

Digging Deeper

Anchor Point Follow-Up Studies to deepen our roots in the faith

Biblical foundation for these follow-up studies

How did the original disciples of Jesus grow in their faith and maturity? Fortunately, we have a record of their lives in the book of Acts and can learn from them. We will use the foundational scripture of Acts 2:42-47 below as an outline for the Digging Deeper follow-up studies with the goal of striving for the original Christian's level of devotion to the things that mattered most to them and to God. The following studies will come from the concepts in **bold** below.

*“They devoted themselves to **the apostles' teaching** and to **the fellowship**, to **the breaking of bread** and to **prayer**. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. **All the believers were together** and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, **they gave** to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And **the Lord added to their number daily** those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:42-47, all scriptures NIV unless otherwise noted)*

Follow-up Studies:

- 1. Apostles Teaching**
- 2. Fellowship**
- 3. Breaking of Bread**
- 4. Prayer**
- 5. Unity**
- 6. Giving**
- 7. Adding**

Shared responsibility for spiritual growth

“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

Jesus taught us that after we baptize someone, we are to continue to “teach them to obey everything I (Jesus) have commanded you” (Vs. 19).

And Jesus taught Simon Peter that part of loving him is to take care of his sheep.

“Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me? He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” (John 21:16)

It’s important that we take seriously this responsibility for taking care of our recent converts to the faith. It’s also important that those who are newly converted to the faith take seriously your responsibility to eagerly desire to grow and learn.

“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.” (1 Peter 2:2)

If both mentor and mentee take these roles seriously, both will grow immensely in this process, and be further bonded as partners in the faith.

“I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:3-6)

Apostles Teaching

Study objective: To understand the importance of the "apostles' teaching" (the Bible for us today) to our spiritual growth and development.

Acts 2:42-47

- What do you think it means that they "*devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching*"? (Vs. 42)
- What might that look like for you, today?

2 Timothy 3:16-18

- Why is the Word of God (Bible) so important to our spiritual growth and maturity?
- What are some of the things the Bible is useful for, according to this passage?

Psalms 19:7-11

- What are some of the ways this passage highlights the immense value of God's Word (Bible)?
- If the Word of God is so valuable to us, why is it so hard to develop and continue the habit of reading and meditating on it daily?

Psalms 119:105

- How can the Word of God be a lamp for our feet and a light for our path?

Matthew 4:1-11

- What did Jesus use to combat the lies and temptations of Satan?
- Notice how important it is to learn the Bible well enough that you can know which scriptures apply to certain situations best (vs. 7 = "*Jesus answered him, 'It is also written...'*")

2 Timothy 2:15

- Why is it important to correctly handle the word of truth, like Jesus did?
- How can we grow in our ability to correctly handle the word of truth?

Hebrews 4:12-14

- How is the Word of God "*alive and active*" (vs. 12)?
- What's the benefit of it judging our thoughts and attitudes as we read it (vs. 12b)?

Practical Application

- What are your deepest convictions about the Word of God (Bible)?
- How has it been so far in staying devoted to God's word? Do you have a set time and place set aside to read and meditate on God's Word each day?
- What have you found most inspiring and most challenging about God's Word?

Fellowship

Study objective: To understand the importance of the fellowship and "one-another" (mutual) relationships to our spiritual growth and development.

Let's reread Acts 2:42-47

- Biblically speaking, "*fellowship*" is active participation in the community of faith through close, mutual ("one another") relationships.
- What stands out to you about the fellowship in this passage?
- There are [59 scriptures in the New Testament](#) that use the Greek word for "one another" to describe how we should interact with each other in the church. Let's look at just a few of these below.

John 13:34-35

- Why do you think that Jesus commands us to love one another?
- How important is our love for one another according to this passage?

Romans 12:9-16

- What are some ways we can show our love and devotion to one another according to this passage?

Hebrews 10:24-25

- What are some appropriate ways we can "*spur one another on toward love and good deeds*" (vs. 24)?
- What are some reasons it's important to be devoted to meeting together when the church meets?
- While there's certainly a place for virtual meetings at times, what are some reasons it's important to actually meet together physically?

Hebrews 3:12-14

- What can sin do to our hearts?
- How can regular fellowship with your brothers and sisters guard against this?
- What are some other reasons we should regularly give and receive encouragement from other disciples of Jesus?

I Thessalonians 5:12-15

- How should we view and treat those who serve us as leaders in the church?
- It's important to avoid both the extremes of putting our leaders on a pedestal and being critical of them. Instead, simply love and appreciate them as your brothers and sisters in Christ who are no better or worse than any of the rest of us.

James 5:16

- Why does this passage teach that we should confess our sins to each other?
- What are the promises if we humbly confess our sins to one another?

- Of course, we don't need to confess all of our sins to each other all of the time. Confessing our sins to God is enough. A good guideline is to simply confess your sins to a trusted and close spiritual friend whenever you need extra help to overcome them, or just want to pray together for encouragement and healing.

Proverbs 27:17

- How might this passage apply to your close, spiritual friendships in Christ?
- How do you feel about being sharpened by and sharpening other Christians?

Practical Application

- What are some reasons we all need to participate in the fellowship?
- What are you excited or apprehensive about when thinking about this kind of close fellowship with your brothers and sisters in Christ?
- Which aspect of these one-another relationships do you think will be the most challenging for you? And how can you overcome those challenges?

Breaking of Bread

Study Objective: To understand the importance of, and reasons for, the breaking of bread, also known as the celebration of *the Lord's Supper*, or *communion*.

Let's reread Acts 2:42

- Notice that "*the breaking of bread*" (aka the Lord's Supper or communion) is a very important part what the early church was devoted to.
- Why do you think that was?

Matthew 26:26-29

- What does Jesus want us to remember when we take the bread and the cup?

I Corinthians 11:23-32

- What's the point of the Lord's Supper, according to this passage?
- This is a very sobering passage about the seriousness of the Lord's Supper. Why do you think God takes this so seriously?
- Reread vs. 28-29; what does it mean to "examine ourselves" when we take the Lord's Supper?
- What do you think it means to "*proclaim the Lord's death until he comes*" (vs. 26)?

1 Corinthians 10:14-17

- The Lord's Supper is a participation in the body and blood of Christ and reminds us to not participate in idolatry, since we are all part of his spiritual body.
- Thus, the Lord's Supper is also a time of reflection on our sins and another opportunity to repent and reunite with Christ and his body, the church.

Hebrews 4:14-16

- Use your own words to describe what this passage teaches us.
- The Lord's Supper should not burden us, but rather unburden us and set us free to approach the throne of grace with confidence.

Hebrew 10:19-22

- What a joy and relief to have our bodies and consciences cleansed by the blood of Jesus!
- This occurs moment by moment for Christians because we are "in Christ", but the Lord's Supper is a special time to remember this cleansing, thank our Lord for it, and recommit ourselves to him.

Acts 20:7

- When did the early church in Acts 20 take the Lord's Supper?
 - (*The first day of the week* is Sunday for us.)
- What are some good reasons to take the Lord's Supper weekly?

- We are not commanded to take the Lord's Supper each Sunday, but it makes sense to follow their example.

Practical Application

- How would you summarize what the Lord's Supper is all about?
- Why do you think Jesus and the first century disciples took it so seriously?
- Why do you think it's important to participate in the Lord's Supper regularly?

Prayer

Study Objective: To understand why we should be devoted to prayer.

Deuteronomy 4:7

- The most important part of prayer is simply to draw near to God.
- God loves us and he loves to spend time with us in prayer.

Matthew 6:5-8

- What is Jesus teaching about prayer in this passage?
- A good rule of thumb: it's not the length, but the strength (sincerity, authenticity, and fervency) of prayer that matters to God.

Matthew 6:9-13

- There are many different ways to pray, but here Jesus gives us an outline for prayer.
- How would you describe the different elements of prayer in Jesus' model prayer?

Matthew 6:14-15

- Why is it important to forgive others in prayer?

Luke 11:5-8

- Notice that Jesus is not saying God is like this uncaring friend, but he's making a point about persistence.
- How important is persistence to prayer?

Luke 11:9-13

- What's God's promise to us about our sincere prayers?
- What about when we don't receive what we prayed for? Does that mean God failed to come through on this promise?
- Remember that God is like a good parent who wants to give good gifts to his children, but also knows what's best for them.

Colossians 4:12-13

- When we pray for others, it's known as offering up "petitions" to God.
- How can petitionary prayer feel like wrestling for others?
- Can you find some time in your prayer life to wrestle in prayer for others?

Philippians 4:4-7

- This is a classic passage on prayer. What are some things you see here?
- What will God do for us when we give our anxieties to him in prayer?

- What are some different types of prayers according to this verse?

Practical Application

- What are some things you've learned about prayer through this study?
- What can you do to ensure that you practice the crucial habit of spending quality time with the Lord in prayer each day?

Unity

Study Objective: To understand the importance of building and maintaining unity in a multi-cultural church.

Ephesians 4:1-3

- How serious is God about unity in his church?
- Why is this so important to God?

Acts 2:5-11

- Notice that the early church consisted of people from all over the known world.
- What kinds of challenges do you suppose they faced?

Romans 9:1-5

- Paul had a special place in his heart for his own people, the Jews. He understood the importance of the unity of believers, but he also identified, in a special way, with those of his own ethnicity and culture, and there's nothing wrong with that. Likewise, our allegiance to Christ and his kingdom does not mean we have to abandon our culture and heritage. God's design is that our diversity is part of what makes us stronger, as each part contributes to the whole.
- We are called to "unity", not "uniformity". Why is this an important distinction?

1 Corinthians 12:12-14

- What does it mean that the church is one body with different parts?
- Just as a body has different parts, so the body of Christ (his church) is made up of many different kinds of people who form a diverse, and yet cohesive whole.
- What are some of the challenges of unifying such a diverse group of people?

1 Corinthians 12:25

- What does the Bible mean when it says "there should be no division in the body"?
- We live in a world that is deeply divided over politics, cultural issues, and more. But we must not bring division into God's church. It is fine to have different opinions about politics and cultural issues, etc., but they must not cause division in the body.
- Is it possible to disagree without being disagreeable?

1 Corinthians 12:25-26

- Jesus calls us to have equal concern for each other, and both suffer and rejoice with each other.
- Why is it so important to have this kind of empathy with each other? And what are some of the obstacles to that kind of empathy?
- One important way we can do this in our multicultural church family is to feel with those who suffer the pain of prejudice, discrimination, racism, and preference, which can divide us if we're not careful.

We are called not to adjudicate or rationalize our brothers and sister's feelings and perceptions, but rather, to console the heart that is broken and to comfort their wounded souls.

James 2:1-4, 8-9

- Showing favoritism and discriminating against anyone, for any reason, is a serious sin in the eyes of God (vs. 4). They have no place in the life of a believer, and are not acceptable in God's church.

John 17:20-23

- Jesus prayed for us to be so completely unified that we could be considered "one" (vs. 21). Jesus said this would stand out in our disunified world, since only through the supernatural power of God can this kind of unity be accomplished.
- May we strive wholeheartedly to make Jesus' prayer come true in his church today.

Practical Application

- Forging unity in our multi-cultural church is difficult on everyone because we are all so different from each other, and our world is so polarized on the subject. But with the love and standards of Christ in our hearts, we can do it.
- How do you feel about all of this?
- What are some things you can do to help forge unity in our church?
- Here's a link to [Our Guiding Values](#) on this subject from our website.

Giving

Study Objective: To begin to understand what the Bible teaches about giving to the church and to those in need.

Acts 2:44-45

- Obviously, this original group of Jesus followers needed to financially support those who had traveled from long distances to Jerusalem and then suddenly decided to stay there after their conversion. So, that was a unique situation.
- But how is “the heart” of those who supported each other financially something we can learn from today, in our context?

Acts 4:32-37

- Vs. 32 describes a very different attitude than most of us have in 21st Century America. What can we learn from our 1st Century brothers and sisters here?

1 Corinthians 9:7-12

- The Christians in Corinth had become critical of Paul and so he refused his right to be financially supported by them in order not to further alienate them. But he teaches them that a congregation ought to support their ministers financially.
- What are the reasons Paul gives for supporting our ministry staff?
- How do you feel about that?

1 Corinthians 16:1-3

- Paul is describing a special offering he was collecting from many different churches to help the church in Jerusalem, who was going through a famine.
- But what principles here might apply to our weekly giving to support the work of the local church?

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

- This is Paul’s second letter to the Corinthian Christians about the same offering.
- What principles here might also apply to our financial giving?

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

- And what principles do you see here?

Leviticus 27:30

- The concept of the “tithe” (giving 10% of our income to the Lord’s work) is an Old Testament command that is no longer binding under the New Covenant. But it can still serve as a general guideline when considering our own offering, provided that we see it as a guiding principle and not a binding command.

- Some will want to give more than 10 percent; others less. The important thing is to follow the New Testament teaching of Paul in this matter: “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Practical Application

- What is the appropriate heart to have when giving to God and his Church?
- How do you feel about this?
- What can you do to ensure that you are giving regularly?
- Here’s some [further study](#) on financial giving if you’re interested.

Adding

Study Objective: To understand our part and God's part in bringing others to faith in Christ.

Acts 2:47

- Who added the disciples to their number?
- God is the one who produces faith in people's hearts and converts them to Christ.
- But we do have a role in the process. Let's look at some more scriptures on this.

I Corinthians 3:5-9

- This passage shows both God's and our roles in leading people to Christ.
- What's God's part? What's our part?

Matthew 28:18-20

- What is God's desire for everyone on earth to become?
- What is the command of Jesus?
- What does this mean for us today?

Acts 8:1-4

- It was not just leaders who "preached the word wherever they went" (vs. 4), but all followers of Jesus.
- Why is it important for every follower of Jesus to share their faith with others?

Mark 1:16-18

- To follow Jesus is to do what he did and to become what he was – a fisher of people.

Luke 19:1-10

- Reread vs. 10; how important was saving lost souls to Jesus?
- As Jesus' followers, how important should that be to us?

2 Corinthians 5:11-15

- What should our motivation be to share our faith with others?

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

- What does it mean to be "an ambassador for Christ" (vs. 20)?
- This passage is rich; what else do you see here?

Practical Application

- Is making disciples and leading others to Christ optional or mandatory for Christ's followers?
- What's exciting about this for you? What's scary about this for you?
- What are some ways you can partner with the Lord in leading others to Christ.