

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

John Isaac Edwards

An identifying mark of the New Testament church is its organization. The organization of the church is set forth in a nutshell in Philippians 1:1: *“Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.”*

1) CHRIST, THE HEAD.

The Lord’s church is not headed by some man or group of men, but by Christ, God’s Son. *“And he is the head of the body, the church...”* (Col. 1:18). The body can only act by the direction of its head (Eph. 5:23-24; Col. 3:17).

2) BISHOPS, THE

OVERSEERS. Bishops, or elders, are men who meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The work of bishops is wholly spiritual, involves flock-feeding, overseeing and example-setting, and is limited to the local church (1 Pet. 5:1-3).

3) DEACONS, THE

SERVANTS. Deacons, mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, are official servants of the church. They tend to the physical needs of the church, under the oversight of the elders.

4) SAINTS, THE LABORERS.

Saints are members of the church of God (1 Cor. 1:2), who live godly, dedicated lives and labor in word and in deed (1 Cor. 15:58).

Most churches, you will find, are not organized after the New Testament pattern. How is the church of which you are a member organized?

ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED?

John Isaac Edwards

Some teach once a person has been saved from his past sins, in becoming a Christian, he cannot so sin and fall away as to be eternally lost. This the Bible does not teach.

1) **THE BIBLE SAYS WE CAN SIN.** John said, *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us...If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar...”* (1 Jn. 1:8, 10).

2) **THE BIBLE RECORDS CHRISTIANS WHO DID SIN.** Simon, the sorcerer, believed and was baptized (Acts 8:13). He sinned and was told, *“Thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine*

heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:20-22).

3) THE BIBLE TELLS US WHAT TO DO WHEN WE SIN.

We are told to confess our sins. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 Jn. 1:9). If we can’t sin, why this teaching?

4) THE BIBLE WARNS US ABOUT SINNING AND FALLING AWAY.

“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). *“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God”* (Heb. 3:12). If it’s impossible for a child of God to sin and fall away to be forever lost, why these warnings?

GOD BLESS AMERICA

John Isaac Edwards

Prior to a National Baseball League game, we stood for the singing of Irving Berlin’s “God Bless America”. This writing makes us aware of some things we need to be doing, if we truly want God to bless America.

1) **MAKE THE LORD OUR GOD.** Psalm 33:12 says, *“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord...”* Have you made the Lord your God?

2) **LOVE GOD.** God blesses those who love Him. Moses taught, *“love the Lord thy God...and the Lord thy God shall bless thee”* (Dt. 30:16).

3) **FEAR GOD.** *“Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord”* (Ps. 112:1). Fear of God is reverence for God that moves us to do His bidding.

4) **SERVE GOD.** Exodus 23:25 teaches, *“And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he will bless thy bread, and thy water...”* Have you been serving God *“with all your heart and with all your soul”* (Josh. 22:5)?

5) **OBEY GOD.** God’s blessings have always been found in keeping His commandments. If we want God to bless us, then we need to obey God! *“Blessed are they that do his commandments”* (Rev. 22:14).

6) **CALL ON GOD.** 1 Chronicles 4:10 states, *“And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from*

evil, that it might not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.” Do you ever call on God in this way?

7) **TURN FROM OUR INIQUITIES TO BE RIGHTEOUS.** According to Acts 3:26, God sent His Son *“to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”* Our iniquities will cause God’s face to be hid from us that He will not hear (Is. 59:1-2). Peter penned, *“For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil”* (1 Pet. 3:12).

Will you turn from your iniquities to be righteous and join us in loving, fearing, serving, obeying, and calling on God so that He will bless this great nation?

prayers, we must learn to pray on His terms.

1) **MUST FIRST PRAY.** Even though God knows our needs before we even ask (Mt. 6:8), He still requires that we ask. James said, *“ye have not, because ye ask not”* (Jas. 4:2).

2) **MUST PRAY IN FAITH.** Jesus stated, *“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive”* (Mt. 21:22).

3) **MUST PRAY IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.** Jesus declared, *“that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you”* (Jn. 15:16).

4) **MUST PRAY IN THE RIGHT SPIRITUAL CONDITION.** We must abide in Christ (Jn. 15:7), be righteous (1 Pet. 3:12), be a worshipper of God and do His will (Jn. 9:31), and keep the commandments (1 Jn. 3:22).

5) **MUST PRAY ACCORDING TO GOD’S WILL.** *“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us”* (1 Jn. 5:14). Are your prayers being heard?

CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTABLE PRAYER

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The Scriptures teach us to pray (Eph. 6:18). If we want God to hear and answer our

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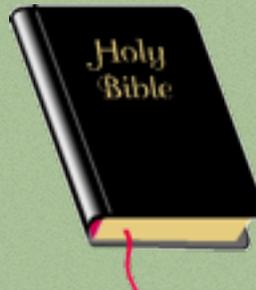
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