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Series: [The Anatomy of a Church](#)

# The Anatomy of a Church (3)

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[Acts 20:28](#)

(Continuation from 12/08/13)

*[Hold] fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.*

[Colossians 2:19; NASB](#)

*He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.*

[Colossians 1:18; NASB](#)

## The Skeletal Structure

**Theme:** Anatomy is the study of how they fit and function together.

The church is a body, and we should look closely at its anatomy. [Everybody](#) has certain features: a skeleton, internal systems, muscles, and flesh.

A [church](#) needs to have the proper framework (a skeleton), internal systems (certain attitudes), muscles (different functions), and flesh (the form of the programs). Remove any one of those key features, and the body cannot survive. **Anatomy is the study of how they fit and function together.** Let's look at the anatomy of a church.

### The Anatomy of a Church

1. The Skeletal Structure
2. The Internal Systems
3. The Muscles
4. The Head

### The Anatomy of a Church

1. The Skeletal Structure
  - 1) A High View of God
  - 2) The Absolute Authority of Scripture
  - 3) Sound Doctrine
  - 4) Personal Holiness
  - 5) Spiritual Authority
- 1) The proper framework (a skeleton),
- 2) The internal systems (certain attitudes),
- 3) The muscles (different functions), and
- 4) The flesh (the form of the programs).

The question that needs to be answered is the following: **What is the Church?**

## The Skeletal Structure

Writing to his congregation, the apostle Peter said, **“I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the present truth”** ([2 Peter 1:12](#)).

[2 Peter 1:12 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you *already* know *them*, and have been established in the truth which is present with *you*.

Peter had a high calling from God, and he didn't want to be irresponsible about how he handled it. He didn't want to be negligent to those he was called to teach, so he continually reminded the people of what they had already learned. He was saying, “I know that you already know these things, but you need to be reminded about them.”

Continuing in [verse 13](#) he says, **“I think it fitting, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle ... I will endeavor that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance”** ([vv. 13–15](#)). There is virtue in repeating basics that shouldn't be forgotten. That is what I would like to do now.

[2 Peter 1:13-15 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>13</sup>I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly* dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,

<sup>14</sup>knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly* dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

<sup>15</sup>And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

For this first part of our study about church leadership, I am going to use the analogy the apostle Paul uses in [1 Corinthians 12:12–31](#).

[1 Corinthians 12:12-31 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>12</sup>For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

<sup>13</sup>For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

<sup>14</sup>For the body is not one member, but many.

<sup>15</sup>If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not *a part* of the body," it is not for this reason any the less *a part* of the body.

<sup>16</sup>And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not *a part* of the body," it is not for this reason any the less *a part* of the body.

- <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?
- <sup>18</sup> But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.
- <sup>19</sup> If they were all one member, where would the body be?
- <sup>20</sup> But now there are many members, but one body.
- <sup>21</sup> And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."
- <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary;
- <sup>23</sup> and those *members* of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable,
- <sup>24</sup> whereas our more presentable members have no need *of it*. But God has *so* composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that *member* which lacked,
- <sup>25</sup> so that there may be no division in the body, but *that* the members may have the same care for one another.
- <sup>26</sup> And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.
- <sup>27</sup> Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.
- <sup>28</sup> And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues.
- <sup>29</sup> All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not *workers of* miracles, are they?
- <sup>30</sup> All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?
- <sup>31</sup> But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

The church is a body, and we should look closely at its anatomy. Everybody has certain features: a **skeleton**, **internal systems**, **muscles**, and **flesh**. A church needs to have the **proper framework** (a skeleton), **internal systems** (certain attitudes), **muscles** (different functions), and **flesh** (the form of the programs). Remove any one of those key features, and the body cannot survive. **Anatomy is the study of how they fit and function together.** Let's look at the anatomy of a church.

**We start with the skeleton.** For a body to function, it has to have structure. The skeleton gives vertebrate animals their structure. Likewise, there are certain skeletal truths that a church must be committed to if it is to have a sound structure. **These doctrines are unalterable and nonnegotiable; they cannot be compromised in any way.** Yield on any of these points, and you destroy the skeleton—*the church ceases to be a church and becomes an amorphous blob instead.*

## A HIGH VIEW OF GOD

**It is absolutely essential that a church perceive itself as an institution established for the glory of God.** I fear that the church in America has descended from that lofty purpose and focused instead on humanity. Today the church seems to think its goal is to help people feel better about themselves. It offers people nothing more than spiritual placebos. It focuses on psychology, self-esteem, entertainment, and a myriad of other diversions to try to meet felt needs.

The church has been reduced from an organism that emphasizes knowing and glorifying God to an organization **that focuses on man's needs**. Yet if you know and glorify God, the needs of your life are answered. **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”** ([Proverbs 9:10](#)).

[Proverbs 9:10 \(NASB\)](#)

**<sup>10</sup>The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.**

When you have a right relationship with God, everything else will fall into its proper place. I am not saying that we should ignore people's needs. We are to be concerned about people the same way God is. **But a balance must be found, and that begins with a high view of God.** We must take God seriously.

I feel righteous indignation toward preachers and others who want to take God off His throne and turn Him into a servant who has to do whatever they demand of Him. People tend to be irreverent; they do not know how to worship God. Some people think that worship is anything that induces a warm feeling. They know little about God. **There are too many Marthas and not enough Marys in the church** ([Luke 10:38-42](#)).

[Luke 10:38-42 \(NASB\)](#)

**<sup>38</sup>Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.**

**<sup>39</sup>She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word.**

**<sup>40</sup>But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.”**

**<sup>41</sup>But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things;**

**<sup>42</sup>but *only* one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”**

We are so busy serving that **we don't** take the time to sit at Jesus' feet. **We don't** tremble at God's Word. **We don't** allow ourselves to be confronted by God's holiness and our sinfulness so that He can use us for His glory.

When a person dies, we have a tendency to say, **“How could God let that happen?”** We have no right to ask that. We should ask, **“Why are we still alive?”** God, being holy, could

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have destroyed man when he first fell into sin. Just because God is gracious toward us is no cause for us to be indifferent. God must be taken seriously.

Look in your Christian bookstore. The vast majority of books written today attack only trivial problems. During the eras when the church was most holy, Christians had very few books to read, but the books they did have told them how to have a relationship with God. Most books today don't do that.

A survey taken at a nationwide pastors' conference revealed that most pastors feel they need more help in dealing with families. In spite of all the books available on family-related issues, that's still an area where Christian leaders need more help. So the answer isn't to write more materials about the family. The problem is that people aren't taking God seriously enough to walk according to His laws. If families were taught a high view of God, there would not be as many family problems in the church.

**James 4:8 says, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."**

**James 4:8-10 (NASB)**

**<sup>8</sup> Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**

**<sup>9</sup> Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.**

**<sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.**

Would you like to live your life with God near you? If you draw close to God, He will come close to you. But you say, "When I get near God, it is easy to become nervous." That's why **James 4:8** also says, "**Cleanse your hands, ye sinners.**" The closer you get to God, the more you see your own sin. Consequently, you will humble yourself and mourn over your sin. **James 4:10** says that when you've humbled yourself before the Lord, "**He shall lift you up.**"

We must take God seriously and exalt Him; we don't want to have a man-centered church. We are to reach out to people in the love of Christ, but God is still to be the focus of our worship and our life.