

Lesson 1

- **Why is the church the heart of God's plan for the world?**

- Because the Holy Spirit "*fitly joins us together*" so our diverse talents, skills, abilities, and spiritual gifts complement each other in meeting people's diverse needs so they can be rooted and grounded in Christ and become maturing fruitful Christians.

- **What is the essential foundation?**

- Without the Lord's answer to these questions, we will by default, do what is right in our own eyes.
 - **PURPOSE** => Why are we here?
 - **GOAL** => Where are we going?
 - **PLAN** => How are we going to get there?

- **How do churches function if the foundation is missing?**

- Consider a typical planning retreat:
 - Brainstorming is exciting
 - Decision-making is difficult if leaders lack unity regarding top priorities, as given by God.
 - Decisions made are influenced more by whose ideas they are and how passionately they push.
 - Results in activities like parallel lines that don't meet, lack focus, compete for limited resources, fill the calendar, spend the budget, become ends within themselves, and produce aging spectators instead of maturing ministers.

- **How does the parable of the talents speak to this? (Matthew 25:14-30)**

- The master is Christ
- The servants are church leaders
- The possessions are church members
- We (church leaders) must give an account to the Master (Christ) of whether or not we have been good Stewards with a good return on the investment of His Possessions (the members)