

# 2016 HSC Men's Conference: TRAINING CAMP

## Introduction

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## I. DRAFTED

Note: Now obviously it's different being drafted by the NFL versus being drafted by Jesus Christ to follow Him and be one of His disciples.

**#1** - In the NFL, you are drafted because of YOUR hard work & talent, but not so with Christ! Christ does not choose us based on our ability or power.

**1 Corinthians 1:26-29** - ***"For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God."***

**1 Corinthians 1:30** - ***"And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'"***

**#2** - In the NFL, when you are drafted, your LOYALTY is immediately transferred to your new team; likewise with Christ, we are called to have an undivided loyalty to Him!

**Matthew 6:24** - ***"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."***

Elisha, Gehazi, and Naaman...

**2 Kings 5:19-22 -**

**1 Timothy 6:9-10 - "...those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs."**

**Luke 6:46 - "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"**

**1 Peter 2:11 - "Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul."**

**2 Kings 5:23-25 -**

*WHY does Elisha bother asking Gehazi where he's been?*

**2 Kings 5:26-27 -**

**2 Corinthians 11:2-3 - "For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one Husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ."**

**#3 -** In the NFL, when you are drafted, you are agreeing to place yourself, in submission, under the leadership of the coaching staff, especially under the leadership of the Head Coach; likewise, we are to follow & submit to our "Head", the Lord Jesus Christ.

*David Platt - "Scores of men, women, and children have been told that becoming a follower of Jesus simply involves acknowledging certain facts or saying certain words. But this is not true. ...the call to follow Jesus is not simply an invitation to pray a prayer; it's a summons to lose our lives."*

**Luke 9:23 -**

**Matthew 11:28-30 - "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."**

**Matthew 13:44-46 - "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then IN HIS JOY he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it."**

**#4** - In the NFL, it's entirely possible that you might be drafted onto one team and then traded to another, BUT Jesus Christ never loses or trades His people away!

*BleacherReport.com* - "In order to remain with the same team for an entire career, a player must be talented enough to warrant his team retaining him while also being willing to forego the potential of a higher salary gained through free agency."

Note: Being "in Christ" is VERY DIFFERENT!

**John 6:37** - "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will NEVER cast out."

**John 10:27-30** - "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are One."

Note: There are NO BETTER OFFERS to entertain!

**John 10:10** - "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

**Psalms 16:11** - "You make known to me the path of life; in Your presence there is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

**#5** - In the NFL draft, it's not the players making the decisions but the General Managers of each team; likewise, we did not first choose Christ; Christ chose us.

*David Platt* writes: "Our problem is not simply that we have made some bad decisions. Our problem is not just that we've messed up. Our problem is that we are - at the very core of our being - rebels against God, and we are utterly unable to turn to Him. This is what the Bible means when it says we are dead in sin."

**1 John 4:19** - "We love because He first loved us."

**John 6:44** - "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws Him. And I will raise him up on the last day."

**Ephesians 2:8-9** - "...by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

**#6** - Being drafted onto an NFL team is a great honor, BUT it is an infinitely greater honor to called by Christ to follow Him!

*David Platt says it well: "Jesus is not some puny religious teacher begging for an invitation from anyone. He is the all-sovereign Lord who deserves submission from everyone. ... He is worthy of more than church attendance and casual association; He is worthy of total abandonment and supreme adoration."*

**Luke 19:10 - "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."**

*David Platt - "To be a Christian is to be loved by God, pursued by God, and found by God. To be a Christian is to realize that in your sin, you were separated from God's presence, and you deserved nothing but God's wrath. Yet despite your darkness and in your deadness, His light shone on you and His voice spoke to you, inviting you to follow Him. His majesty captivated your soul and His mercy covered your sin, and by His death He brought you life. Do you know for sure that you are His child, not ultimately because of any good you have done - any prayers you have prayed, steps you have taken, or boxes you have checked - but solely because of the grace He has given?"*

## II. TEAM

Note: To actually play in the NFL... to actually be on a team in the NFL... takes a lot more than just watching a video... it takes a lot more than just having head knowledge about the game... it takes a lot more than just putting on a uniform... it takes a lot more than just having a copy of the playbook... it takes a lot more than just being in good physical condition!

Note: It's possible to do an awful lot of things that Christians do without actually being a Christian... without actually being a true follower of Christ... without actually being saved.

Note: Every false religion in the world has some similar components; there are some characteristics that every false religion in the world share in common.

*David Platt - "In Hinduism, ancient teachers have passed down Vedic traditions prescribing rites and rituals for Hindus to observe. In Islam, Muhammad pointed in the Koran to five pillars for Muslims to practice. In Buddhism, the Buddha's eightfold path is just one of four noble truths that he taught, alongside hundreds of other rules for Buddhists to follow. In Sikhism, ten gurus have pointed to one body of teaching as the way to truth and life."*

*Is Christianity really any different? Is the Gospel different? If so, how?*

Note: Most importantly and most foundationally the teaching & doctrine of Christianity does not point to a path to follow but to a Person to trust, a Person to believe in, a Person to worship, a Person to follow, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**John 14:6 -**

***Matthew 11:28-29 - "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."***

### A. How the Gospel is Unique

Note: The Bible says we need new life, a new heart; we must be "born again".  
**John 3:7, 10 -**

***Isaiah 64:6 - "We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away."***

*Ian Thomas - "In defiance of God's Word, God's mind, God's will, and God's judgment, men everywhere are prepared to dedicate to God what God condemns - the energy of the flesh! There is nothing quite so nauseating or pathetic as the flesh trying to be holy!"*

**Ezekiel 36:25-27 - “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes and be careful to obey My rules.”**

**Matthew 1:21 - “She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”**

**John 1:29 - “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”**

**Galatians 2:16 - “...we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.”**

*David Platt - “Faith is the anti-work. It’s the realization that there is nothing you can do but trust in what has been done for you in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Faith is the realization that God’s pleasure in you will never be based upon your performance for Him. Instead, God’s pleasure in you will always be based upon Christ’s performance for you.”*

## **B. What the Gospel Offers**

*What is mankind’s greatest problem?*

Note: Mankind’s greatest problem is that God is holy, righteous, and just; and we are not, we are thoroughly corrupt & sinful.

Note: What Jesus Christ offers: eternal life, forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, adoption into His family, His very Spirit to live inside of us, the promise of heaven, the promise of eternal glory & joy with Him, and the promise of a future glorified body!

Note: What Jesus Christ does NOT offer: clean drinking water, a fat bank account, a care-free easy life, early retirement, a healthy happy body, popularity with men, fame, or the admiration of the world.

**1 Peter 4:12-14 - “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”**

**2 Timothy 3:12 - “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”**

### C. Living for the Glory of Christ

Note: As believers, we must remember that our conduct reflects upon the Church in general, upon one another as fellow believers, and upon Christ Himself!

**1 Peter 4:15-16 - “But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.”**

**1 Peter 2:11-12 - “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable (The Greek word for “honorable” is rich in meaning and implies the purest, highest, noblest kind of goodness. It means “lovely,” “winsome,” “gracious,” “noble,” and “excellent.”), so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.”**

Note: In the book of 2nd Timothy, Paul describes life on Jesus’ team. Paul describes the Christian as a “soldier” (because there is a battle to fight; there is suffering to endure). Paul describes the Christian as an “athlete” (because we are to run our race honorably in accordance with & in submission to God’s wisdom). And Paul describes the Christian as a “hard-working farmer” (because we are to persevere, work hard, and wait upon the Lord).

*David Platt aptly recounts how... “Peter preached the gospel to thousands at Pentecost and to throngs thereafter, and because he would not shut up, tradition says he was crucified upside down. Similar tradition tells us that Andrew was crucified while preaching the gospel in Greece, Judas (not Iscariot) was clubbed to death for ministering near modern-day Turkey, Thomas was speared through his side while making disciples in India, James was beheaded, Philip was stoned, and Matthew was burned at the stake, all for preaching the gospel. As a result of being disciples of Jesus, every one of these men literally gave their lives to making disciples of Jesus.”*

*David Platt summarizes it like this... “The fruit of following Jesus is a new heart with a new mind, new desires, a new will, a new way of relating to people around you, and a new purpose. ‘Follow Me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men.’ This is not some solicitation to tread a path of superficial religion. This is an invitation to taste a pleasure that can only be found in a supernatural relationship with Jesus. He beckons you to let your heart be captivated by His greatness and your life be changed by His grace. Turn from your sin and yourself and trust in Him as the all-sovereign, all-satisfying Savior of your soul.”*

### III. COACH

Bleacherreport.com - 7 categories of responsibility that belong to the head coach:

- 1) Postgame Analysis...
- 2) Game Planning...
- 3) Managing Practice...
- 4) Game-Time Management...
- 5) Adding Players to the Team...
- 6) Schemes & Formations...
- 7) Overall Leadership...

#### **A. Jesus Christ... Head-Coach and SO MUCH MORE!**

- 1) Jesus is not just our “head coach”, He’s our Lord, our Master!

***Romans 1:1 -***

***1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”***

***Romans 1:1, 7 -***

- 2) Jesus is not just our “head coach”, He is our message!

***Romans 1:2-4 -***

***2 Timothy 2:8 - “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel.”***

David Platt... the core truths of the Gospel...

- The Character of God -
- The Sinfulness of Man -
- The Sufficiency of Christ -
- The Necessity of Faith in Christ -
- The Urgency of Eternity -

3) Jesus is not just our “head coach”; His Gospel & Glory is our mission!

**Romans 1:5-6 -**

**Galatians 1:15-16a - “But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles...”**

**Luke 24:45-47 - “[Jesus] ...opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name TO ALL NATIONS, beginning from Jerusalem.’”**

**Romans 1:5 -**

a. Christ is the GIVER of the Gospel.

**John 6:44a - “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.”**

b. Christ is the GIFT of the Gospel.

*John Piper - “Today - as in every generation - it is stunning to watch the shift away from God as the all-satisfying gift of God’s love. It is stunning how seldom God Himself is proclaimed as the greatest gift of the gospel. But the Bible teaches that the best and final gift of God’s love is the enjoyment of God’s beauty. ‘One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple’ (Ps. 27:4). The best and final gift of the gospel is that we gain Christ. ‘I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ’ (Phil. 3:8). This is the all-encompassing gift of God’s love through the gospel - to see and savor the glory of Christ forever. ... The gospel of Christ proclaims the news that he has purchased by his death ten thousand blessings for his bride. But none of these gifts will lead to final joy if they have not first led to God. And not one gospel blessing will be enjoyed by anyone for whom the gospel’s greatest gift was not the Lord himself.”*

c. Christ is the GOAL of the Gospel.

**Romans 15:9 -**

**John 12:27-28a - “Now is My soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.”**

**Romans 1:16a - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel..."**

**Romans 1:8 - "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world."**

Note #1: We have a privilege to pray!

Note #2: We have a debt to pay!

**Romans 1:14-15 -**

*David Platt - "Every saved person, this side of heaven, owes the gospel to every lost person, this side of hell."*

Note #3: We have a theological unity & loving community to display!

### III. CO-OWNER

Note: There is just ONE NFL team owned by the fans, but there are NO NFL teams owned by the players themselves.

*J. I. Packer - "What is a Christian? The question can be answered in many ways, but the richest answer I know is that a Christian is one who has God as Father."*

#### A. Adopted... but HOW???

***Galatians 3:26 - "...for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith."***

***John 1:12 - "But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God."***

1) To "receive Him" is to "believe in His name". You cannot receive unless you believe.

***John 6:29, 47-48, 51a - "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent... Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life... I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever."***

2) The right & privilege of adoption into God's family is NOT something we deserve or have earned; it is something we must be given by/in Christ.

***John 1:12 - "But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God."***

3) Your salvation/adoption was planned & accomplished (not by you!) by God.

***John 1:13 - "...who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."***

***1 John 5:1a - "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God."***

***1 John 3:1-3 - "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure."***

*J. I. Packer - "If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the New Testament new, and better than the Old, everything that is distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. 'Father' is the Christian name for God."*

**John 20:17 - "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.'"**

## **B. Adoption: Implications & Ramifications**

*What does our adoption actually mean???*

1) It means that God possesses AUTHORITY.

2) It means that there is now LOVING AFFECTION between us and God.

**John 17:23 - "I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me."**

*How does the Father love His Son???*

Note: The Father loves the Son with a GLORIOUS love!!!

Note: The Father loves the Son with an ETERNAL love!!!

Note: The Father loves the Son with an INFINITE love!!!

3) It means that there is close, intimate FELLOWSHIP with God.

**1 John 1:3b-4 - "...indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete."**

4) It means that there is HONOR & GLORY in our relationship.

**John 12:26 - "If anyone serves Me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will My servants be also. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."**

*J. I. Packer - "Justification is the primary blessing, because it meets our primary spiritual need. We all stand by nature under God's judgment; His law condemns us; guilt gnaws at us, making us restless, miserable, and in our lucid moments afraid; we have no peace in ourselves because we have no peace with our Maker. So we need the forgiveness of our sins, and assurance of a restored relationship with God, more than we need anything else in the world; and this the gospel offers us before it offers us anything else."*

*J. I. Packer - "...justification does not of itself imply any intimate or deep relationship with God the judge. ...you could have the reality of justification without any close fellowship with God resulting. But contrast this, now, with adoption. Adoption is a family idea, conceived in terms of love, and viewing God as father. In adoption, God takes us into His family and fellowship - He establishes us as His children and heirs. Closeness, affection and generosity are at the heart of the relationship. To be right with God the Judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is greater."*

5) It means that we are made "brothers" with Christ.

**Mark 3:35 - "For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."**

**Matthew 28:9-10 - "And behold, Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshipped Him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.'"**

**Hebrews 2:11-12 - "For He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why He is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, 'I will tell of Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise.'"**

### C. Adoption: Application

Note: We ought to live our whole lives in light of our adoption!

1) Our conduct should now imitate, glorify, & please our Father.

**Matthew 5:44-45, 48 - "But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ... You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."**

**Ephesians 5:1 - "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children."**

**Matthew 5:16 - "...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."**

**Matthew 6:1 - "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven."**

2) Our prayers should be personal, forthcoming, and bold.

**Matthew 6:5-13 -**

3) Our attitude should reflect confidence in the goodness & sovereignty of our Father.

**Matthew 6:31-33 -**

Note: Having God as Father changes everything! Knowing we are forever beloved by Him, brought permanently into His family, given access to Him... should motivate us to lives of joy & thankfulness & holiness because WE WANT TO HONOR OUR FATHER.

**1 John 3:1-3 - "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies Himself as He is pure."**

## V. PLAYBOOK

*What is God's will??? How should we think about God's will???*

*Can I be outside of the will of God if I make a bad or sinful decision???*

*Does God have one special personal will for every person that they can break out of and then spend the rest of their life outside of God's will???*

*How do you know if it's God's will for you to eat at Rally's or McDonalds??? And what happens if you make the wrong choice???*

*How do you know if it's God's will for you to marry "Person A" or "Person B"??? What if you are married to the wrong person???*

*How do you know if it's God's will for you to work for the FBI or for the CIA or for Mike's Express Car Wash???*

*How do you know if it's God's will for you to listen to talk radio or the oldies station???*

*How do you know God's will for your life???*

***James 4:13-17 - "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and make a profit' - yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.' As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin."***

Note: We do not and cannot see things from God's infinite complete perspective!

***Isaiah 46:9b-10 - "...for I am God, and there is no other; I am God and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all My purpose,'"***

***Isaiah 45:6b-7 - "I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the Lord, who does all these things."***

***Romans 11:33-35 - "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! 'For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?' 'Or who has given a gift to Him that he might be repaid?'"***

Note: You don't have the ability to create parallel universes through your bad decisions.

Truth: Our bad sinful decisions cannot ever over-rule the sovereignty of God.

**Romans 8:28 - "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose."**

**Hebrews 12:5b-6 - "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him. For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives."**

**Hebrews 12:10 - "...He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness."**

**Genesis 50:18-20 - "His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, 'Behold, we are your servants.' But Joseph said to them, 'Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.'"**

#### **A. What We Can & Should Say About the Will of God.**

1) There is such a thing as God's determined & decreed will.

**Colossians 1:1a - "Paul, as apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God..."**

**Galatians 1:15-16 - "But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone..."**

**Acts 4:23-28 - "When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, 'Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, Your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against His Anointed' - for truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your plan had predestined to take place."**

**Ephesians 1:3-6 - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved."**

**1 Thessalonians 4:16 - "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God."**

2) There is also such a thing as God's moral & desired will for His people... and it is found EXCLUSIVELY in the Bible!

***2 Peter 1:3 - "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence..."***

***1 Thessalonians 4:16-22 - "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil."***

Note: So while we often violate/rebel against God's moral & desired will (which will bring consequences of God's loving discipline), we never move even one inch outside of the sovereignty of God.

Example... Jonah

***Psalms 103:10-14 - "He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust."***

## **B. Who you should marry, where you should work, what you should eat...**

Note: God has NOT revealed in Scripture or Creation specifically who you should marry, where you should work, what you should eat, or a great many other things! THEREFORE, we MUST/ought/should approach these types of issues as "WISDOM" issues.

*But what about Gideon the his fleece???*

Note: Gideon ALREADY KNEW the will of God. He was merely looking for comfort and encouragement through this miraculous sign... NOT KNOWLEDGE.

Note: We who have & know the Word of God are FREE to walk in wisdom.

1) Who should you marry???

**1 Corinthians 7:27-28** - *“Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that.”*

**Proverbs 18:22** - *“He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord.”*

**Proverbs 12:4** - *“An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rottenness in his bones.”*

**Proverbs 11:14** - *“Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety”* **Proverbs 24:6** - *“...for by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory.”*

Note: Here's the deal: You must choose who to love, & then love who you chose!

**Mark 10:9** - *“What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”*

2) Where should you work???

**1 Thessalonians 4:10b-12** - *“But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.”*

**2 Thessalonians 3:10-12** - *“For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.”*

**Colossians 3:23-24** - *“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”*

3) What should you eat???

**Mark 7:18-19** - *“Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?’ (Thus He declared all foods clean.)”*

**1 Timothy 4:1-5** -

*David Platt* - *“...far more important than looking and searching for God's will is simply knowing and trusting God. ... His ultimate concern is not to get you or me from point A to point B along the quickest, easiest, smoothest, clearest route possible. Instead, His ultimate concern is that you and I would know Him more deeply and trust Him more completely.”*

## V. TEAM-PLAYER

David Platt writes... “The room was packed full of people, and the preacher held the audience in the palm of his hand. ‘I would like everyone to bow your heads and close your eyes,’ he said, and we all followed suit. He then declared, ‘Tonight, I want to call you to put your faith in God. Tonight, I am urging you to begin a personal relationship with Jesus for the first time in your life. Let me be clear,’ he said, ‘I’m not inviting you to join the church. I’m just inviting you to come to Christ.’ As the preacher passionately pleaded for personal decisions, scores of people stood from their seats and walked down the aisles of the auditorium to make a commitment to Christ. Yet there was a problem in all of this. These people had been deceived. They had been told that it is possible to make a commitment to Christ apart from the a commitment to the church. The reality, however, is that it’s biblically impossible to follow Christ apart from joining His church. In fact, anyone who claims to be a Christian yet is not an active member of a church may not actually be a follower of Christ at all. ...to identify your life with the person of Christ is to join your life with the people of Christ.”

**1 Corinthians 3:16-17 - “Do you not know that you (this word ‘you’ is plural, it means ‘y’all’) are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.”**

**Ephesians 5:25 - “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for Her.”**

David Platt writes... “Isn’t the church the bride of Christ? What if I said to you, ‘Man, I love you, but have I ever told you how much I can’t stand your wife?’ Would you take that as a compliment? Similarly, isn’t the church the body of Christ? What if my wife said to me, ‘David, I love you, but I can’t stand your body?’ I can assure you that I wouldn’t take that as a compliment. It’s impossible to follow Jesus fully without loving His bride selflessly, and it’s impossible to think that we can enjoy Christ apart from His body. Jesus goes so far as to identify the church with Himself when He asks Saul on the road to Damascus, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?’ Saul hadn’t persecuted Christ Himself, but he had persecuted Christians, so in essence Jesus was saying, ‘When you mess with them, you mess with me.’”

**Revelation 1:12-13 - “Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lamp stands, and in the midst of the lamp stands one like a Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around His chest.”**

**Revelation 1:20b - “...the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lamp stands are the seven churches.”**

## **A. Life in the Body of Christ**

1) The Church is not a building! The Church is the Redeemed People of God.

*David Platt writes... "Instead of a building, you see a body made up of members and a family made up of brothers and sisters who together have died to themselves and are living in Christ. Christians are joined together by Jesus' death, His Spirit, His Gospel, His suffering, and His life. Biblically, a church does not consist of people who simply park and participate in programs alongside one another. Instead, the church is comprised of people who share the life of Christ with each other on a day-by-day, week-by-week basis."*

**John 17:20-21 - "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me."**

**Matthew 16:18 - "I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."**

Note: We are a local church with a global purpose: Total World Domination.

**Colossians 3:1-17 - "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (5) Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. (9) Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. (12) Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. (14) And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. (16) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."**

2) The Church is not indifferent to sin! We must take sin & sanctification seriously.

**Matthew 16:16 - "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."**

**Matthew 18:15-20 - "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them."**

David Platt writes... "Jesus' teaching on church discipline and restoration should jump off the pages of the Bible in front of us. This is not number 100 on a list of 101 things that Jesus says we should do as His people. This is at the top of the list, right after the importance of confessing Him as Lord. Church discipline is not supplemental for Christians; it's fundamental. Church discipline is not optional; it is essential."

**Galatians 6:1-2 - "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer - "Nothing can be more cruel than the 'tenderness' that consigns another to his sin. Nothing can be more compassionate than the severe rebuke that calls a brother back from the path of sin."

3) Commitment to the Local Church is not optional! It is foundational.

*David Platt - "We date the church for a variety of reasons. We're independent, self-reliant, self-sufficient people, and the thought of mutual submission, accountability, and interdependence seems foreign, if not outright frightening. In addition, we're indecisive. We date different churches because we can't decide on the one we really like. It's a consumer mentality applied to church shopping: looking for the best product with the best price on Sunday morning. We're always looking for a better deal, which often leads to a fairly critical attitude toward the church. We can find something wrong with every church we visit, and even when we do settle down somewhere, we're ever cognizant of the things we don't like."*

Note: Our commitment to the Global Church is seen through our commitment to the Local Church.

*David Platt - "Out of the 114 times that we see the primary word for the church, ekklesia, in the New Testament, at least ninety of them refer to specific local gatherings of Christians. ... Believers in the Bible were joined together into local bodies. We never once see the New Testament addressing followers of Christ who don't belong to a local church."*

Why does it matter??? Why is this such a big deal???

**John 13:35 - "By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."**

*David Platt - "...the message of God's Word is that God's glory is most majestically displayed not through you or through me, but through us. God raises up the church and says to all creation in the heavens, on the earth, and under the earth, 'This is the bride and body of my Son, bought and purchased by His blood, to be My people and receive My power and enjoy My presence and declare My praise forever and ever.' It is a privilege to be a part of the church. To come to Christ is to become a member of His community."*

## VII. END ZONE

Note: We need to have a vision for this life informed by our vision of the next life.

***Ecclesiastes 3:11 -***

Note: Our culture is dominated by a thirst for instant everything. The only thing we are willing to defer is payments.

***Colossians 3:2 - "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."***

Note: When the choice is heaven or hell we all want heaven, but when the choice is heaven or earth... we're not so sure.

***1 John 2:15 - "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."***

***James 4:4 - "...do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."***

Note: The only way to be of any earthly good is to be heavenly minded.

***1 Corinthians 15:58 - "Therefore (in light of the glory & life to come), my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."***

Note: Heavenly mindedness motivates us to earthly usefulness.

*C. S. Lewis - "If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did the most for this present world were just those who thought most of the next. It is because Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this one."*

Note: Greater devotion, greater worship, greater service comes from thinking about heaven and the coming glory of Christ.

***John 17:24 - "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world."***

## A. The CERTAINTY of Heaven

There are a few Greek words commonly translated as “desire”...

“*Epithumai*” - which means like a lust or craving.

“*Boulomai*” - which expresses a wish, I desire, a feeling.

“*Thelo*” - which expresses purpose, determination, a decree, an action of the will, delight, deliberation, determination.

***Matthew 7:28-29 - “And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for He was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.”***

***Matthew 8:1-3 - “When He came down from the mountain, great crowds followed Him. And behold, a leper came to Him and knelt before Him, saying, ‘Lord, if You will, You can make me clean.’ And Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, ‘I will; be clean.’ And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.”***

***Hebrews 1:3a - “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power.”***

Note: What the Son of God decrees the Son of God accomplishes.

***2 Corinthians 5:6-8 - “So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by faith. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”***

***1 Corinthians 15:54b-55 - “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”***

Note: The certainty of heaven is established by the effectual praying and redemptive work of God the Son.

## B. The CITIZENS of Heaven

Two Different Ways to Think about the Same Group of People...

1) God's Eternal Plans: Heaven will be filled by those given to the Son.

Verse 1: ***"Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You, since You have given Him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him."***

Verse 6: ***"I have manifested Your name to the people whom You gave Me out of the world. Yours they were, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word."***

Verse 9: ***"I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours."***

Verse 24: ***"Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am..."***

**Note:** In eternity past, God gave a gift to His Son, a group of sinners to save for all of eternity. Christ would lavish the fullest expression of His grace upon them. We couldn't come to Him; He had to come to us.

Note: Properly understood, this is a very HUMBLING truth & reality.

Note: Additionally, this is a humbling truth because remember the KINDS & TYPES of people that God chooses, that God saves.

***1 Corinthians 1:26-31 - "For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'"***

2) Our Actual Experience: Heaven will be filled by those who believe the Gospel.

Verse 20: ***"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word."***

### C. The CHARACTERISTICS of Heaven

1) Heaven is being in the immediate presence of Jesus, beholding His glory.

**John 17:24 - "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world."**

**Luke 23:43 - "Truly, I say to you, today you will be WITH ME in Paradise."**

**1 Thessalonians 4:17 - "Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord."**

**2 Corinthians 5:8 - "Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord."**

**Philippians 1:22-23 - "If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which shall I choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better."**

**Psalm 16:11 - "You make know to me the path of life; in Your presence there is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."**

**Psalm 23:6 - "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."**

**Revelation 21:3-4 - "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.'**

**1 Corinthians 2:9 - "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him."**

2) Heaven can be thought of in 3 phases: Immediate, Intermediate, & Ultimate

2a. The Immediate Aspect of Heaven

**Luke 17:20-21 - "Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them, 'The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.'"**

2b. The Intermediate Aspect of Heaven

**2 Corinthians 5:8 - "Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord."**

2c. The Ultimate Aspect of Heaven

Note: Our resurrected/glorified bodies will be imperishable.

**1 Corinthians 15:42 - "So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable."**

Note: Our resurrected/glorified bodies will be glorious.

**1 Corinthians 15:43a - "It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory."**

Note: Our resurrected/glorified bodies will be powerful.

**1 Corinthians 15:43b - "It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power."**

**Philippians 3:20-21 - "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself."**

3) Heaven is a place of perfect, unending love.

**1 Corinthians 13:7-8 - "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away."**

Note: In heaven there is NO LOSS... ONLY GAIN.

**Mark 1:15 - "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."**