

# Preface

The book of Acts records the birth of the Christian Church and the growth of the believers as they learned what it meant to live as a Christian believer. Once we are born again by receiving the gift of holy spirit, we need to know what we do next to live as a Christian. After Peter's first sermon, is recorded what the new Christian believers did to continue their personal growth in this new family and learn how to use their gift of holy spirit as the Apostles were using it in their lives. If we want to get back to walking with the same love and power that the first Christians (*original Christians*) lived in, then we will need to rediscover the foundation of their lifestyle choices to grow in their new Christian faith that started on the Day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:41-47 reveals two foundational categories of growth for the individual believer and for the growth of church as a body of believers. Within these categories are lifestyle choices we need to make to personally grow and help grow our fellowship of believers as a family of God. These lifestyle choices are necessary for every believer and fellowship to mature and grow in the family of God. When the believers start seeing the bigger cause, to serve the other believers, to help others understand

The Word of God, then there will be growth in the individual and in the fellowship, the family of God. These seven verses hold all the main ingredients needed to build a foundation for the growth of the individual and for the fellowship, the body of believers.

**Acts 2:41-47 KJV**

**41** Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

**42** And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

**43** And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

**44** And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

**45** And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.

**46** And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

**47** Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

The two categories I see in this section also show us the basic organizational structure of how the leadership kept in touch and taught the new believers. It also shows us how the new believers fellowshiped together in local communities or

areas. This section has a few lists that I will bring to your attention as we study it in more detail. I am a firm believer in bringing out lists that found are in The Word of God. Lists are God's way of showing us "bullet points" of things that are important for us to remember and apply to attain the results that are mentioned in that section.

1) **V42: The believers "continued" in:**

- a. **Apostles Doctrine** (*Living as a family in the "one body" as revealed by Paul*)
- b. **Fellowship** (*hanging out with other believers and doing things together*)
- c. **Breaking of bread** (*They ate together, as a family and shared their experiences*)
- d. **Prayers** (*They prayed for each other with their understanding and by speaking in tongues*)

2) **V44-45: The believers gave of their material and spiritual abundance to others**

- a. They shared abundance, both physical and spiritual
- b. They sold un-needed positions and used the money to help others

3) **V46: The Apostles "continued" daily with the believers:**

- a. **In the Temple** (*They taught the new believers in the Temple from the Old Testament most likely*)
  - b. **Breaking of bread “house to house”** (*This is where the local meetings were held*)
  - c. **Ate with Joy and like mindedness** (*The Apostles (leadership) enjoyed being with the believers to enjoy their fellowship, not always in a meeting setting*)
- 4) **V47: Held forth God’s Word with others, and many believed** (*The new Christian Church grew and expanded because of the personal growth and family growth in God’s Word*)

This is a quick look of what we look at in more detail as I work this section in the following chapters. We will need to look at individual words, and we will need to look at phrases that have vital keys to be successful in maturing to an adult Christian. In my prior books, I concentrated on specific areas for building up our individual growth mentally and spiritually.<sup>1</sup> This book will break down the foundational lifestyle changes that were the starting place for the first century believers to mature and realize their potential within the "one body," the

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<sup>1</sup> Arbib, Peter., (*“Can I Really Speak in Tongues?” “20+ Benefits Speaking in Tongues Has for You,” “Behold, I Have Set Before You a Choice”*), Sound Wisdom Publications, Camby, or Mooresville, IN. 2016-2019. Available through Amazon.

family of God. We will look at what the individuals needed to change in their lifestyle in relation to the family of God as a collective of likeminded individuals wanting to live The Word God as a group.

The believers who were just born again (*Acts 2:41*) were not left to their own devices to figure out what to do next. They got together with the Apostles to learn how to continue in this new family of God and this gift of holy spirit that they heard in the Temple earlier from the twelve Apostles.

The new believers must have been excited about becoming more involved in this new way of life. They already saw the Apostles and Jesus Christ healing others and teaching them The Word of God in different settings. This was not new, but what was new, was now they had the same ability as Jesus Christ and the Apostles to heal others along with other spiritual abilities from their new gift of holy spirit.<sup>2</sup> The Apostles already had experience in how they needed to nurture the new believers from their example that Jesus Christ gave them from before his resurrection. Jesus Christ taught in the

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<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:7-10, Speaking in Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues, Prophecy, Word of Knowledge, Word of Wisdom, Discerning of Spirits, Faith, Miracles, Gifts of Healings.

Temple and in the homes of those that followed him.

The above breakdown of what the believers and the Apostles (leadership) did is a starting point for all believers and leadership to practice daily to grow in God's Word in knowledge and power. For the believers, it breaks down to two major categories, **personal growth**, and **family growth**. For personal growth they would continue in two things:

- **The Apostles Doctrine** (*the new doctrine of the family of God, the mystery, the one body... The renewed mind for mental growth*)
- **Prayer** (*Both types: by speaking in tongues, by praying with their understanding... Speaking in tongues to grow spiritually – Jude 20*)

For family growth, there are three things that are added to the two above that the new believers will need to work on. For this new family of God to work, the believers need to change their lifestyle to get closer to the other believers by doing things together and wanting to be with each other. Eating together has always been a way for people to get to know each other. And while you are eating together, you are also fellowshiping with each other.

- **Fellowship** (*To share and participate in anything*)
- **Breaking of bread** (*This is a cultural thing, it means they had meals together, yes, but it was also a time discuss daily events and situations and give or get advice on pressing issues*)
- **Sharing their abundance both physically and spiritually** to help meet the needs of the believers
- **Holding forth God's Word to others so they too may have a chance to believe.**

This will be the direction I will take this book. We must get back to the original Christian lifestyle choices that caused the first century church to become a very powerful influence in the world. Not just politicly, but also with the demonstration of God's power being activated by the believers. These patterns of commitment and fellowship amongst the believers and leadership that are revealed in The Word of God. They hold the keys for modern believers and leadership to apply in their structural arrangement of their fellowships. These practices are timeless and form a foundation for any church to base their growth on, both in the areas of the renewed mind growth and spiritual growth. The two areas we are taught to build upon to mature as

Christians.<sup>3</sup> I believe it is possible to get back to and practice the original Christian practices that allowed the new believers to grow up not only in the knowledge of God's Word, but also grow up in using their new gift of holy spirit so they too preformed signs, miracles, and wonders. The four things listed in Acts 2:42 shows us the minimum we as believers need to incorporate in our lifestyle choices in order to grow and mature as a Christian.

But for a new church to grow, it needs leadership to keep the new believers organized and encouraged. Acts 2:46-47 show us foundational keys for leadership to use to help build the church's strength. I have broken down Acts 2:46 to its single elements below.

**Acts 2:46-47 KJV**

**46 And they, <sup>1</sup>continuing daily with <sup>2</sup>one accord in the temple, and <sup>3</sup>breaking bread from <sup>4</sup>house to house, <sup>5</sup>did eat their meat with gladness and <sup>6</sup>singleness of heart,**  
**47 <sup>7</sup>Praising God, and <sup>8</sup>having favour with all the people. And <sup>9</sup>(results)the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**

I will also dig deeper into what the leadership needs to do to help the church (*fellowships*) grow as the

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<sup>3</sup> Arbib, Peter., (*"Behold, I Have Set Before You a Choice"*), Sound Wisdom Publications, Mooresville, IN. 2019. Available through Amazon.

believers are taking care of their personal growth as pointed out in Acts 2:42. Not only are there “what to do” verses, there are also “result” verses that show us what genuine growth looks like in real-time attitudes and accomplishments. These are important to work so we can understand normal Christian behavior for the original Christians of the first century.

**Acts 2:43-45 KJV**

**43 And <sup>1</sup>fear came upon every soul: and <sup>2</sup>many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.**

**44 And <sup>3</sup>all that believed were together, and <sup>4</sup>had all things common;**

**45 And <sup>5</sup>sold their possessions and goods, and <sup>6</sup>parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.**

**Acts 2:47 KJV**

**47 <sup>7</sup>Praising God, and <sup>8</sup>having favour with all the people. And <sup>9</sup>the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**

I have listed nine things that are in the “result” verses. This includes both categories of “believers,” and “leadership,” These nine things I listed can apply to all the believers as they continue living the precepts that Jesus Christ and the Apostles taught, where every new believer has been given the same gift of holy spirit that the Apostles received on the Day of Pentecost. They were learning what was needed to grow both in knowledge and spiritually

as a new son or daughter of God so they too could walk in the same love and power as Jesus Christ did. These “result” verses are showing us lifestyle choices they made to continue walking with God’s love and power in their lives. These are things we can see, and when we do, we know that those believers are growing and maturing as Christians.

1. **Fear** (*respect*) **came** (*began to be*) **upon every soul**
2. **Many wonders and signs** were done by the leadership
3. **All that believed were together** (*they believed together as a group, community believing*)
4. **Had all things common** (*they shared of things that others did not have to help meet their need*)
5. **Sold their possessions and goods** (*Sold multiple things that another could use, like #4*)
6. **Redistributed the possessions and goods** to those with a need (*The leadership most likely organized the abundance of pluralities and gifts the believers wanted to help others with*)
7. **Praised God**
8. **Having loving-kindness** to all
9. **The Lord added to the church daily** (*This is more of a result of #1-#8*)

I will go into more detail on numbers 3-6 above in a separate chapter after I cover the points that we are

to continue in the other areas first. The points on giving of your pluralities to help those believers in need is a result of believers getting past their own growth as their primary goal, to moving into the “service to believers” category of their Christian walk.

As you can see, in these few verses in Acts 2:41-47 is quite a bit to chew on as we want to continue growing as a Christian personally and as a group of believers. These are the first precepts that are written to the believers in the New Testament that give us a starting point of what is necessary to grow as a believer and family of God. These are the original Christian precepts of the first century church that caused them to grow in God’s power and size by the end of the first century. It is in these original Christian precepts that this book will expand on. There are other precepts that can be added, but many of them can be incorporated in these precepts I have listed above.