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**http://www.granbychurchofchrist.org/images/what-i1.jpgWhat Is A Strong Church?****Introduction:**What is a strong church?  Many people would answer the question by responding that it is one with large numbers of members, a large budget, a beautiful building, influential people and such like.  But how would God answer the question?  That’s what is truly important.**Body:****I.**  **Love for God**  First commandment  (Mark 12:28-34) “. . . ‘Which is the first commandment of all?’. . . ‘And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’  This is the first commandment. . .”  NKJV  Is seen in obedience  (John 14:15, 21-24) “If you love Me, keep My commandments. 21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. . . .”  NKJV  Leads to service  (II Corinthians 5:14-15) “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus:  that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”  NKJV**II.**  **Love for Each Other**  Second commandment  (Matthew 22:37-39) “39And the second is like it:  You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” NKJV  This love should be of such a nature that it is noticed by non-Christians.  (John 13:34-35) “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.  By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”  NKJV  Love is a distinguishing mark of Christ’s followers.**III.**  **A Strong Bible Emphasis**  The Word must be taught and preached without compromise.  (II Timothy 4:1-4) “2Preach the word!  Be ready in season and out of season.  Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.  3-4For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” NKJV  This is a very solemn charge because it is done before God Himself !  Woe to all who compromise the truth.  (I Timothy 5:20-21) “Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.  I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.”  NKJV  It is the pure Word of God which builds Christians up.  (Acts 20:32) “So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”  NKJV  Each Christian is to rightly divide the Word of truth.  (II Timothy 2:15) “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”  NKJV**IV.**  **Each Member Is to Live A Holy Life**  We should not be living like the world.  (Romans 12:1-2) “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.  And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”  NKJV  Our speech and behavior are not to be like an ungodly society.  It involves the total person.  A holy life means turning away from certain actions and toward others.  (Titus 2:11-12) “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,”  NKJV  Christians are to exercise caution in how they live.  (Ephesians 5:15-16) “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”  NKJV**V.**  **Willing to Work**  Be “zealous for good works.”  (Titus 2:14) “who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”  NKJV  Note also (Titus 3:8) “This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works.  These things are good and profitable to men.”  NKJV  Behaving like a Christian means being diligent in our service.  (Romans 12:11-13) “not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.”  NKJV  This work also includes soul-winning.  (Acts 5:42)  “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”  NKJV  (Acts 8:4) “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.”  NKJV**Conclusion:**Notice that none of these qualities of a strong church depend upon having a large attendance or budget, a beautiful new building or lots of influential members.  Sometimes these can keep a church from being strong. Bobby Stafford June 21, 2015[More on Worship](http://www.granbychurchofchrist.org/Studies.htm#Worship) |
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