

- ii. **2 Timothy 3:16-17.** The Holy Scriptures work in the life by the Spirit of God (Hebrews 4:12-13) so that the man of God may be perfect (mature) thoroughly furnished unto _____
_____.
- iii. Note in Hebrews chapter eleven, the “Hall of Faith,” how the Word of God produces the work of God whether it be an acceptable sacrifice, a life that pleases God, an ark, a sojourn in a strange land, a son, a crossing of the Red Sea, or whatever. **I must believe God’s Word,** and respond in the right way to what God has said.
- c. Knowing demands we start where we are and do what we can.
 - i. Desire to please the Lord, Psalm 37:1-7.
 - ii. Direct yourself to grow up in Him, 2 Peter 3:18.
 - iii. Determine to do His will regardless of what it is (Do not be given to picking and choosing. God will not reveal His will on the basis of our doing it if we like it. If it is your purpose to do His will, whatever, however, whenever, wherever, then you will know His will, John 7:17).
 - iv. Discipline yourself. Work at it. Follow through. Maintain your spiritual attitude. Be faithful. Give yourself to God and God will give you your place, Romans 12:1-2.
 - v. Start exercising what you can do—share, encourage, comfort, etc. It is not “show me and I will do it” BUT “do it and He will show you.”
- d. It is God’s to decide how much and what kind of service.
- e. Keep the right attitude—serve to glorify God and to profit others, 1 Peter 4:10-11, 1 Corinthians 12:7,31ff.

D. The Politics (Government) of the local Assembly

1. If, and it is true, the Church operates under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ with the Holy Scriptures as its only infallible guide for faith and practice, and the Holy Spirit of God as its Teacher, what is the need for membership within the local assembly?
 - a. The local assembly is still in the world (though it is not of the world) and thus subject to the laws of man. Furthermore, the local assembly is influenced by the nature, ways, and means of men.

- b. Membership defines the “team”—
 - i. To the local church itself—It is a covenant with one another as one body in Christ, engaging by the power of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of the local church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to support the ministry. It is important to know who is a teammate and who is not, who is with me and for me, and who is my opponent.
 - ii. To the government and the parties without the assembly with whom we do business (for legal and tax purposes, for property ownership, for contracting services to be rendered).
 - iii. To the unsaved world—we are a club but a fellowship group in Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour. We stand with conviction and are those who have the privilege, right, and responsibility to do business with the living God. (See 1 Corinthians 14:23-24). Outsiders do come in.
 - iv. God Himself is the true Keeper of the Book of Life. Revelation 20:11-15.
 - c. Membership defends the team against infiltration by the enemy—by false prophets and false teachers and the like who would for their own purpose corrupt and destroy the assembly.
2. The office or position of ELDER or BISHOP (The same office is designated by either term. See 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11; Acts 20:17-31; 1 Peter 5:1-8 (cp 2:25); Philippians 1:1; etc.
- a. The word “elder” designates one who is far entered into or advanced in years; a name of dignity, of an official position, one who is conspicuous or distinguished. It always implies understanding, wisdom, maturity; those who are presiding or the presiding ones.
 - b. The term “bishop” or “overseer” refers to a watcher, inspector, a superintendent, one who has the inspection or oversight.
 - c. These are the men recognized as those whom the Holy Spirit of God has and is qualifying for His work by means of His working (Philippians 2:12-13; Acts 20:28) to shepherd or act as a shepherd in the tending, guarding, guiding, folding, finding, feeding, etc.

- d. “The Board of Elders shall be recognized by the congregation as the ruling body of the Church in all spiritual matters and the general oversight of the Church, such as Sunday School, Young People’s Society, Missionary Society, Branch works, etc.”
(MBC Constitution Article VIII, Section 2).
 - e. “Elders shall, in cooperation with the Pastor, be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the church and shall carry on, or cause to be carried on, the ministerial functions in the absence of the Pastor. They shall make themselves available to the Pastor for counsel in matters pertaining to the encouragement and spiritual growth of the Church. It shall be their duty, in part, to visit the sick and sorrowing membership, to look after the welfare of the widows and fatherless, to investigate delinquents and endeavor to remedy any spiritual weakness in the lives of its members and to assist him in the spiritual oversight of the Church. They shall assist in ministering the ordinances of the Church and shall make the necessary provision for the same. They shall be diligent and faithful in attendance at the Board meetings and at the regular services of the Church. They shall act as a pulpit committee in the selection of a Pastor...” (MBC Constitution Article X, Section 1-C).
3. The office or position of Deacon (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-13)
- a. The word “deacon” means servant, especially a waiter at a table.
 - b. “One employed in God’s service to advance His (God’s) saving health, so called both in his relation to the Lord of salvation, Who entrusts to him the service, and in his relation to those to whom the salvation is given, and whom his labour serves.” (Colossians 1:7; 1 Corinthians 3:5-9). —Cremer
 - c. The deacon is thus used side by side with the term “Bishop” or Overseer in Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:8,12, where it means helper, those who stood by the Overseers (1 Timothy 3:1-2) as helpers. Note Tychicus’ relation to Paul in Ephesians 6:21 “and faithful _____ (or servant) in the Lord” (Colossians 4:7); compare Timothy and Erastus (Acts 19:22).
 - d. In Acts 6:1-7 we have the origin of the relationship. Men were chosen who were specially qualified, in the duties to which they were called, to stand side by side with the apostles, and afterwards with the bishops or presbyters as assistants.
 - e. “The Board of Deacons shall be recognized by the congregation as the Board vested with the authority to maintain, preserve, and improve all of the property of the Church Corporation, both personal and real, and individuals or groups desiring to use any of the Church property for their own use must receive the consent of this Board... (MBC Constitution Article VIII, Section 4).