

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*” (*ἄσαν 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 # 10

Luke 9:23 (NASB)

²³“And He was saying to *them* all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”

(Luke 9:23) Cross— Discipleship: people in Jesus' day knew what it meant to **"take up" a cross**. They saw scores of criminals bearing the cross to the place where they were to be executed, and they witnessed scores of crucifixions, some even by the side of the roads that led in and out of the cities.

The cross does not mean merely bearing one's particular hardship in life, such as poor health, abuse, unemployment, invalid parents, an unsaved spouse, a wayward child. The cross is always an instrument of death, not just an object to carry or bear. The Christian is to die mentally and actively. He is to deny himself daily. He is to let the mind of Christ, the mind of humbling himself to the point of death, be in him and fill his thoughts every day (**Philippians 2:5-8; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5**).

Philippians 2:5-8 (NASB)

⁵ **"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,**
⁶ **who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,**
⁷ **but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.**
⁸ **Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."**

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NASB)

³ **"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,**
⁴ **for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.**
⁵ **We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."**

He is to put his will, his desires, his wants, his ambitions to death. In their stead, he is to follow Jesus and to do His will all day long. **Note** this is not negative, passive behavior. It takes positive, active behavior to *will*, to *deny self*, to *take up* one's *cross*, to *follow* Christ. A person has to act, work, get to it, and be diligent, consistent, and enduring in order to die to self.

There are several ways the believer dies to self. **Romans 6:11-13** spells out the ways as clearly as they can be.

Romans 6:11-13 (NASB)

¹¹ **"Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.**
¹² **Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,**
¹³ **and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."**

1. The believer reckons or counts himself crucified with Christ.

Romans 6:11 (NASB)

¹¹“Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 6:6 (NASB)

⁶“Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.”

Galatians 2:20 (NASB)

²⁰“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

Galatians 5:24 (NASB)

²⁴“Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

2. The believer reckons or counts himself dead to sin, but alive to God.

Romans 6:11b (NASB)

¹¹“Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

1 Peter 4:2 (NASB)

²“So as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.”

3. The believer does not let sin reign in his body.

Romans 6:12 (NASB)

¹²“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts.”

Colossians 3:5 (NASB)

⁵“Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.”

4. The believer does not yield his bodily members as instruments of sin.

Romans 6:13a (NASB)

¹³“And do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.”

Romans 8:13 (NASB)

¹³“For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

5. The believer yields himself to God—as much as those who are alive from the dead are yielded to God.

Romans 6:13b (NASB)

¹³“**And do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**”

Romans 12:1 (NASB)

¹“**Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.**”

Romans 13:14 (NASB)

¹⁴“**But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.**”

6. The believer yields his bodily members as instruments of righteousness.

Romans 6:13c (NASB)

¹³“**And do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**”

Galatians 5:16 (NASB)

¹⁶“**But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.**”

It should be noted that one's hardship or burden can bring a person to the place where the Lord can deal with him. It is then that the hardship becomes the cross and denial of self that Jesus is talking about. With an act of self-denial, the Christian can then reckon himself alive to God (**Romans 6:13**).

Romans 6:13 (NASB)

¹³“**And do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**”

He can then follow Jesus. This is an act which can be described as committing all that one is and has to Christ. It is an act that needs to be repeated every day (cp. **Matthew 10:38**).

Matthew 10:38 (NASB)

³⁸“**And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.**”