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there is a distinction between the individual and the local church. As we examine these passages, let us do so with an honest heart seeking to understand the teaching of God. In 1st Timothy 5:16 it says: *“If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.”* Who is to relieve widows? The individual or the church? This passage clearly shows that it is the individual’s responsibility to relieve the widow. Why? So the church is not burdened. This seems very clear to me. Now, let’s look at Acts 5:1-4: *“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”* While Ananias had the property, it was his. Once he sold the property and brought a portion of the selling price and laid it at the apostles’ feet, it changed ownership and control. Now it belonged to the church. We should be able to see the distinction here. In 1st Corinthians 11:18 it says: *“For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.”* This text clearly shows that individuals *“come together as a church.”* If they *“come together as a church”* isn’t there a way, they act separately or distributively not as the church? In Matthew 18:15-17 Jesus said: *“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that **‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’** And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.”* We should be able to clearly see that in these verses the individual and sometimes individuals are to act first in correcting this problem. Only as a last resort does the church enter into it. There

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“CUT TO THE HEART”

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Truth hurts.

“The sword of the spirit... is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). Swords are sharp things, meant to inflict pain, which is why those hearing the word of God were said to have been *“cut to the heart”* (Acts 2:37; 7:54). Two audiences are so described, both after having been accused of murdering the Son of God (2:36; 7:52).

Some of those who were cut received the lesson favorably and asked the apostles, *“Whall shall we do?”*, to which Peter replied, *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized”* (2:38), and so they were (41).

Others who were cut *“gnashed... with their teeth”* (7:54), *“cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears”* (57), and stoned the messenger to death (58).

Two crowds were convicted of their sins and both were *“cut to the heart,”* but they did not react identically. One was humbled and obeyed. Another was infuriated and disobeyed.

It is not a bad thing to be hurt by the truth, for it is written, *“no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it”* (Hebrews 12:11).

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are clearly some things the individual is to do and some things the church is to do.

Conclusion

When distinguishing what the individual and the local church may do in the areas of benevolence, edification, and evangelism, one **must** always act within the guidelines of Biblical authority. When one fails to recognize the distinction, then one will act without proper authority, resulting in a separation from God (Matthew 7:21-23).

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY

Ladies' Study @ 6:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

**Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.**

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"God sends no one away empty
except those who are full of
themselves."

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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INDIVIDUAL VERSUS CHURCH ACTION

Richie Thetford

Many people have thought that whatever the individual Christian can do, the local church can do also. There are others that say that if the local church cannot do a certain work then neither can the individual. It is important for us to find out if this is so. Can a distinction be made between the individual and the local church? If no distinction can be made, then every command given to the individual is also the duty of the local church. I maintain that a distinction is made within the pages of the Bible. The student of God's Word must recognize the distinction between the individual and the church or further study of the Bible will be accomplished with difficulty. The Word of God makes a clear distinction of what the church can do distributively or collectively. If there is no clear distinction in the Bible on what the individual or church can or cannot do, then we might simply ask this question: "If the individual functions in exactly the same way as the local church functions, why did God establish the local church at all?" There is a distinction!

The Distinction

Let's look at some passages in God's Word that clearly shows that
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