Biblical Church Growth

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INTRODUCTION

- We have been studying this year, looking at our theme for this year, how firm a foundation.
- We want to close out the year and talking about building on this foundation. We want to talk about growth.
- It's very easy for us to get our priorities misaligned on the subject of church growth.

1 What We Mean by Growth

- We can talk about growth as just this idea of what we might call internal growth, that we're all to be growing.
- We're to be growing in our knowledge of God's word. We're to be growing in our relationship to God and in one another.
- When we talk about growth in numbers, that it's not just some kind of mathematical addition problem that's taking place, but that each number is a soul that is being added in.
- We're not just trying to inflate numbers, we're trying to add souls into the body of Christ.

2 What We Mean by the Word Church

Ephesians 1:22–23; Acts 14:23

- The Father put all things under Christ's feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.
- This is all the saved, all the saved of all the world of all time.
- So when they had appointed elders in every church and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.
- When they had appointed elders in every assembly, every local assembly.

3 God Determines the Body; Men Determine the Local Church

Acts 2:47; Revelation 3:5; Acts 9:26–28

- Only God determines who makes up membership in the universal church.
- And the Lord added daily to those who were being saved. God did the adding.
- I will not blot out his name from the book of life, but I will confess his name before my father and before his angels.
- So God determines who makes up the body of Christ. Men determine who makes up the local church.

4 Our Actions May Not Reflect God's Actions

3 John 1:9–10; Galatians 2:4

- Our actions in the local church may not necessarily reflect God's actions in the body of Christ.
- We may exclude people from our fellowship that God has included in him.

- We may, on the other side of that equation, we may include somebody in our fellowship that God has excluded from His.
- Because they may deceive us, and our judgment is not perfect like God's is.

5 Growth to the Body of Christ Should Be Our Focus

Acts 8

- Any interest in local church growth is secondary to the overall growth to the body of Christ. That should be our focus.
- But those people were still in the body of Christ.
- What I see as the number one danger is that we can compromise our teaching.
- Rather than convicting people of sin and error, we can flatter people into the local church.

6 Preach Jesus and Add Them to the Lord

Acts 11:20–24

- Preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.
- And a great many people were added to the Lord. What was their emphasis? The same emphasis that should be ours. They wanted to add people to the Lord.
- Let's go out there and preach to them Jesus. And add them to the Lord.

> THE CHALLENGE
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> **I hope that we can all re-evaluate our priorities and our goals of what's most important. And that is leading people to the Lord.**

MY NOTES