

S T U D Y G U I D E

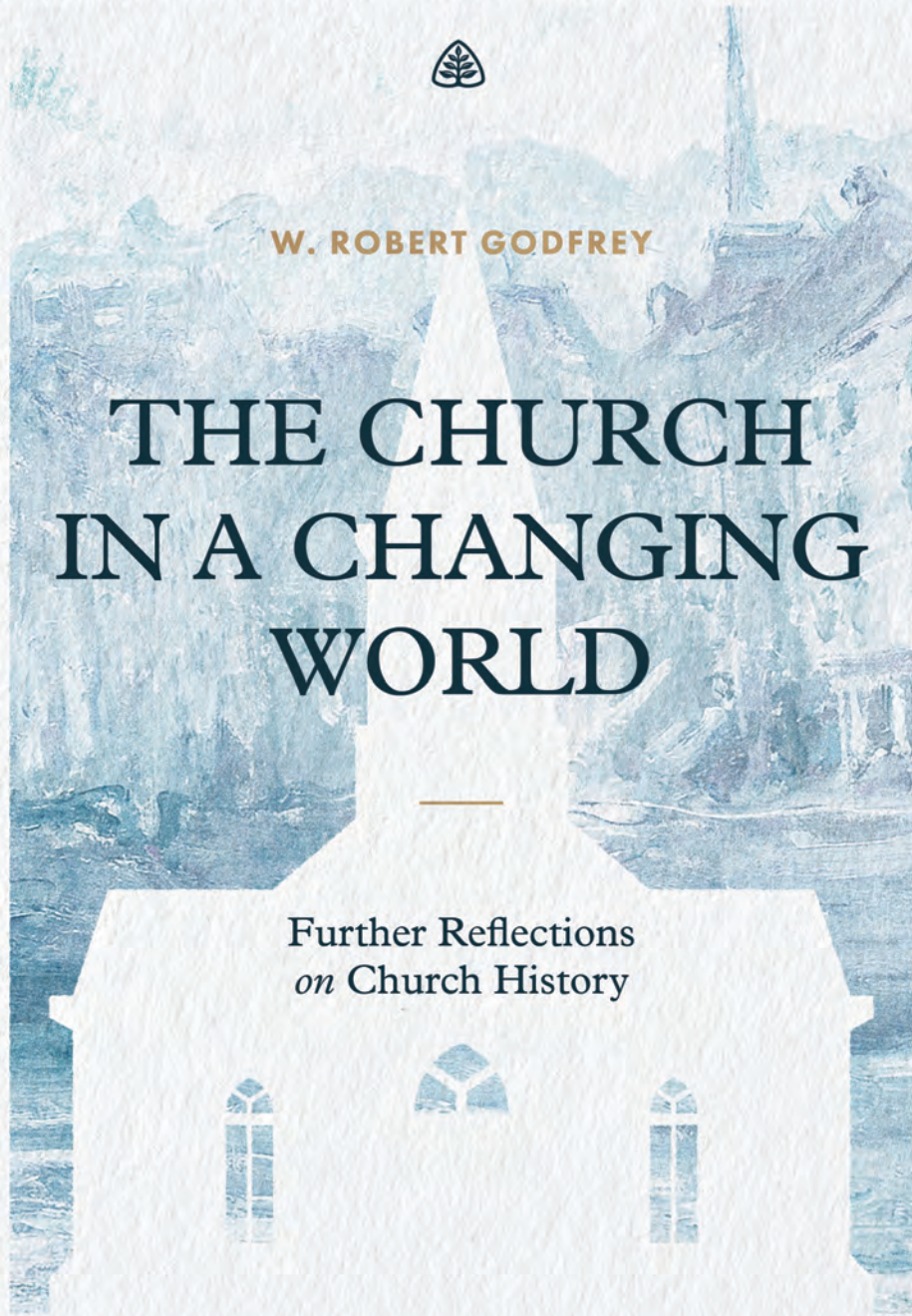


W. ROBERT GODFREY

# THE CHURCH IN A CHANGING WORLD

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Further Reflections  
*on Church History*



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# The Church in a Changing World

Further Reflections  
on Church History

W. Robert Godfrey



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

*Renew your Mind.*

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# Introduction

Many Christians find themselves disoriented in the strange new world of secular ideologies. How did everything change so fast? What should we do about society's rejection of Christian values? In this teaching series, Dr. W. Robert Godfrey provides critical reflection on recent church history and the transition to a secular age, arguing why Christians must be persuasive people for the sake of the gospel.

This study guide is a companion to the video teaching series. Whether you are using the DVDs, streaming the videos on Ligonier.org, or going through the course in Ligonier Connect, this resource is designed to help you make the most of the learning experience. For each message in the series, there is a corresponding lesson in this guide. Here is what you will find in each lesson:

INTRODUCTION	<p>The introduction is a brief paragraph that summarizes the content covered in the lecture and considered in the study guide lesson.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use the introduction to each lesson to get a sense of the big picture before watching the video. Refer to these statements as you work through the study guide to remind yourself of what you have already covered and where you are headed.</p>
LEARNING GOALS	<p>The learning goals are the knowledge and skills that the study guide lesson will endeavor to equip you with as you work through the lecture content.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Familiarize yourself with the goals of each lesson before engaging its contents. Keeping the overall purpose in mind as you watch each video and reflect on or discuss the questions will help you get the most out of each lesson.</p>
KEY IDEAS	<p>The key ideas are the major points or takeaways from the lecture.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use these ideas to prepare yourself for each lesson and to review previous lessons. They describe specifically the knowledge that each lecture is communicating.</p>

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	<p>The questions are the guided reflection and/or discussion component of the lesson that is intended to help you prepare for, process, and organize what you are learning.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Reflect on individually or discuss in a group the questions in the order in which they appear in the lesson. The time stamps in the right margin indicate where the answers to questions during the video can be found.</p>
PRAYER	<p>The prayer section offers suggestions for how to close the lesson in prayer with respect to what was taught in the lecture.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Consider using each lesson's prayer section as a guide to personal or group prayer. These sections follow the ACTS prayer model, which you can learn more about in R.C. Sproul's Crucial Questions booklet <i>Does Prayer Change Things?</i> This helpful guide is available as a free e-book at <a href="http://Ligonier.org">Ligonier.org</a>.</p>
REVIEW QUIZ	<p>The review quiz is a set of six multiple-choice questions that appears at the end of each lesson.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use each quiz to check your comprehension and memory of the major points covered in each lecture. It will be most beneficial to your learning if you take a lesson's quiz either sometime between lessons or just before you begin the next lesson in the study guide.</p>
ANSWER KEY	<p>The answer key provides explanations for the reflection and discussion questions and answers to the multiple-choice questions in the review quiz.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use the answer key to check your own answers or when you do not know the answer. Note: Do not give in too quickly; struggling for a few moments to recall an answer reinforces it in your mind.</p>

# Study Schedules

The following table suggests four plans for working through *The Church in a Changing World* video teaching series and this companion study guide. Whether you are going through this series on your own or with a group, these schedules should help you plan your study path.

	<b>Extended 10-Week Plan</b>	<b>Standard 8-Week Plan</b>	<b>Abbreviated 5-Week Plan</b>	<b>Intensive 4-Week Plan</b>
<b>Week</b>	<b>Lesson</b>			
<b>1</b>	*	1	1	1 & 2
<b>2</b>	1	2	2 & 3	3 & 4
<b>3</b>	2	3	4 & 5	5 & 6
<b>4</b>	3	4	6 & 7	7 & 8
<b>5</b>	4	5	8	
<b>6</b>	5	6		
<b>7</b>	6	7		
<b>8</b>	7	8		
<b>9</b>	8			
<b>10</b>	*			

\* For these weeks, rather than completing lessons, spend your time discussing and praying about your learning goals for the study (the first week) and the most valuable takeaways from the study (the last week).

# Defining Christendom

## INTRODUCTION

Life has changed drastically for Christians in the twenty-first century. The fundamentals of a Christian worldview were once assumed, and now they are denied. How did we get here? And what brought about this new and seemingly disorienting feeling that we now have? In this lesson, Dr. Godfrey defines Christendom and surveys some historical realities that have led to the displacement of the Christian worldview from society.

## LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Explain what Christendom is and how it was started
- Point out the remnants of Christendom in our modern day
- Understand how events such as the French Revolution had an impact on Christendom

## KEY IDEAS

- The end of Christendom places Christians in a new and disorienting historical situation.
- Christendom once played a major role in Western social and political life, but its end is not Christianity's demise because Christianity is different from Christendom.
- Enlightenment social and political thought played a significant role in the decline of Christendom.

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## REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Before the Video

#### *What Do You Think?*

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- How would you describe the society you live in? How does it compare to the past? Do you remember a time when things seemed better?
- Should Christians be concerned with what is going on in the world? Why or why not?

#### *Scripture Reading*

*Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples! Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works! Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice! Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually! Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered, O offspring of Abraham, his servant, children of Jacob, his chosen ones!*

—Psalm 105:1–6

- Why does this psalm say that people should give thanks to the Lord?

### During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

#### *Introduction and the Origins of Christendom*

0:00–12:00

- How many years of change is Dr. Godfrey responding to in this teaching series? Why?
- When did the pope gain authority over the whole Western church? What does this reveal about Protestantism?

*The Presence and Decline of Christendom*

12:00–24:12

- What are some of the established churches of the major European countries? What does the status of being established by the state mean for these churches?
- Why has the end of Christendom affected society so much, and why is it such an impactful reality in the history of Christianity?

## After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- According to Dr. Godfrey, what is Christendom, how did it begin, and who started it?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss how the history of Christendom has affected the history of Christianity. Ask: Was the development of Christendom good for the church? Why or why not?

- How are the coronations of kings and queens today part of the last vestiges of Christendom? What does this reveal about the manifestation of Christendom's place in today's world?

If you are in a group, have the members give other examples of Christendom's presence or history in society. Ask: What do these remains of Christendom tell us about the world?

- What was the French Revolution? How did it begin and end, and what was its impact on Christendom?

If you are in a group, ask the members what a Christian view of revolution and change should look like. Ask: How can revolution be good and/or bad for a society?

## PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God that He transcends and rules over all of human history.
- Confess the areas in your life in which Christianity has been a mere formality.

- Thank God for His promise in Christ to build the church such that the gates of hell will not prevail against it.
- Ask God for a greater assurance of His providential care for the church in this secular age.

## REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. The end of which of these things has led to the disorientation of Christians in the world today?
  - a. The Holy Roman Empire
  - b. The Roman Catholic Church
  - c. Christendom
  - d. All of the above
2. Which British historian and expert on the late Roman period did Dr. Godfrey continually reference?
  - a. Peter Heather
  - b. Rowan Williams
  - c. Tom Holland
  - d. N.T. Wright
3. Christendom still exists in some form.
  - a. True
  - b. False
4. What began to unravel Christendom in the West?
  - a. The Renaissance
  - b. The Reformation
  - c. The Counter-Reformation
  - d. The Hundred Years' War
5. Which country emphasized getting rid of the old world to create a new world during the Enlightenment?
  - a. England
  - b. Germany
  - c. The Netherlands
  - d. France
6. What staple of society did the French Revolution try to shed to eliminate Christian influence?
  - a. The twenty-four-hour day
  - b. The seven-day week
  - c. The Ten Commandments
  - d. All of the above

# Answer Key—Defining Christendom

## REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Before the Video

#### *What Do You Think?*

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

#### *Scripture Reading*

- Why does this psalm say that people should give thanks to the Lord?  
*Psalm 105 declares that people should give thanks to the Lord because of His wondrous works throughout history. God's goodness and faithfulness in the work of redemption is what guides our thoughts and thanksgiving back to Him.*

### During the Video

#### *Introduction and the Origins of Christendom*

- How many years of change is Dr. Godfrey responding to in this teaching series? Why?  
*After completing his original seventy-three-part series on church history, Dr. Godfrey follows it with a postlude to give Christians some direction in light of recent changes. A lot can change in a year, let alone the dramatic changes of the last decade or so. Dr. Godfrey aims to explain the last fifteen years of change, which have left many Christians feeling surprised and disoriented in the world.*
- When did the pope gain authority over the whole Western church? What does this reveal about Protestantism?  
*According to Dr. Godfrey and Peter Heather, the pope did not have universal jurisdiction over the Western church until 1100 or possibly even later. This shows that Protestantism is not a deviation from the church of the Apostles, but rather that the Protestant Reformation was against a system that was relatively novel.*

#### *The Presence and Decline of Christendom*

- What are some of the established churches of the major European countries? What does the status of being established by the state mean for these churches?  
*Among major European countries, there are a variety of state churches. In the United Kingdom, there are the Anglican church and the Presbyterian church (in Scotland). In the Scandinavia nations and Germany, there is the Lutheran church, although Germany also has state Roman Catholic churches in particular areas.*

*In the Netherlands, there is the Reformed church. Because these churches are established state churches, they are supported by tax money even if they are nearly empty most Sundays.*

- Why has the end of Christendom affected society so much, and why is it such an impactful reality in the history of Christianity?

*The end of Christendom has affected society and changed the course of Christian history because Christendom, in many ways, defined the historic culture of the West and was its predominant influence. Because of this, the end of Christendom both changes society and affects Christian history as a new phenomenon in a new and emerging culture.*

#### After the Video

- According to Dr. Godfrey, what is Christendom, how did it begin, and who started it?

*Christendom, as defined by Dr. Godfrey, “is a situation in which Christianity has become the official religion, the legal religion, with the full support of the state.” This originally began in the fourth century when Constantine gave sanction to Christianity in the Roman Empire. This identification of the church by the state persisted through and after the Roman Empire in the Western world.*

- How are the coronations of kings and queens today part of the last vestiges of Christendom? What does this reveal about the manifestation of Christendom’s place in today’s world?

*As Dr. Godfrey noted, the coronations of kings and queens in the United Kingdom have remnants of Christendom in them. The coronation ceremonies include the rulers’ vow to “uphold the Protestant Reformed religion,” which traditionally meant the establishment of Protestantism as the expression of Christianity practiced in England. This is now an empty ceremony, since little credence is given to the content of the vows that are made. For this reason, Dr. Godfrey called empty practices such as these “the last pale shadows of Christendom,” which is at its end.*

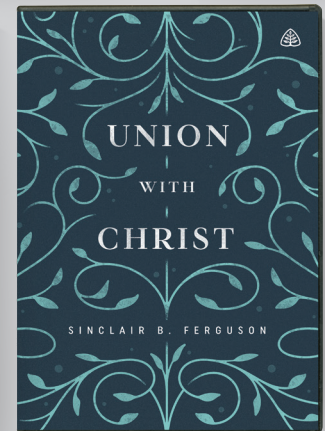
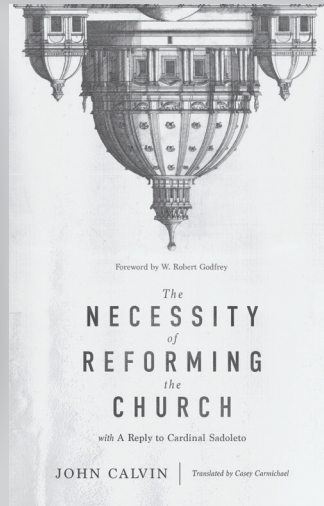
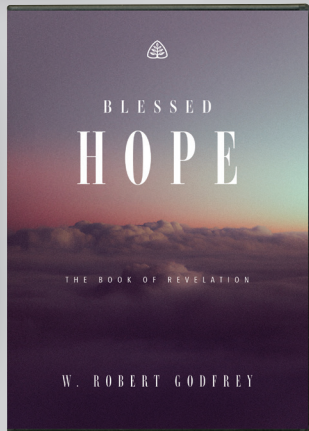
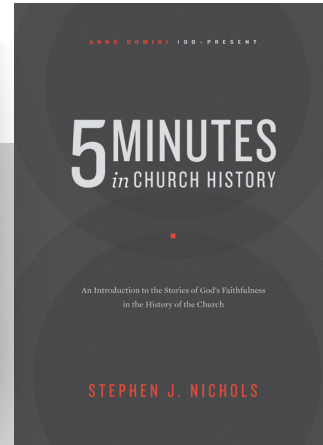
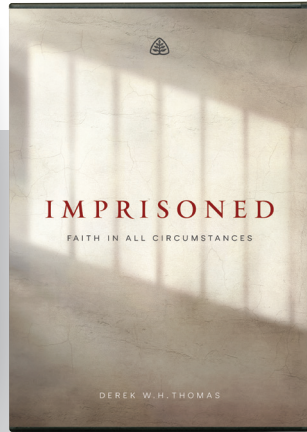
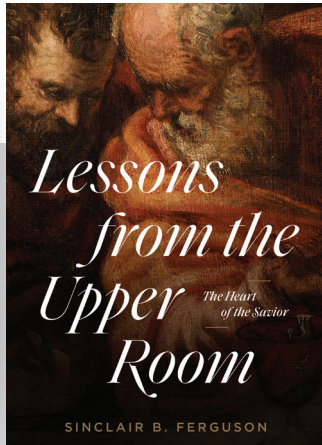
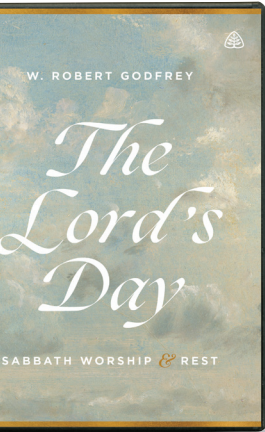
- What was the French Revolution? How did it begin and end, and what was its impact on Christendom?

*The French Revolution of the eighteenth century was the attempt of the French people to overthrow the monarchy and traditional systems of power or authority in the nation of France. The revolution began with the spread of ideas against the monarchy and against the established church in France. Shortly after the revolution ended, Napoleon was made emperor of France, which undid much of the revolution’s political change. Although many of the changes were not lasting, this was the first attack on Christendom and presented a picture of life without the established church for Europe, leading directly to deeper changes in the nineteenth century.*

## REVIEW QUIZ

1. **C.**  
*The end of Christendom has contributed most significantly to the disorientation of Christians in our modern day. Society no longer embraces the fundamentals of the Christian worldview, but Christianity remains alive and well even without Christendom.*
2. **A.**  
*Dr. Godfrey relied on Peter Heather’s work titled Christendom to explain the development of Christianity from Constantine to the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. Dr. Godfrey used this resource because it shows the foundation of Christendom in the Middle Ages and how the Roman Catholic system emerged.*
3. **A.**  
*Although Christendom is no longer at the height of power and has lost most of its influence, it nevertheless remains active in a lesser degree throughout various parts of Europe.*
4. **B.**  
*Although it was ultimately a good thing, the Reformation began to unravel Christendom by removing the ideal of one emperor and one church. Since the Roman Catholic Church was the only church in the West for a time, the move in the Reformation against the corruptions of Rome began the decline of Christendom as a single institutional force.*
5. **D.**  
*Although the attitude throughout all of Europe began to change with the Enlightenment, this was particularly the case in France. French thinkers such as Voltaire and Rousseau were insistent on ushering in a new age. In France, such thinkers and ideas were a major cause of the French Revolution, which actually attempted to start a new world.*
6. **B.**  
*As the French Revolution overturned many traditions and customs, it went so far as to attempt to change the seven-day week into a ten-day week. This practice did not last long, but it showed how committed the revolutionaries were to the idea of dismantling the realities that had shaped the world to usher in a new one.*

We want to see men and women around the world connect  
the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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