

“Churchless Christians”

A recent study indicated that less than 1 out of every 5 Americans believe that belonging to a community of faith is essential to spiritual maturity. In other words, most Americans now believe that it is possible to be a New Testament Christian without belonging to a church.

The Bible contradicts this notion in the strongest terms possible. The Lord has not given us the option to say that we believe in Christ but have no interest in belonging to His church. Acts 2:47 informs us that God Himself adds every saved individual to His church. Further, it is impossible to obey the commands of Scripture without belonging to a community of believers known as the local church. Consider just a few verses that cannot be observed and obeyed if we do not belong to a congregation of God’s people.

Acts 2:42 – “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Romans 12:10 – “Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.”

Romans 12:16 – “Be of the same mind toward one another...”

Romans 13:8 – “Owe no one anything except to love one another; for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.”

Romans 15:7 – “Therefore receive one another, just as Christ has also received us, to the glory of God.”

1 Corinthians 1:10 – “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

1 Corinthians 12:21 – “And the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’; nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’”

Galatians 5:13 – “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

Galatians 6:1 – “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”

Ephesians 4:32 – “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”

Philippians 2:4 – “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

James 5:16 – “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

1 John 4:11 – “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

These passages comprise but a small sample of what God has said regarding a Christian’s obligation to fellow believers. It is simply impossible to faithfully obey God apart from the New Testament church. **--JB**