



As you research and visit a church, circle one answer for each item. The items marked **ESSENTIAL** are the non-negotiables. Point values are shown in parentheses. When you are done, add up your circled points and find your zone in the scoring guide at the end.

## this is just a guide

*This is only a helpful tool, by no means exhaustive, and never a replacement for the leading of the Holy Spirit. If you are seeking the Lord, He will guide you, even a new or young believer, faithfully and tenderly. Sometimes a church will not be exactly what you expected, and that is okay. Listen to His leading above any score on a page.*

## core doctrine

*The non-negotiables. These are gatekeepers.*

1 **ESSENTIAL** They affirm the Bible as the inspired, authoritative, inerrant Word of God.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

2 **ESSENTIAL** They affirm Christ as virgin-born, the Son of God, fully God and fully man.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

3 **ESSENTIAL** They affirm His physical death and bodily resurrection.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

4 **ESSENTIAL** They affirm salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

5 **ESSENTIAL** They can clearly explain the gospel when asked.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

## the preaching

*What is actually being fed to the people.*

6 The Word is genuinely preached and handled in context, not proof-texted.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

7 The gospel is preached and sin is named honestly.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

8 Christ is central, not personality, politics, or production.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

9 Their teaching is consistent over time (recent and older messages line up).

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

## doctrine often left unstated

*Worth asking directly.*

10 They give a clear, thoughtful answer on the security of the believer.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

11 They are clear on spiritual gifts, tongues, and the charismatic question.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

12 They hold a biblical view of marriage, sexuality, and gender.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

13 They handle baptism and the Lord's Supper with biblical seriousness.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

## practice and life

*How they actually live it out.*

14 The church is governed well, with qualified, accountable elders.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

15 They practice loving church discipline and accountability.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

16 They teach grace-giving and are transparent about where money goes.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

17 They distinguish essentials from secondary matters with grace.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

18 They point people to trustworthy teachers, authors, and ministries.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

## heart and witness

*What you see and feel.*

19 People inside the body genuinely love and care for one another.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

20 They welcome the outsider and the stranger with warmth.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

21 Christ and the Word are clearly at the center of everything.

Yes / Solid (2)  Unclear (1)  No / Concern (0)

## add up your score

Add up the points you circled (Yes / Solid = 2, Unclear = 1, No / Concern = 0). Divide your total by 42 to get your percent, then find your zone below. But first, check the essentials, they come before any number.

My points:  / 42 possible =  %

**If you circled No / Concern on any Essential (items 1 to 5):** that outweighs your total. A church cannot be sound while denying a core truth of the faith. Treat it as **Concern**, whatever the number says.

**If you circled Unclear on any Essential (items 1 to 5):** do not score it higher than **Caution**. The essentials are too important to leave uncertain, go and find out plainly before you decide.

### **STRONG**

**85% +**

Strong, consistent marks of soundness. A hopeful sign, keep praying and weighing.

### **GOOD**

**70 to 84%**

Many good signs. Note the unclear answers and follow up, but worth pursuing.

### **CAUTION**

**50 to 69%**

A mixed picture. Slow down, ask more, and lean hard on the Lord's leading.

### **CONCERN**

**Under 50%**

A lot of concern. Take it to the Lord and the Word, not this number alone.

***"Taste and see that the Lord is good." Psalm 34:8***

*A guide, not the final word. Trust the leading of the Holy Spirit.*

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