

ACTS Lesson 16

Puritan William Gurnall on interpreting scripture:

“Compare Scripture with Scripture. False doctrines like false witnesses, agree not among themselves.”

- Caesaria to Rome
- Shipwreck
 - Malta
- Paul in Rome
- The Prison Epistles
- Later writings
- Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls

God's Design for the Church

It's interesting when you look at Scripture that every time God creates something, he gives commands to explain its purpose and existence. God does this at the very beginning of Scripture. In Genesis 1 and 2, God creates the world and gives commands regarding what it's supposed to look like and how it's supposed to function.

Interestingly, King Jesus, who sits on the throne, has done the same thing in regards to the church. Jesus gave commands to the church. They are commands that Christians know well but maybe don't always connect back to the local church. We are to love God, love neighbor, and love one another.

In today's hyperindividualized culture, Edward Klink III not only demonstrates why it's vital for individuals to connect to a local church, but also reveals why it's vital to God's work in the world.

Each of those commands aim in a direction for the believer. To love God means there's this upward ministry of worship—that the church is called to gather and to lead people to know and worship God in word and deed.

The love neighbor command is very much an outward command—that we are to be engaging in our world. We are an embassy of the kingdom. We are ambassadors of the gospel. We administer God's special and common grace in our parish, in our neighborhoods, in our school districts. And finally, the third command of King Jesus in the Gospel of John is that we're supposed to love one another.

If loving God is upward and loving neighbor is outward, then love one another is inward. We are to be a family. We are to be shepherding one another, disciplining one another, caring for one another. So, God didn't just create the church into existence and then leave it alone. He gave three commands to explain the purpose of the church. The church is called and commanded to love God, love neighbor, and love one another.

Edward W. Klink III is the author of *The Local Church: [What It Is and Why It Matters for Every Christian](#)*.