

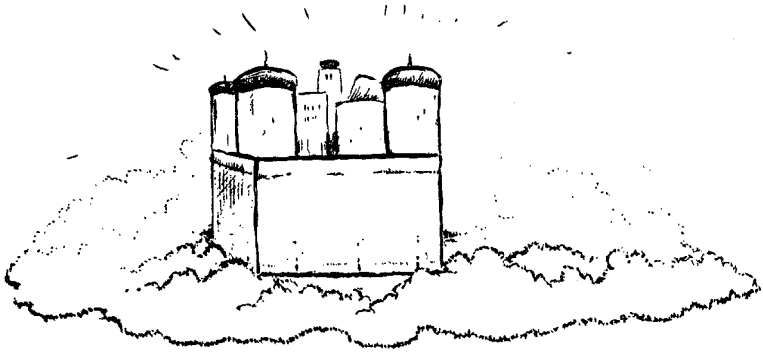
Lesson 10

The Results of Ministry

Let's take an imaginary walk down those streets of gold which we read about in Revelation 21-22. There are many people moving about enjoying fellowship. Over there I see the man who won my parents to the Lord. Now I see the Sunday school teacher who first told me the way of salvation. Oh! And there stands the first person I led to the Lord! What glorious sights!

As I walk along, I see men and women from every page of the church's history: the apostles who wrote the New Testament Scriptures which guided my life—early Christians who went to their deaths as martyrs in defense of the gospel of Jesus Christ—great missionaries who gave their lives for people of a foreign culture—humble saints who quietly did the work of the Lord in their own communities. Now I see more clearly that they all had a part in my own salvation. The gospel story has gone from one to the other, down through the ages, until it reached me in my sin and I was redeemed!

In this lesson we will look at some of the results of ministry. The greatest result is that we will be united in heaven with those who brought us to Christ, and those we brought to Him, and all together we will worship our Lord, singing with a host of angels, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!" (See Revelation 5).



lesson outline

Results in the Church
Results in the World

lesson objectives

When you have completed this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the results of the church's ministry in the church itself and in the world.
- Recognize your own responsibility to be involved in the church's ministry, and its relationship to Christ's return.
- Appreciate the effects of the church's ministry in your own life and in the world.

learning activities

1. Study the lesson according to the instructions given in Lesson 1. Be sure to read all Scriptures given, and answer all study questions.
2. Take the self-test and check your answers.
3. Review the material in Unit 3, then answer the questions in Unit Student Report 3.

key words

benefits

fulfillment

involvement

numerical

rejoicing

lesson development

RESULTS IN THE CHURCH

It is natural for us to want to see results in rewards for our labors. The believer and the church long to hear their Master say, “Well done, you good and faithful servant!” (Matthew 25:23). Even the physical universe longs to be delivered out of the decay into which it has fallen on account of man’s sin (Romans 8:20-21). But the church does not labor in vain. There are wonderful results because of its ministry. Let’s look at some of these results both for the person in ministry and for the church as a whole.

Growth

Objective 1. *Describe several ways in which growth results from ministry.*

A church that is deeply involved in ministry is a growing church. We have already seen that part of the church’s ministry to itself is for the purpose of *edification*, or building itself up. Here we are talking about *spiritual* growth. This comes through *involvement*.

A person learns to pray by praying. A person learns to witness by witnessing. As the church provides opportunities for members of the body to be involved, the members grow spiritually. Involvement builds confidence. For example, if the church has a training course for witnessing, and the instructor says, “This afternoon we are going to go out and put into practice what we have studied today,” the students will become excited. As they experience the joy of witnessing and seeing people come to Christ, their confidence will grow, and they will witness even more.

When a believer is involved in ministry, Christ occupies a central place in his heart. It is Christ who gives meaning and purpose to his life. As he becomes more aware of Christ, he grows in his understanding of himself. He gains a sense of responsibility and self-worth. He also accepts God's goals for his life. He understands that service and ministry are vital to his wholeness in Christ.

When the church is involved in active witness to the world, it is brought to a complete dependence on the working of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who gives power to witness, and all of the other helps that are necessary for a healthy spiritual condition. A church in ministry is a dynamic growing church full of vitality. As it senses the need for spiritual wisdom and prays and hungers for the power of the Holy Spirit, it experiences God's presence and power. There is a warmth of spiritual fellowship within the body. This leads to further involvement in God's ministry to the world.

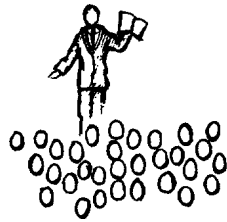
A church involved in ministry also experiences numerical growth. We see examples of this in the book of Acts:

Acts 2:41 — “Many of them believed his message and were baptized, and about three thousand people were added to the group that day.”

Acts 4:4 — “But many who heard the message believed; and the number of men grew to about five thousand.”

Acts 5:14 — “But more and more people were added to the group—a crowd of men and women who believed in the Lord.”

The story continues through the book of Acts. As people heard the message, more and more were added to the church. The church is still growing today, and yet there are many people who do not know Christ. The church's ministry is not complete until all of them have heard the gospel. A spiritually healthy church is a growing church!



MINISTRY BRINGS GROWTH

- 1 Choose the best answer: A church grows spiritually and numerically when it
 - a) has a fine building and an educated pastor.
 - b) emphasizes fellowship among the believers.
 - c) is actively involved in ministries to God, to itself, and to the world.

2 State three ways that growth results from involvement in ministry.

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Fulfillment

Objective 2. Compare ordinary fulfillment with spiritual fulfillment.

Active involvement in ministry brings real satisfaction. Jesus Himself found satisfaction in knowing that He had come to serve and not be served. He found satisfaction in doing His Father’s will. As a believer ministers, he is in harmony with himself, his neighbors, and God. This brings a sense of fulfillment.

Men who make a contribution to the world do so out of a dedication, a sense of commitment. The poet believes that nothing is as important as his poetry. The sculptor and artist give themselves to their art—they exalt it. This is why they approach the canvas and stone with such determination to make them come alive. They find fulfillment in their contribution. But this is an ordinary type of fulfillment which fades away. A great sculpture can be admired by many people over many centuries, but it will not endure forever.

The fulfillment that a believer experiences through his ministry for God has eternal value. It is seen in the light of

eternity. A soul brought to Christ will last forever. Man’s deepest needs and highest ideals can be met only in a spiritual way. In 2 Corinthians 4:18 we read, “For we fix our attention, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts forever.” Spiritual fulfillment is an eternal result of ministry. The apostle Paul expressed this sense of fulfillment near the end of his ministry. We read his words in 2 Timothy 4:7-8:

I have done my best in the race. I have run the full distance, and I have kept the faith. And now there is waiting for me the prize of victory awarded for a righteous life, the prize which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day—and not only to me, but to all those who wait with love for him to appear.



... to all who wait with love ...

- 3** How does a Christian find his greatest fulfillment?
 - a) By working hard in the church so that others will praise him
 - b) By leading someone to Christ
 - c) By contributing something of value to the world
- 4** Compare ordinary fulfillment with spiritual fulfillment. Explain which is most complete, and why.

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Rejoicing

Objective 3. *Analyze Scripture texts which refer to the joy of winning souls.*

There is great joy in serving Jesus. We have seen that one of the fruits of the Spirit is joy. Christians have many reasons to rejoice—to express their joy. First, they themselves have been redeemed! Their lives have been changed, and they are free from the burden of sin!

Christians also experience joy when they see the fruit of their labors for the Lord. Have you led someone to the Lord? Do you remember what a joyful experience that was? The Bible tells us that even the angels in heaven rejoice when a sinner repents (Luke 15:10).

Jesus compared winning souls to gathering in a harvest. Let’s look at a few Scriptures concerning the harvest and its results.

5 Read John 4:35-38, and answer these questions.

a What is meant by “the man who plants”?

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b What is meant by “the man who reaps”?

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c What does verse 36 mean?

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d What do verses 37 and 38 mean?

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Sometimes our ministries may not seem to be directly involved with sinning souls. We may not see the results of our efforts. But when we are busy serving the Lord wherever He places us, we can rejoice with others who are helping to reach the world for Christ. The missionary who goes to a distant land with the message may win many souls to Christ in that land. But the Christians who provided the funds for him to go, and all those who pray for him, will also rejoice and share in the rewards for the harvest!

Psalm 126:5-6 is sometimes called “the law of the harvest.” If we plant the seed we *shall* have a harvest, and we *shall* rejoice!

Let those who wept as they planted their crops, gather the harvest with joy! Those who wept as they went out carrying the seed will come back singing for joy, as they bring in the harvest (Psalm 126:5-6).



WE REJOICE TOGETHER

6 Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-9. How does this Scripture explain why we can rejoice together when we see someone come to Christ through the efforts of many people?

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RESULTS IN THE WORLD

In Romans 16:26 we read that the gospel—the good news about Jesus Christ—“. . . has been brought out into the open through the writings of the prophets; and by the command of the eternal God it is made known to all nations, so that all may believe and obey.”

The gospel of Christ is the fulfillment of man’s hope for a better world. Since early times man has looked forward to an age of justice and righteousness. God created a people to be the example for the world. But His chosen people, the Israelites, failed to live up to His standards. Still the people dreamed of a new age, a world of peace.

The prophets pointed to that new order of things. Read their prophecies in the following Scriptures: Isaiah 52:7; Isaiah 2:2-3; Isaiah 11:2-5; Psalm 72:12-14; Isaiah 66:12-14, 23; Isaiah 62:12. “The land will be as full of knowledge of the Lord as the seas are full of water” (Isaiah 11:9).

Jesus came announcing the kingdom of God. He was the anointed one of God to bring about a new order and a new age (Luke 4:18-21). He provided redemption to all mankind. By His death He provided the way to restore man to his original state. Man, by accepting Christ’s death, can be restored to his former fellowship with God the Creator. The church has been privileged to carry on Christ’s ministry, which offers hope to the people of the world. What are the results in the world of the church’s ministry? How has the preaching of the gospel message affected our world? In this section we will look at some important results of our ministry in the world.

Changed Lives

Objective 4. *Give examples from Scripture and from personal experience of lives changed by the gospel of Christ.*

When the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the responsibility of the church are combined, there is a change in the unbelieving world. There is a response when the gospel is preached. Evangelistic work results in new disciples for the Kingdom.

Who can explain the miracle of salvation and how it changes lives? In John chapter 9 we read the story of a blind man whom Jesus healed instantly. The man had been blind from birth. The Pharisees, who were trying to get rid of Jesus, questioned the man about his healing, and about Jesus. The man’s answer was: “I do not know . . . One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I see” (John 9:25). The man did not know *how* it happened—he only knew that it happened!

We read about another miraculous change in Acts 9. A man named Saul was on his way to Damascus to kill Christians. Suddenly there was a flashing light from the sky, and Saul fell to the ground. At that moment, he met Jesus Christ, and his life

was changed. He became the apostle Paul, the greatest missionary of the early church!



7 Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-18.

a What is the first thing that happens when someone accepts Christ?

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b What happens after this change takes place in a life (v. 18)?

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There are many other examples in Scripture of people who were instantly changed when they met Jesus: Matthew (Matthew 9:9); four fishermen (Matthew 4:18-22); a man possessed with demons (Luke 8:26-39); Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10); and others.

Perhaps you know someone who was instantly delivered of alcoholism, or drug addiction, or some other burden of sin the moment he found Jesus Christ. Whether or not you were bound in such a way, the moment you met Christ you became a new creation. When His love filled your heart, it changed your attitudes, your desires, and your behaviors.

8 Choose one of the four Gospels and see how many examples you can find of lives changed in some way when they met Jesus. Write these examples in your notebook under the heading *The Gospel Changes Lives!*

9 Can you also write down some examples from your own experience of lives that were changed through your ministry or that of your church? Write them in your notebook.

Increase In Workers

Objective 5. *Recognize how the fulfillment of the church's ministry results in an increase in workers.*

The ministry of the church results in changed lives. These lives then become living testimonies of the power of the gospel. They in turn influence others whose lives need to be changed.

This is how the early church grew. The 12 disciples were joined by 108 other disciples (followers of Christ) who waited in Jerusalem for the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:15). After they were baptized in the Spirit, these disciples went out and made new disciples, who in their turn made more disciples. It is within the church that future pastors, missionaries, and other Christian workers are being converted, trained, and prepared for the next generation of gospel ministry.

When the church is faithful in obeying the mission God has given to it, the result is that men and women are persuaded to become faithful disciples of Christ, and they take their places as responsible members of His church.

10 Which of these statements best describes the way in which the fulfillment of the church's ministry results in an increase in workers?

- a) Just as only sheep can give birth to sheep, only disciples can bring forth new disciples. As the members of the body of Christ preach the gospel, their converts in their turn become workers in the church, taking the gospel to the world.
- b) As the church becomes more active in ministering to the needs of the world it becomes more powerful, and can therefore have a greater influence in getting help with its ministries from important people in the world.

Benefits to Society

Objective 6. *List five ways that the church's ministry to the world is a benefit to society.*

Can you think of ways the world would be different if Christ had not come to the world, or if the church had not carried out His commission to preach the gospel? What about your own

country? In many places schools have been established and people taught to read and write so they could be taught from the Bible. Many languages have been put into written form by missionaries, so that the Bible could be given to the people. The inventor of the printing press was motivated by his desire to print many copies of the Bible so that people could read it for themselves. Many of the world’s greatest paintings, books, and musical compositions were inspired by the message of the gospel.

Jesus told us that we are a light in a world of darkness (Matthew 5:14-16). The gospel brings freedom, hope, and joy. It causes men and women to be better neighbors, honest in their dealings with others, faithful to their employers, loyal citizens in their community. It causes parents to teach the children to love that which is right, and hate evil. Who can say how great is the value to a community of a Christian doctor or nurse who ministers to spiritual as well as physical needs? Or the worth of a schoolteacher who loves the Lord and by his example teaches his students the true meaning of love? Wherever Christians are proclaiming the gospel, their message holds back evil.

In one African country where tribes were very fearful of one another, villages were secluded in the forests away from roads until the gospel message reached them. As people in these villages turned to Christ, they lost their fear, and entire villages moved out to the roads where they could communicate the gospel with other tribes. Large churches have been established in that area—their entire way of life has been changed!

11 List one way the gospel has affected society in each of these areas:

- a** Education:
- b** Artistic contributions:
- c** Language:
- d** Behavior:
- e** Other ways:

12 There are, of course, many other benefits to society from the preaching of the gospel that we do not have space to mention. Can you think of some benefits in your own area?

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Soon Return of Christ

Objective 7. *Explain the relationship between the church’s ministry and the return of Christ.*

Did you know that the church has an active part in determining when Christ will return to gather up His church and take it to be with Him in heaven? Jesus revealed this in his words recorded in Matthew 24:14:

And this Good News about the Kingdom will be preached through all the world for a witness to all mankind; and then the end will come.

13 Read 2 Peter 3:3-4 and 9:15.

a What reason does this Scripture give for the delay in Christ’s coming?

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b What is our responsibility in affecting His soon return (vs. 11-12)?

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Clearly we see here that God is interested in results. He is “not willing that any should perish.”(2 Peter 3:9 KJV) He wants every man, woman, and child to have an opportunity to hear about Christ. He is not pleased with the following results:

- Fishing without catching (Luke 5:4-11)
- An empty banquet table (Luke 14:15-23)
- Sowing without reaping (Matthew 13:3-9)
- A fig tree that bears no figs (Luke 13:6-9)
- Lost sheep that are not brought into the fold (Matthew 18:11-14)
- A lost coin that is sought but not found (Luke 15:8-10)
- Ripe harvests that are not reaped (Matthew 9:36-38)

We have a responsibility to take the gospel message to the *whole world*. It is through the gospel message that wholeness or completeness will come to the world. God’s grace has been shown through Christ, but Christ Himself promised that greater things were to come. The new community which He formed, the church, must be totally committed to the ushering in of that great and wonderful new age.

This is the church’s ministry: A body of believers, a new community, entrusted with a message to proclaim in such a way that Jesus Christ might be presented to the world in His fullness, as the Lord and Savior of creation, and as the soon-coming King!

14 What is the relationship between the church’s ministry and the soon return of Christ?

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This is the final lesson on *The Christian Church in Ministry*. I trust that you have been inspired to be more actively involved in the ministry of the church. I pray that the fruit of the Spirit will be very evident in your life and ministry.

After you have taken the self-test, review all of the lessons in Unit 3, then answer all of the questions in Unit Student Report 3.

I conclude with John’s final words in Revelation 22:20-21:
He who gives his testimony to all this says, “Yes indeed! I am coming soon!” So be it. Come, Lord Jesus! May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with everyone.

self-test

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space if the statement is TRUE. Write **F** if it is FALSE.

- **1** A person's spiritual growth can be measured by the amount of his involvement in ministry.
- **2** An active church depends upon the working of the Holy Spirit.
- **3** A church's numerical growth is no indication of its spiritual strength.
- **4** Fulfillment means finding real satisfaction in doing something worthwhile.
- **5** All workers in the harvest—those who plant, those who water the plants, and those who gather the fruit—will share alike in the rewards of the harvest.
- **6** God's chosen people, the Israelites, were a good example to the world.
- **7** A person's life usually changes slowly when he becomes a Christian.
- **8** Outside of the church, the world has not really been influenced by the gospel message.
- **9** The gospel of Christ is the fulfillment of man's hope for a better world.
- **10** Christ will not return until the gospel has been preached through all the world.

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Select the one best answer or completion for each item.

- 11** A person's wholeness in Christ is dependent upon his
 - a) abilities.
 - b) self-image.
 - c) goals in life.
 - d) service and ministry.

12 In the book of Acts the result of preaching the gospel message was always that

- a) the Christians were persecuted.
- b) some people believed and were added to the church.
- c) people were confused and frightened by the strange teaching.
- d) everyone who heard the message believed it.

13 The fulfillment experienced by a person who has had results in his Christian ministry is greater than that found in the world in what way?

- a) It comes from commitment and dedication.
- b) It brings him honor among men.
- c) It has eternal value.
- d) It depends on what can be seen.

14 The “law of the harvest” is that

- a) those who plant good seed will joyfully reap a harvest.
- b) there are never enough workers.
- c) most of the seed will not grow.
- d) the one who plants the seed usually doesn’t see the harvest.

15 To become a worker in the church, to tell others about Christ, is

- a) the natural result for anyone whose life has been changed by the gospel.
- b) the responsibility of special Christians chosen by God.
- c) possible only after someone has been a Christian for a long time.

16 The return of Christ has not yet taken place because God

- a) is waiting for the world to become better.
- b) wants every man, woman, and child to have a chance to accept Christ as Savior.
- c) wants to surprise us when we aren’t doing our best for Him.

answers to study questions

8 Your answer. We have given a few examples in the lesson.

1 c) is actively involved in ministries to God, to itself, and to the world.

9 Your answer.

2 (Any of these) Spiritual growth takes place as Christ becomes central in our life; as we practice involvement we gain confidence and want to do more; our involvement causes us to lean more on the Holy Spirit; growth in numbers takes place.

10 a) Only disciples can bring forth new disciples. New converts in their turn become workers.

3 b) By leading someone to Christ.

11 Your answer. Any of those ways listed in this section. For example:

- a** Schools established by missionaries.
- b** Great paintings, books, and music inspired by the gospel.
- c** Many languages put in writing to record the gospel message.
- d** People who become Christians practice love, honesty, are faithful, loyal, hold back evil by standing for what is right.
- e** Inventions such as printing press, changes in lifestyles.

4 Ordinary fulfillment is the satisfaction that comes with any job done well. Spiritual fulfillment comes from knowing we have done God's will through our ministry. Spiritual fulfillment is more complete because it is eternal. It results when souls are brought into the kingdom of God.

12 Your answer.

- 5 a** The man who plants is the one who first takes the gospel message to a sinner.
- b** The man who reaps is the one who leads the sinner to Christ.
- c** Both men rejoice when the sinner comes to Christ.
- d** We give the message to some who later come to Christ through another person's ministry. We also lead people to Christ who heard the message from someone else. We all rejoice together when a soul is won to Christ.

- 13 a** He wants to give everyone a chance to come to Him and turn away from sin.
- b** Live holy lives and do our best to make His coming soon, by telling the whole world about Him.

- 6** Because none of us can take personal credit when a person comes to Christ—it is God's grace alone which makes his salvation possible. We are simply God's partners in bringing the unsaved to Him, and we rejoice in what God has done.

- 14** The church must be faithful and work hard to fulfill the Great Commission, because it is then that Jesus will return.

- 7 a** He becomes new—his old life is gone, he has a new life in Christ.
- b** The changed person then takes to others the message that Christ can change their lives.