

Discipleship 101
Acts 2:42-47
Notes

Today we will look at the marks of devotion displayed by the church in Acts.

We will see a devotion to God's word, to the church, to one another, and to prayer and how this devotion caused them to serve one another in ministry and serve the community in outreach and evangelism.

And it was this devotion that led to the world being turned upside down for Jesus.

What can a life devoted to Jesus accomplish? What difference can it make?

What might your life look like, what difference might you make if it was truly devoted to Christ?

Acts 2:42-47 is on the heels of the 3,000 people coming to faith in Christ following Peter's sermon.

⁴² They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. ⁴⁶ Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

I. DEVOTED TO THE WORD

Our devotion to the word of God will inspire and empower us to live a life of meaning and purpose that glorifies God and brings sinners the great news of Jesus' redemption.

These 3,000 plus people who were just saved by the power of the Holy Spirit are now living, working, and serving together.

Verse 42 acts as a summary verse with verses 43-47 giving us specific description of some of the details of verse 42.

Notice the word Luke uses to describe the attitude of these new disciples.

“Devoted” – ‘to persist in adherence to a thing; to be intently engaged in, attend constantly to;

To be devoted means you are all in; this is not a side gig; this is not something like a hobby that you do off and on. To be devoted is your main objective.

These new disciples were devoted to the word, to the church, to one another, and to prayer.

And what is interesting about this word is the English translation “continually devoted” is actually one word in Greek, but it is a present active verb which means it is a continual activity, never given up.

Each day these new disciples were strangely focused on these things.

But let’s pause for a moment to look at this first description.

They were devoted to the apostles’ teaching.

The apostles’ teaching consisted of preaching and teaching the OT in light of the life, death, and exaltation of Jesus and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit.

They were devoted to hearing, understanding, and living out the word of God.

Many of us have more Bibles in our homes than most churches in many third-world countries.

Our lives are more often than not, not devoted to anything much less the Word of the Living God.

Donald Whitney stated, “There is simply no healthy Christian life apart from a diet... of Scripture.”

Failure to devote ourselves to the Word has led many believers and subsequently churches to part ways with the Bible’s clear teachings and we see this right now in our culture in the most obvious way when it comes to LBGTQ issues.

We see so many churches struggling; so many believers taking the world’s stance on gender and sexuality.

The church is actually fighting WITH ITSELF over simple, straightforward biblical principles such as sex, sexuality, gender, and marriage.

We shouldn’t be fighting or arguing with ourselves over this. Christians shouldn’t have to wonder; the Bible clearly teaches what it means to be made in the image of God; clearly instructs what the institution of marriage is to be and means; pointedly tells us what it means to be a man or a woman.

The church’s lack of devotion to the Word of God is causing a falling away from the Bible’s clear understandable timeless truths.

We should expect society to sin and act opposite to the Word of God, we should not expect the church to do the same.

If we are to take a stand; if we are to be firm in our commitments; if we are to not only raise our children, but fortify them to withstand and fight the attacks of the World, we must teach them and model for them what it means to be devoted to the Word.

Without the Word of God, we are powerless, and we cannot and will not make an impact in our families and communities.

Our devotion to the Word is strengthened as we hear, read, and study the Word.

How often do you need to read the Bible? How often are you tempted to sin? How often do you sin? How often do you face problems and pressures?

If our growth in godliness were measured by the quality of our devotion to God's word, what would be the result?

Our devotion to Christ begins with a devotion to his Word.

II. DEVOTED TO THE CHURCH (FELLOWSHIP)

Our devotion to Christ's church will be in seen its place of value and subsequent priority level in our lives

The second devotion we see observe in these new disciples is their devotion to fellowship or the church.

If we are not devoted to the Word, we won't be devoted to the church.

Verse 46 tells us that every day they were worshipping in the temple and going to one another's house.

They wanted to worship God with others. They desired to be in the church.

They did not allow the pressures or pull of the world to keep them from being in God's house with God's people.

At this point this new religion of baby Christian believers had not made a stir in the religious society and these Jewish believers were still allowed to worship in the temple.

The text says they devoted themselves to fellowship (koinonia).

Fellowship- "koinonia"-is more than just a group of people, more than just hanging out. They were connected by the Spirit.

They had a deep sense of love for one another.

Koinonia is a deep sense of love for one another, and this love was on display as they worshipped together in the temple.

Noticed what it caused them to do-be where God's people were-the temple.

When that wasn't enough, they met at each other's houses

Many see the church today as an expendable activity, usually the first to be cut when time gets tight or bodies get tired.

Parents don't bring kids to church- they send them without someone else or they find themselves at the mercy of whatever sport is in season that Sunday.

If baseball or other sport starts up, we put the diamond idol up at the house cause that's what we are worshipping.

Verse 46 tells us another aspect of their devotion to the church.

They were breaking bread together.

This breaking bread consisted of two parts:

- Meal (equipping one another)
- Lord's Supper (great act of worship)

A devotion to the church is not a devotion to a building, but it is devotion to exalt Christ, be equipped, and engage the world with the gospel.

Devotion to church is driven by a deep sense of awe at what God is doing in our lives and a deep longing to gather with others to express our thankfulness and gratitude to God for his wonderful grace.

Our devotion to the church is strengthened and we are prepared for life as we attend worship service together, as we are in Sunday School together, and as we serve together.

At FBCD we want to help you thrive in your walk with Christ and we offer several opportunities to do that in our discipleship pathway.

We worship together, we are equipped in groups, and we engage through ministry teams and personal evangelism.

What is our level of devotion to the church, to her Lord, to her mission?

If we lose the sense of deep love and affection for God's church it won't take long before we lose affection for Christ himself and our lives will surely reflect that devotion.

III. DEVOTED TO ONE ANOTHER

Genuine love for one another is one of the key marks that distinguish the church from the world.

Devotion to one another is seen in verses 44-45.

And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

We observe their devotion to one another by the manner in which they meet each other's needs.

They went house to house. They liked each other so much they hung out, outside of church.

Each time they met they celebrated the Lord's Supper and shared a meal.

Genuine love for one another is one of the key marks that distinguish the church from the world.

It's not that we won't have arguments, preferences, points of view/not that we won't sin or make mistakes- it is that in spite of those things we love each other as Christ loves us and we forgive, show grace, mercy, and patience.

We are to show the world what it looks like when imperfect people who share Christ's love live in fellowship together.

They actively cared for one another when a need arose.

If someone had a need they came to the church and the church meet the need.

Not communism/not forced/not required to sell anything/past tense verb describing an event, not a command.

The church (collective) has all the money to meet every single need in our community so that not a single person would ever need government assistance or lack the basic necessities of life; the only issue is it is still in our pockets.

3000 people just got saved and more daily/from all over-had needs, but all the needs were met.

This shows that the first century church cared about one another

They cared more about meeting each other's need than personal wants being taken care of.

Are we devoted to self and self-image or are we devoted to one another and putting others ahead of self?

Are we ruled by a love of Christ so deeply that it compels us to help our fellow believer even if it is a sacrifice to us?

May we be so devoted to caring for one another that our love for each other is a shining light to dark and lost world.

IV. DEVOTED TO PRAYER

Prayer binds us, strengthens us, and nurtures us to the heart of Christ.

Along with the teaching of the word, prayer is the lifeblood of the church.

We saw in the first part of Chapter two the powerful pouring out of the Holy Spirit following intense corporate times of prayer.

As we walk through the Acts, we will notice prayer preceding powerful moments of ministry and miracles.

Prayer takes place in two settings: private and public.

Prayer connects us to Christ and allows him to change us and empower us for ministry.

Prayer allows us to go to him in time of trouble and joy.

Prayer allows us to be familiar with him, so we know where to go when we are in need.

So many neglect personal times of prayer and forfeit some of the most beautiful, intimate, and powerful moments in their walk with Christ.

A lot of things go undone because we don't pray about them.

What are we to pray for?

- Intercession
- Salvation
- Praise and worship
- Church
- Leaders

There is always something and someone to bring before God in prayer.

Prayer is the rope that holds us to the anchor of the Word.

What does your prayer life look like? Would you say you are devoted to prayer?

Our depth of devotion to prayer is measured by our sense of dependency on Christ.

Notice the results of their devotion to the Word, the church, one another, and prayer.

V. THEIR DEVOTION LEAD TO: Ministry to the Body and Mission in the Community

Devotion to the Word, to the church, to one another, and to prayer will naturally lead to internal ministry to the body and external missions to the community.

Signs and wonders were being done, confirming the Word being preached.

The church's ministry to one another demonstrated to the world they were different to one another.

They ministered to the body-ministry teams and service.

Ministering and serving the body is a necessary and integral part of a healthy church and expected of our members.

Not one of us is in a position to simply be served, but we are here that we may serve one another in the name of Jesus.

Each of us have gifts, talents, and abilities. Find a ministry team and a place of service.

We also see the church conducting missions to the community.

A healthy church practicing these traits will have a healthy body, loving one another and meeting each other's' needs, and will also be fervent in practicing personal and corporate evangelism.

Personal evangelism is a trait of a growing mature believer.

As believers who are devoted to the Word, to the church, to one another, and to prayer we are obedient and share Christ's love to the lost.

VI. CONCLUSION

Many of us, if we are honest, are holding on too tightly to that fishing pole and it is dragging us down.

We need to let go, let it go, let go of whatever we are holding onto in this world, whatever is holding you back, whatever fear, sin, or excuse that is keeping you from devoting yourself fully to Christ; let it go, rise up, and come to freedom, come to the fullness of a life fully devoted to Christ.

You will be amazed at the peace and freedom in your life.