churches have become involved in politics, and I believe they take this too far.
2. Some churches function in the main to get certain political figures elected and to push a certain political agenda.
3. This is not honoring to the Lord. Churches are here for worship and carrying on the Great Commission, which does not include political exercises.
4. I think Jerry Falwell got himself into trouble when he began to meddle in politics and got his church involved. This became at one time the main operation of that church. Everyone knows about the Moral Majority.

E. Religious Institutions

1. There are thousands of religious institutions in America and in the world.
2. The Ecumenical Movement has tried and is trying to get all of these religious organizations together to worship the capital “O” One, which is a reference to a god; but they are not interested in worshiping the one God of the Bible.
3. We have no purpose in being a part of these organizations. They are all man-made.
4. The World Council of Churches and other organizations like it are foreign to the New Testament concept of the church.
5. We are to have fellowship in church capacity only with churches of like faith and order.
6. Jesus said in Matt. 16:18 “I will build my (kind of) church.” I want to be a part of his kind of church, not a church that has a human origin.

III. “... to contribute cheerfully and regularly ...”

A. Contribute cheerfully

1. 2 Corinthians 9:7 *Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, [so let him give]; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.*

B. Contribute regularly

1. 1 Corinthians 16:2 *Upon the first [day] of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as [God] hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*

IV. “...to the support of the ministry ...”

A. The ministry of a church is the work of the church.

B. Without money, a church is limited as to what it can do.

C. If every member were to give cheerfully and regularly, no church would have any problem meeting its expenses and giving large contributions to mission works and getting the Gospel out to the world in a greater way.

D. The Bible teaches tithing

1. Matthew 23:23 *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier [matters] of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

2. Hebrews 7:8 *And here men that die receive tithes; but there he [receiveth them], of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.*
- E. The Bible teaches offerings
1. Malachi 3:8 *Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.*
- V. To contribution to “... *the expenses of the church ...*”
- A. We have just talked about the Income of the church
 - B. Now we must talk about the Expenses of the church
 - C. Expenses are different for different churches. They include.
 1. Building expenses and maintenance
 2. Insurance
 3. Supplies
 4. Salaries
 5. Vehicles
 6. Licenses
 7. Missionary expenses
 8. Benevolences
 9. Bibles, song books
 10. Sunday School material and supplies
 11. Bible School material and supplies
 12. Food
 13. And the list goes on and on
 - D. If people do not contribute to these expenses, then we cannot do these things.
- VI. To contribute to “... *the relief of the poor ...*”
- A. Giving to the poor is not a universal job for the church.
 - B. We are to take care of our own, not the world at large.
 - C. The secular organizations and charitable organizations can do that job.
 - D. Notice some limitations.
 1. Read 1 Timothy 5:3-16
- VII. To contribution to “... *the spread of the Gospel through all nations.*”
- A. Read Matt. 28:18-20
 - B. This job is not for every Christian or just the apostles of old.
 - C. This job is for every church.
 - D. Spreading the Gospel through all nations includes the nation in which we live.
 - E. Today our nation needs the Gospel as much as any nation on the earth.
 - F. In Cuba and India, Bro. Bob Jones tells us that people are anxious to hear and receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - G. In America, people are turning away from the Gospel.
 - H. If America does not turn around, the same thing will happen here that happened in England. All of the churches that used to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, including the church

where Charles Spurgeon used to pastor, are boarded up and unused.

- I. If we are not faithful to our covenant, the same thing will happen here and around the world. Let us be faithful to our covenant that the world may hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- J. There are many ways that we can do this:
 - 1. Bible publishing
 - 2. Tract publishing
 - 3. Sending and supporting missionaries
 - 4. Being a personal witness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Church Covenant

Lesson 8 - Pastor Ronnie Wolfe - February 4, 2004

*“We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions;
to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation
of our kindred and acquaintances; ...”*

- I. *“We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; ...”*
- A. To engage means “to occupy the attention or efforts of ...”
1. We are to engage, or to occupy our attention and efforts toward God and his word.
- B. To maintain, again, means to continue with or never to cease doing something, to keep a thing in good order.
- C. The word devotion means “profound dedication; consecration.”
1. This devotion, dedication and consecration is for the family
 - a. Everyone in the home should know that Mom and Dad love the Lord.
 - b. Everyone in the home should have an example set whereby the children can see this dedication and will desire to imitate it.
 - c. See Deut. 11:18-20.
 2. This devotion, dedication and consecration is for each person privately.
 - a. Everyone should, whether anyone is watching or not, be diligent in devotion to God.
 - b. Three things are included in our devotion to God.
 - (1) Bible reading. We are to read our Bibles regularly and earnestly.
 - (a) Psalms 119:105 *Thy word [is] a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*
 - (b) Psalms 119:11 *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*
 - (c) 2 Timothy 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*
 - (d) 1 Corinthians 2:13 *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*
 - (e) 2 Peter 1:19-21 *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*
 - (f) 2 Tim. 3:16-17 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.*
 - (2) Prayer. Our daily prayers should never cease.

- (a) 1 Thessalonians 5:17 *Pray without ceasing.*
 - (b) We have the model prayer in Matt. 6:9-13.
 - (c) Hebrews 4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*
 - (d) Ephesians 3:20 *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him [be] glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*
- (3) Meditation. We must, now, meditate upon God's word, the Bible, and also upon the things which we ask God to give us.
- (a) Psalm 51:1 *Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.*
 - (b) Psalms 19:14 *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.*
 - (c) Psalms 119:97 *O how love I thy law! it [is] my meditation all the day.*
 - (d) Psalms 119:99 *I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies [are] my meditation.*

II. "To religiously educate our children ..."

A. We teach our children by example.

1. If our children do not see our wise and moral behavior, then they will mimic our unwise and immoral behavior.
2. Don't tell your children what to do; show them what to do.
3. As Adam was created in the likeness of God, we were born in the likeness of our parents and grandparents.
4. This implies that we are to be examples to our children. They will manifest many bad traits from us, but we must teach them moral living.

B. We teach our children audibly

1. When we take our Bibles and show them to the children and explain its wonderful purpose and content, we are teaching our children in a positive way.
2. We must show our children the 10 commandments.
 - a. Three of these commandments have to do with the family itself.
 - (1) The 5th – Exodus 20:12 *Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*
 - (2) The 7th – Exodus 20:14 *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*
 - (3) The 10th – Exodus 20:17 *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that [is] thy neighbour's.*
3. We must teach our children continually, because there are so many things in the world which teach our children the wrong things.
 - a. Islam is growing in our country. It teaches five sacred duties: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, a pilgrimage to Mecca, and holy war (in which, if a person dies in this holy war, he will attain paradise immediately).
 - b. Mormonism teaches polygamy, and this is a crime against the family.

- c. Divorce is an obstacle to a good family environment.
- d. Migration has contributed to the family breakdown. We can move from place to place so easily. Our families are everywhere. We do not live in the same little down our entire lives as we did many years ago.
- e. Modern industry has caused the family to be affected. We have around-the-clock shifts which keep families apart. Because of unemployment, people pack up and go to another city or state. For cheaper operating expenses, companies will move to other cities, states, or countries. Sometimes the workers go with them.
- f. The public education system is a negative influence on the family.
 - (1) Teachers are admonished to be the intelligent one; therefore, the children should listen to the teachers rather than their parents.
 - (2) Textbooks are written from a humanistic standpoint, redefining the family and putting down the traditional (biblical) family.
 - (3) God is condemned, and a more humanistic religious is taught—evolution.
 - (4) See Deut. 6:1-25

III. *“To seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; ...”*

- A. The people we know and the people we meet are sinners just as we are.
 - 1. Ecclesiastes 7:20 *For [there is] not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*
 - 2. Romans 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*
- B. All people need the Lord and will go to eternal judgment without Christ Jesus.
 - 1. John 3:36 *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*
 - 2. 2 Peter 2:9 *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:*
- C. By faith, the people we know can have eternal life
 - 1. John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*
 - 2. John 1:12 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name:*
- D. Our kindred and acquaintances can have peace with God and be assured of God’s Providence
 - 1. Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose.*
- E. To see our kindred and acquaintances saved is what we promised in this covenant
 - 1. Romans 10:1 *Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

Our Church Covenant

Lesson #9 - Pastor Ronnie Wolfe - Feb. 18, 2004,

*“... to walk circumspectly in the world;
to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements,
and exemplary in our deportment ...”*

I. “... to walk circumspectly in the world ...”

A. Walking in the World

1. Some walk in long robes (Luke 20:46)
2. Some walk in Jewry (John 7:1)
3. Some walk in darkness (John 8:12)
4. Some walk in the day (John 11:9)
5. Some walk in the night (John 11:10)
6. Some walk in their own ways (Acts 14:16)
7. Some “walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham” (Rom. 4:12)
8. Some walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4)
9. Some walk after the flesh; some walk after the Spirit (Rom. 8:4)
10. Some walk carnally as men (1 Cor. 3:3)
11. Some walk by faith; some walk by sight (2 Cor. 5:7)
12. Some walk in good works (Eph. 2:10)
13. Some walk worthy (Eph. 4:1)
14. Some walk after the Gentiles; some do not (Eph. 4:17)
15. Some walk in love (Eph. 5:2)
16. Some walk as children of light (Eph. 5:8)
17. Some walk worthy of the Lord (Col. 1:10)
18. Some walk in wisdom (Col. 4:5)
19. Some walk after his commandments (2 John 1:6)
20. Some walk in truth (3 John 1:4)
21. Some walk after their own ungodly lusts (Jude 1:18)
22. Then, some walk circumspectly (Eph. 5:15)

B. Circumspectly

1. Exodus 23:13 *And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.*
2. Ephesians 5:15 *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,*
3. Circumspectly means “looking around, watchful.”
 - a. To the church of Sardis, Jesus said in Revelation 3:2 *Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.*
 - b. Matthew 24:42 *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.*
 - c. Matthew 26:41 *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed*

[is] willing, but the flesh [is] weak.

- d. 1 Corinthians 16:13 *Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*
- II. “... *to be just in our dealings ...*”
 - A. The word “just” means “guided by truth, reason, justice, and fairness”
 - B. All of our dealings should be in truth, justice, and fairness.
 - 1. Romans 13:3 *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*
 - 2. 2 Corinthians 13:7 *Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.*
 - C. 2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if any man [be] in Christ, [he is] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*
 - D. Philippians 2:12-13 *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.*
- III. “... *faithful in our engagements ...*”
 - A. The word “engagement” means “an appointment or arrangement ... employment.”
 - 1. We engage in things all the time.
 - 2. Sometimes we are not faithful to keep our engagements, though.
 - 3. Titus 3:1 *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,*
 - 4. 1 Peter 3:15 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] ready always to [give] an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*
 - B. The word “faithful” means “strict or thorough in the performance of duty”
 - 1. Do you know of anyone who is habitually late or lazy in doing what he or she has engaged to do?
 - 2. I think we all know one or two people like that. Sometimes this cannot be helped, but a habit of lateness or laziness is not a good example for a Christian or a church member.
 - 3. When we say we are going to do something, these should not be idle words. They should be words that people can depend on.
 - 4. When it comes to serving the Lord, we should be faithful to his service, too.
 - a. I want to hear the Lord say to me: Matthew 25:21 *... Well done, [thou] good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*
 - b. 1 Corinthians 4:2 *Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*
- IV. “... *and exemplary in our deportment ...*”
 - A. The word “deportment” means “demeanor; conduct; behavior.”
 - 1. A Christian is to have an exemplary behavior.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 13:5 *Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not*

easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

- b. 1 Timothy 3:15 *But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*
- 2. Do you remember when you went to school you may have had a “deportment” grade?
 - a. 1 Timothy 4:12 *Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*
 - b. Matthew 5:16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

This little light of mine

I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Our Church Covenant

Lesson #10 - February 25, 2004 - Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

*To avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger;
to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage;
and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.*

- I. "... To avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger ..."
- A. The word "avoid"
1. It has a dictionary definition of "to keep away from; keep clear of; shun."
 2. Proverbs 4:14 *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.*
 3. Titus 3:9 *But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.*
- B. All Tattling
1. **1.** to let out secrets. **2.** to chatter, prate, or gossip.
 2. 1 Timothy 5:13 *And withal they (the younger widows) learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.*
 3. Some secrets need to be kept. We should always tell the truth, but to tell the truth does not mean to tell everything you know.
 4. We call these people "tattletale." Some people just have that personality. They love to hear and tell everything they know.
 5. A tale is defined as "a rumor or piece of gossip, often malicious or untrue."
 6. So, tattling is not just telling everything you know; sometimes it involves telling things you do not know. Sometimes our news media do this.
 7. We are to avoid all of that.
- C. All Backbiting
1. This word has two dictionary definitions: "(1) to attack the character or reputation of (a person who is not present), and (2) to speak unfavorably or slanderously of a person who is not present."
 2. Psalms 15:1 *LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*
2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. 3 [He that] backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.
 3. This is to be avoided.
- D. All Excessive Anger
1. Anger means: "a strong feeling of displeasure and belligerence aroused by a wrong; wrath; ire."
 2. The first mention of anger in the Bible is in Genesis 4:5 *But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.*

3. The word anger is used 228 times in the Bible. That's how bad the problem is.
4. This began a chain reaction of anger, and from that time anger has been one of the most serious problems with the human nature. Almost everyone at one time or another has a problem with this fiend.
5. The word "wrath" is used 194 times in the Bible, and "wroth" is used 47 times in the Bible. Sometimes the Bible uses these words to relate to God's wrath, and God has the right to be angry with us. Psalms 7:11 *God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.*
6. Jesus was angry in Mark 3:5 *And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.*
7. Notice our Covenant says "Excessive Anger."
 - a. This is important, because all anger itself is not to be shunned. The Bible says in Ephesians 4:26 *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*
 - b. John Gill comments on this verse: "a man may be said to be angry and not sin, when his anger arises from a true zeal for God and religion; when it is kindled not against persons, but sins; when a man is displeased with his own sins, and with the sins of others: with vice and immorality of every kind; with idolatry and idolatrous worship..."
 - c. The anger here is an excessive anger where it takes charge of your life and dictates your attitude and your personality.
 - d. Notice this example in scripture: 1 Peter 4:4 *Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:*

II. "...to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage;"

- A. The definition of abstain is: "to hold oneself back voluntarily, esp. from something regarded as improper or unhealthy."
- B. So, we are to hold ourselves back voluntarily from the sale or social use of intoxicating beverages.
- C. Personally, I have no problem with this. Others, however, either do have or have had a problem with it.
- D. All Christians should abstain from anything having to do with anything intoxicating, including alcoholic drinks, drugs, and anything else that would hinder our thinking.
- E. I will not tarry long on this subject, because I think it is so obvious that Christians should not be a part of anything intoxicating that we should not need to linger here on this subject.
- F. Scriptures:
 1. Proverbs 20:1 *Wine is a mocker, strong drink [is] raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.*
 2. Prov. 31:4 *It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: 5 Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted. 6 Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. 7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.*

- III. "... *and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.*"
- A. Rather than being involved in the negative things just mentioned, we should overcome those negatives with a positive.
 - B. This is the answer to every addiction, yea every sin: be busy for the Lord.
 - C. Luke 2:49 *And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*
 - D. Hebrews 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset [us], and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*
 - E. We certainly have a work to do. It is laid out to the churches of the Lord in the Great Commission.
 1. Matthew 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*
 - F. We are to be zealous to advance the Lord's kingdom.
 1. The word "advance" means: "to improve; further."
 2. We are to improve the Lord's kingdom by abstaining and avoiding the things we have mentioned.
 3. As we abstain and avoid, we must be zealous.
 4. Zealous means: "ardently active, devoted, or diligent."
 5. Numbers 25:11 *Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.*
 6. Titus 2:14 *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*
 7. Revelation 3:19 *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

Work, For The Night Is Coming
When Man Works No More

Our Church Covenant

Lesson #11 - Pastor Ronnie Wolfe - March 3, 2004

*We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love;
to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress;
to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech;
to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation,
and mindful of the rule of our Savior to secure it without delay.*

- I. *We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love;*
- A. Romans 12:10 *[Be] kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*
 - B. 1 Thessalonians 4:9 *But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.*
 - C. Hebrews 13:1 *Let brotherly love continue.*
 - D. Romans 13:8 *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*
 - E. 1 Corinthians 12:25 *That there should be no schism in the body; but [that] the members should have the same care one for another.*
- II. *to remember each other in prayer;*
- A. James 5:16 *Confess [your] faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*
 - B. Luke 6:12 *And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*
 - C. Romans 12:12 *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;*
 - D. Matthew 21:22 *And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*
 - E. When we cannot do anything for a person physically, we can pray for that person.
 - F. Prayer is a privilege. We should use this privilege to hold up others in prayer for their healing, their health and their welfare.
 - G. Romans 8:26 *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*
 - H. “Don’t forget to remember to remember not to forget” to pray. Prayer will enrich your life beyond comprehension.
- III. *to aid each other in sickness and distress;*
- A. We can help by praying: James 5:15 *And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*
 - B. We can help by faith: 1 Thessalonians 3:7 *Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you*

in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

- C. We can help physically: It is said of the Philippian jailor in Acts 16:33 *And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed [their] stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*
- D. If someone has sickness or distress in the home or in their individual lives, let us always be ready to give a helping hand without any desire of being repaid for what we do.
- E. This is the time when true love is shown in its richness and fulness.
- F. James 1:27 *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

IV. *to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech;*

A. Sympathy in feeling

- 1. Sympathy means: “harmony of or agreement in feeling, as between persons or on the part of one person with respect to another.”
- 2. We agree in feeling. It does not mean that we feel what the other person feels or that we know what the person is experiencing. It means that we actually care about the person and that person’s feelings and their distress or concern.
- 3. We are to cultivate this sympathy; that is, we are to grow up in this or be trained in this or learn this from others. This does not come automatically in most people.

B. Courtesy in speech

- 1. The word courtesy means: “excellence of manners or social conduct; polite behavior.”
- 2. 1 Peter 3:8 *Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:*
- 3. We are to be courteous in our speech.
- 4. Colossians 4:6 *Let your speech [be] alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*
 - a. Always with grace – having been led by the grace of God before speaking.
 - b. Seasoned with salt – temper our speech before we use it. Do not say everything that comes into our heads. Season it first with a little salt so that it will not be distasteful when it comes from our mouth.
 - c. This takes work. That is the reason we need to cultivate it.

V. *to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation,*

- A. James 1:19 *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:*
- B. This takes self-control to be able to keep our resolution as we hear things that we do not like or see things we do not like.
- C. Matthew 5:24 *Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*
- D. Matthew 5:25 *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*
- E. This is reconciliation

F. “Forgive and forget” means “forgive and never speak of it again.”

VI. *and mindful of the rule of our Savior to secure it without delay.*

A. Read here Matthew 18:15-20

B. These are the rules that the Lord has put down for us in reconciling with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

These things we promised when we became members of First Baptist Church

Our Church Covenant

Lesson #12 - Pastor Ronnie Wolfe - March 10, 2004

We moreover, engage that when we remove from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church of like faith, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

- I. *We moreover, engage that when we remove from this place ...*
- A. It is said that Americans move from one address to another on the average of every six months.
 - B. This can be for many reasons: job change, go back to live close to the relatives, some friends have moved to a certain and you want to be where they live, some have to move because they lost their house or could not meet their rent. Some move back to a place where they previously lived because they do not like where they moved. Some inherit land or a house and will move into that house, and many more reasons.
 - C. Before a person moves, one of the first things that he should consider is the kinds of churches that are available to attend in that area.
 - D. This is not usually done. Usually, a person will make decisions on the direction of rationalism rather than on the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
 - E. We need to make a move only after much prayer and consideration, especially on where one will worship the Lord.
 - F. In Bible times, people moved from place to place and were recommended by the church from which they were traveling.
 - 1. Romans 16:1 *I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: 2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.*
 - 2. Aquilla and Priscilla traveled from Corinth (Acts 18:2) to Rome (Rom. 16:3) and then to Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:19).
- II. *... we will as soon as possible ...*
- A. This part of the Covenant expresses the expediency with which we should consider a church to join as soon as we can in our new location.
 - B. Three things are involved in this: there should be
 - 1. A Purpose – The purpose of finding a new church in which to worship is so very important for anyone who moves from one location to another. We know the purpose of our move, and we prepare for that purpose. But do we see the importance of having a real purpose in mind for finding a new church?
 - 2. A Plan – With a purpose in mind, we should also have a plan. If we do not plan to do a thing, then we hardly will ever get to that matter. If necessary, sit down and think

- through this plan with your family, especially with your spouse, writing down things that should be done to pursue the plan and to fulfill the purpose of this venture.
3. A Priority – This purpose and plan should be your utmost priority. Usually we think first of how we will move, when we must move, what company will move us; but we as God’s children have a more important agenda than a physical move—we are moving to a new area, and we need a new church. This is top priority!
- C. Our covenant says “as soon as possible.” We should take that seriously.

III. ... *unite with some other church of like faith ...*

A. The Uniting

1. United means “to join, combine, or incorporate so as to form a single whole or unit.” This is the purpose of our uniting with another church.
2. Just as we united with the church here, so we should unite with another church as soon as we can in the location of our new residence.

B. Some Other Church

1. Some people feel that there is only one church in the whole world and that they can find no other church like the one they just left.
2. This may be true concerning the personality of the church, but don’t be surprised. Churches exist all over our great country from sea to shining sea.
3. You may be surprised at how many churches believe exactly the way this church believes.
4. Another church may not have the same kind of Sunday School, the same kind of building, the same kind of people, or the same kind of pastor; but these are only personality differences.
5. We must be able to adjust to these. From a big church to a small church may be quite a change for some, but that is a physical difference. From a small church to a big church may be somewhat of a shock to some people, but it is a physical difference.
6. Remember, the Bible speaks of “churches” plural. Read Revelation chapters two and three, and you will find seven different churches with seven different personalities.

C. Of Like Faith

1. The Faith

- a. The real concern is that a person look for church of like faith.
- b. Generally we use the term “faith and order,” but the word faith is sufficient; because if a church has the right faith, they will have the right order.
- c. There is a difference between “faith” and “the faith.”
- d. Many churches have faith in their doctrine, but they may not stand for “the faith.”
- e. We are to unite with a church which holds to “the faith” that is taught in scripture.
- f. Some have departed from the faith: 1 Timothy 4:1 *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*
- g. Some have denied the faith: 1 Timothy 5:8 *But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an*

infidel.

- h. Some have erred from the faith: 1 Timothy 6:10 *For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*
 - i. But Paul kept the faith: 2 Timothy 4:7 *I have fought a good fight, I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith:*
 - j. We are to contend for the faith: Jude 1:3 *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort [you] that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*
2. The Name
- a. One way to identify a church is by name.
 - b. If you are a Baptist, you should look for a Baptist Church.
 - c. Any church who will not use the name Baptist or who will remove the name Baptist is not truly Baptist.
 - d. But a church is not Baptist because of its name.
 - e. Every name has a reputation. Before you assume that a Baptist church is a true church, you must learn of its doctrine and its practices.
 - f. When you have settled that it is a Baptist church in the true sense of the word, then you can unite with that church with good conscience.

IV. ... *where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant ...*

- A. The letter of the covenant means little; it is the spirit (or true meaning) of this covenant that is important.
- B. Ask your prospective church for a copy of this covenant.
- C. Be reminded that we promised to keep this covenant when we joined this church.
- D. Therefore, when we move away, we must continue to carry on the promise of this covenant. Moving does not release the person from this covenant.
- E. This is no time to change to a different covenant. This is a covenant based upon the word of God; and if you change the covenant, then you change your doctrinal position.
- F. Be wary of pastors and churches who are in the process of changing the church's constitution, by-laws or its covenant.

V. ... *and the principles of God's Word.*

- A. Principles
 - 1. A principle is "a fundamental, primary, or general law or truth from which others are derived:"
 - 2. If the principles of this covenant are contrary to the word of God, then we must change it, and we are not bound to it.
 - 3. The word of God is the basis of all that we believe, not this covenant or the constitution or by-laws of a church.
 - 4. Nothing that the church can adopt can supersede the word of God, the Bible.
- B. God's Word
 - 1. The Bible is God's word, and it is the basis for all of our beliefs and practices.

2. We believe and teach here that in the English language the King James Version of the Bible is the best literal translation of the preserved manuscripts of the Bible that God has kept throughout the ages.
3. Beware of a church which uses new versions of the Bible. It will not be long until they will be changing doctrine, because the new versions of the Bible are very weak on the deity of Jesus Christ, and Lordship, and Kingship and his sovereignty.
4. They are also weak on the specific need for a blood atonement and a personal substitutionary Savior.

Conclusion

Our church life is so important. We need to have a regular, a busy and a strong church life just to get through the troubles of our day. We need the truth in our lives. We need Bible study and prayer and fellowship. We need praise and worship to our God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, if and when you move from this place, keep this part of the covenant to unite with another church of like faith as soon as you possibly can.

THE END