



“In One Heart and Mind”

August 2016

Dear Friend,

In the last few weeks, I've been in a Bible study focusing on the book of Acts. It's fascinated me, the story of the arrival of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the early church, but one aspect of it has resonated with me over the past few weeks that I continue to ponder as I go about my daily walk. That aspect, that idea, can be summed up in a sentence in Acts 4:32, "All believers were one in heart and mind." Throughout Acts this theme of unity seems to be common. As a matter of fact, when the Spirit came in Acts, the first act of the Spirit was to unite the crowds around the apostles by uniting them in understanding, "because each one heard their own language spoken." In Acts 2:44 it is written, "All the believers had everything in common." That theme of unity in the Spirit guided them and protected them throughout the book, and in several verses increased their numbers.

Yet, it had me thinking, in today's church culture in the United States, where we see so many churches split over disagreements, our nation divides over political stances, and we see so many situations where work and the busyness of life keep us from even sitting down for a family dinner, how can today's Church in America, or even just in Birmingham return to that unification, and truly be, "in one heart and mind?"

The answer can be found by applying the very verses following Acts 2:44 in a modern context.

"All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who 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 2:44-47

"They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need."

In all of our lives, God has provided in so many ways. Whether it be time, talent, material wealth, or even just another day, the Father is blessing us in abundant provision, but in each person, due to our human nature, we also find great needs. One of the great beauties of God's provision is that He offers us the opportunity to sacrifice in love for those in need. Whether that sacrifice is of property or material wealth, or time in your day, or effort and work to make someone else's life better, we all have opportunities in our communities, and even in our nation and world to emulate that Spirit of sacrificial love through giving, whether it be in efforts to serve people in need in other parts of the world, serve those suffering from the recent flooding in Louisiana, or just helping your neighbor down the street. So this week, I encourage you to ponder the ideas, what needs can you help provide for the people in your community? What about your church? Whether it's materials or time, work, or just love and a listening ear, you have the opportunity through God's provision for you, to show sacrificial love to anyone in need in your community.

"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."

This trait of the Church that the Holy Spirit introduced may be the most neglected trait of the early church in the American culture. In this verse, the writer of Acts, Luke, expresses to us just how much the early church LOVED to be together. They treasured each other's company so much so that it was a daily top priority, and in treasuring each other's company held dear their time with the Lord. As the

body of Christ, as a Church family, shouldn't this be a great focus of ours in the way we love our neighbors? Yet, when I read this verse, I had to confess my neglect, because I hadn't ever even invited my neighbors in the apartment complex over to my apartment for dinner. How can I be an effective witness to the people surrounding me, when I haven't shown that love to the people just an apartment across from me? This has recently produced a challenge in my life to intentionally engage in getting to know the people in my community, in hopes of bringing together the community, to bring together the Christ-followers, and show Christ's love through our unity to the neighbors in our surrounding complex. I imagine that many other Americans also struggle, with how busy our lives can be, to invite our neighbors to dinner, to "break bread in our homes," with our Church family, and even visit our churches and engage in fellowship and worship there. So this week, I wanted to encourage you to invite a neighbor or a Church friend to dinner, and when you come across a random conversation or encounter with a new acquaintance, even if you're busy, take the time to embrace and rejoice in that opportunity of fellowship. Don't have a friend or brother/sister in Christ in mind to invite for dinner? Then pray for God to lead you to someone to offer the invitation, whoever may need that provision of time and love. You never know what might happen, the Lord may give you an opportunity to speak important truths into a fellow believer's life, or even bring a non-believer to Christ!

"And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

The Lord added to their numbers daily those who were being saved... What a powerful result! Through sacrifice for those in need, and through the treasuring and love of unity in their praise of the Lord, and rejoicing in being together while doing it, God used them to show Jesus Christ's love to the people around them, saving their eternal lives. This is the goal Jesus outlined in the Great Commission, Matthew 28:18-20!

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, 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

The process seems simple, and yet, it is a challenge to American culture, perhaps what you would even call a "counterculture." But it's a challenge that as Christ-followers we must embrace, in hopes that as a Church we can find ourselves "in one heart and mind," "having everything in common," so that we may be blessed to be those the Lord uses to add to the number being saved daily.

Blessings,

Michael

How Much Water Do We Need To Drink, According To Our Weight?

Have you ever taken the time to appreciate all the health benefits of water? Now may just be the right time to do that.

Water is the source of life & one of the best things you can drink to quench your thirst.

Making sure to drink enough water every day ensures proper functioning of your metabolism, gives you better skin complexion & boosts energy levels.

With no calories, water is also an excellent drink for dieters. In fact one study showed that drinking two 8-ounce cups of water before every meal can improve weight loss.

“Over the course of 12 weeks, dieters who drank water before meals, 3 times per day, lost about 5 pounds more than dieters who did not increase their water intake.” (1)

Warning: Consult your healthcare professional if you have kidney damage.

(1) <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/198720.php>



If you have any questions about how to get healthier with one simple change, email me, Betsy Frazer, RN, BS at betsyfrombham@gmail.com.