



1. What is the “church” according to the Bible and what was the mission Jesus left the church? What are the four main criticisms of the church? Do you think they are valid?
2. Read John 15:1-8. What is the passage addressing? Do you think that if a person is a branch to begin with, that they are a Christian? What do you think it means to “remain” in Christ? Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. Do you think this is the “burning” that John 15 talks about? So if a person does not “remain” in Christ, what does that mean for their life?
3. What is the difference between being saved by Christ and being in fellowship with Christ?
4. If remaining in the vine (Christ) means to have a relationship with him, to have fellowship with him, how do you have a relationship with Christ? How does God speak to us? How do we speak with God? What does Christ want from us in this relationship? In John 15:10, 14, what are the actions of someone who loves Christ?
5. What are the five most important habits you can develop in order to establish and maintain a close relationship with Christ? Which ones do you do well and which ones need work? How can you as a group hold each other accountable to practice these habits?
6. Read 1 John 1:3-10. What is this passage talking about? What does it say you must do in order to have fellowship with Jesus? What do you think it means to walk in the light? How about to walk in darkness? What must we do when we sin if we want to continue in fellowship with Jesus? Does being in fellowship with Christ mean that you will not sin anymore?

Answers

- 1. The church is every individual who has trusted in Jesus as their savior from the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 until the rapture when Jesus comes and takes the church out of the world. The four main criticisms are: a. It is too political; b. Lack of inclusivity toward certain groups; c. Focus on wealth and prosperity; and d. Lack of awareness regarding problems in society.*
- 2. The passage in John 15 is addressing the relationship that should exist between believers and Jesus that should result in believers producing "fruit". Many people believe that the fruit referred to is the fruit of the Spirit talked about in Galatians 5. Others say that this fruit is to produce other Christians, to lead others to Christ because the fruit in Galatians 5 is not the fruit produced by Christians, but the fruit produced by the Spirit. An apple tree produces apples, so a Christian should produce other Christians. Others say the fruit is simply living in obedience to Christ. If a person is a branch, that means they are connected to the vine to even exist, so this is talking about Christians and does not even address salvation, but fellowship with Christ. To remain in Christ means to live in a constant condition of fellowship with Christ as a Christian. If a person does not remain in fellowship with Christ, they will not produce fruit because the fruit comes as a result of being connected to the vine, a person who is out of fellowship with Christ will not produce fruit. Everything they live for that is not fruit produced by being connected to the vine will be lost to them at the judgement seat of Christ, talked about in 1 Corinthians 3, it is "burned up" and they suffer the loss of any reward for eternity.*
- 3. Being saved has nothing to do with anything we do, it is completely the work of Christ, it is our birth into God's family (John 3). Fellowship is having a relationship with Christ which depends completely upon our ability to do and maintain the elements of a relationship. Just because a person is saved does not automatically mean that person has a personal relationship with Christ, just like a child who is born into a family does not mean they have a good relationship with their parents. A relationship must be cultivated and constantly worked on by practicing the habits that make a good relationship between two persons.*
- 4. A relationship with Christ is exactly like any relationship between two people. Communication and similar interests are what make a relationship. If we do not make the purposes of God as our primary purposes in life, we will not have a relationship with Christ. If we do not make communication with God by spending time in the Word and prayer as a daily priority, we will not have relationship with Christ. If we are unwilling to obey God's commands, we will not have a relationship with Christ. God speaks to us through his word and the circumstances that he allows in our lives; we reply through prayer. God wants us to serve him because we love him as we get to know him through our relationship with him, not because we are afraid of him. If we love Christ, we will obey his commands.*
- 5. The five habits are: a. Individual and corporate worship; b. Fellowship with other believers; c. Serving others; d. Giving generously of my time, talents, and treasure; and e. Spending time with God on a daily basis.*
- 6. 1 John 1 is talking about our fellowship, our relationship with Christ as a believer. In order to have fellowship, we must walk in the light as he is in the light which means to think, talk, and act like Jesus would, to live a godly life not controlled by our sinful nature which is what it would be to walk in darkness. We confess our sin when we do sin in order to remove that barrier in our relationship with Christ, this is not in order to go to heaven. We will sin until the day we get to heaven, and our sin will become a barrier in our relationship with Christ. Confessing our sin is just like apologizing when we offend another person in any relationship that we have with them, it is admitting that we were wrong.*