

The First Church: Worthy Traits

THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, [Acts 2:1-7:60](#)

The First Church: Worthy Traits, [Acts 2:41-47](#)

4. ([Acts 2:44-45](#)) Church—Unity—Ministry: the early believers were a people who were together and who shared in ministry.

[Acts 2:44-45 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴⁴“And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;

⁴⁵and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.”

It Was a Sharing Church

It Was a Joyful Church

[Acts 2:46b-47a \(NASB\)](#)

⁴⁶Day 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,

⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

It is critical for the church to pay close attention and heed what is being said in this point.

1. The *professing believers* were true believers.

They were those “that [truly] believe” (see below [Deeper Study # 8, Believe—John 2:24](#) for discussion that shows true belief is the commitment of all one *is and has*).

DEEPER STUDY # 8

[John 2:24 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁴“But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men.”

([John 2:24](#)) Believe—Commit: the word “entrusting” or “commit” (*episteuen*) is the very same word “believe” (*episteusan*) (cp. [John 2:23](#)).

[John 2:23 \(NASB\)](#)

²³“Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing.”

This gives an excellent picture of *saving faith*, of what *genuine faith* is—of the kind of faith that really saves a person.

1. Saving faith is not head knowledge, not just a mental conviction and intellectual assent.

2. Saving faith is believing in Jesus, *who* and *what* He is, that He is the *Savior* and *Lord* of life.

3. Saving faith is commitment—the commitment of a man's total being and life to Jesus Christ.

There are **three steps** involved in faith, steps that are clearly seen in this passage. ([Romans 10:16-17](#))

Romans 10:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶“However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, “LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?”

¹⁷So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

1. There is the step of *seeing* ([John 2:23](#)) or *hearing* ([Romans 10:16](#)). A man must be willing to listen to the message of Christ, the revelation of truth.

2. There is the step of *mental assent*.

A man must agree that the message is true, that the facts of the case are thus and so.

3. There is the step of *commitment*.

When the New Testament speaks of faith, it speaks of *commitment*, a *personal commitment to the truth*.

2. The believers were “**together**” (*ἅσαν ἐπι το αὐτο*).

This *means* they were together in the same place *because they were of the same call, mind, and purpose*. It does not mean just being in the same location and place. They would not have been *together* **unless they had been of the same spirit and purpose**. This is critical to God's call.

3. The believers sold their possessions and goods and used the money to minister to the poor and needy.

A final matter is this: Christ demands that we *give all we are and have* if we are to follow Him (see below [Deeper Study # 10—Luke 9:23](#)). Any attempt to *water down* what He often said fails miserably before an honest heart reading His Word

Thought 1. Just imagine how long ago the world would have been reached with the gospel if *professing* believers had been honestly committing their *total* lives to Christ, giving all they were and had to His cause of world evangelization!

DEEPER STUDY # 9

Acts 2:44-45 (NASB)

⁴⁴“And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;

⁴⁵and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.”

(Acts 2:44-45) Stewardship— Commitment— Self-denial—

Possessions: Christ demands that we give Him all we *are and have to enter heaven*. This is the reason the early believers gave what they had to meet the needs of the world. Christ had demanded it of the rich young ruler and *of His disciples*.

In our struggle to protect the glorious truth that man is saved by grace and grace alone, we often forget and neglect another great truth: **to follow Christ is to serve and minister to our neighbor**. To follow Christ is to deny self completely, all that we are as well as all that we have. When we love our neighbor as ourselves, then we show that we truly love God. If we do not love and minister to our neighbor (**above self**), then we do not love God.

When we deny self by giving all we are and have (**1 John 4:20**), then and only then do we receive heaven and the treasure of heaven.

1 John 4:20 (NASB)

²⁰“If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.”

To deny self, to give all we are and have is a hard saying, but Christ demands it. Our attempts to soften it do not annul His demand.

It is love of the world that makes us unwilling to give up the possessions we have obtained (**comfort, esteem, recognition, power, position**).

By refusing to take and give what we have, we make the fatal mistake of showing (demonstrating).....

1. That we love the things of the world more than we love people; that we prefer hoarding and extravagance, living sumptuously and comfortably to helping those who are so needful, so desperately needful.
2. That we love the world more than we love the hope of eternal life.
3. That we love the position, recognition, esteem, and power of the world's possessions more than we love Christ.

Now note a critical fact that we must heed: this point is often made a point of controversy. Men use every explanation possible to ease their consciences and to keep from having to give everything. There is a reason for this, and it is this that is so critical. Possessions pull a person away from God.

It is difficult for a person who has possessions to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Why? There is a lure, an attraction, a force, a power, a pull that reaches out and draws any of us who look at or possess wealth. There are pulls so forceful that they will enslave and doom any man who banks and hoards and fails to turn and embrace God.

1. Possessions create the big “T” (cp. **Matthew 19:16, 20**).

Matthew 19:16 (NASB)

¹⁶“And someone came to Him and said, “Teacher, what good thing shall **I** do that **I** may obtain eternal life?”

Matthew 19:20 (NASB)

²⁰“The young man said to Him, “All these things **I** have kept; what am **I** still lacking?”

The man who *has possessions* is usually **looked up to**, **esteemed**, **honored**, and **envied**. Possessions bring **position**, **power**, **recognition**. They boost ego, and make a person self-sufficient and independent in this world. As a result there is a tendency for the rich person to feel independent and self-sufficient, that he needs nothing. And in such an atmosphere and world of thought, God is forgotten. It is forgotten that there are things that money cannot buy and events from which money cannot save.

Peace, love, joy—all that really matters within the spirit of man—can never be bought. Neither can money save a person from **disaster**, **disease**, **accident**, or **death**—the trials that are sure to come upon all.

2. Possessions tend to make one hoard (cp. [Matthew 19:21](#)).

Matthew 19:21 (NASB)

²¹“Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be complete, go *and* sell your possessions and give to *the* poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

The Bible lays down the principle of handling money for all men, even for the poor:

Ephesians 4:28 (NASB)

²⁸“He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have *something* to share with one who has need.”

Matthew 19:19 (NASB)

¹⁹“HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”

Matthew 22:39 (NASB)

³⁹“The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’”

The world reels in desperate need. People are **starving**, **sick**, **unhoused**, and **unclothed** by the millions. Teeming millions are spiritually lost and without God in this world and they are doomed to die without ever knowing Him. When any of us sit still and objectively look at the world in its desperate plight, we ask: “**How in this world can any man hoard and not help—even to the last available penny? Why**

would any man keep more than what he needs for himself and his family?”

As God looks at any man who banks and hoards, He is bound to ask the same question. In fact, His questions are bound to be more pointed and forceful. This is exactly what Christ said to the rich young ruler:

Matthew 19:21 (NASB)

²¹ **“Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be complete, go *and* sell [all] your possessions and give to *the* poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”**

Riches tend to make a man selfish. For some unexplainable reason, the more we get, the more we want. When we taste the things of this world and become comfortable, we tend to fear losing our possessions. We struggle to keep what we have and to get more. True, many are willing to make contributions, but only a certain amount, an amount that will not lower their overall estate or standing or level of comfort and possessions. There are few who give all to Christ, all they are and all they have to meet the needs of the world.

As Christ said, it is very difficult for the rich (**meaning those who have anything in comparison with most of the world**) to enter heaven. If we do not have compassion and take care of our brothers (**fellow man**) when they are in desperate need, how can we expect God to have compassion and take care of us when we face the desperate need for heaven?

It is foolish to think that a loving and just God will meet our need for eternal life when we would not meet the need of our fellow man for physical life.

The rich (**all of us who have anything in comparison with the rest of the world**) have the means to help and to save human life, if we only would.

3. Possessions attach a person to the world (cp. [Matthew 19:22](#)).

Matthew 19:22 (NASB)

²² **“But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.”**

Possessions enable a person to buy things that.....

- a. make him comfortable
- b. please his taste
- c. stir his ego
- d. expand his experience
- e. challenge his mental pursuit
- f. stimulate his flesh
- g. stretch his self-image

If a man centers his life upon the things of the world, his attention is on the world and not on God. He tends to become wrapped up in securing more and in protecting what he has. Too often, he gives little if any time and thought to heavenly matters. Wealth and the things it can provide within this world can and usually do consume the rich.

Luke 12:33 (NASB)

³³ **“Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys.”**

Acts 20:35 (NASB)

³⁵ **“In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'”**

Romans 12:13 (NASB)

¹³ **“Contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.”**

Galatians 6:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ **“So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”**

1 Timothy 6:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ **“*Instruct them* to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share.”**

Hebrews 13:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ **“And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”**