



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 8 The Vibrant Body Pt. 2 - RADICAL
By Pastor Jody May 10/02/2022

Acts 2:42-47 ESV

The Fellowship of the Believers

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Last week we began our discussion of the type of Church that was beginning to be developed here out of these first converts in the book of Acts. What I failed to do for you last week, out of a lack of time, was to explain the use of the **metaphor of a body**. That picture, in case you are not aware, has long been a tool to explain and talk about the church. Let me briefly make you aware of just a couple of instances in scriptures where this metaphor is used:

Colossians 1:18 ESV

¹⁸ And he (Jesus) is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

The church has a head, a leader, a person who makes the plans and gives directions for what He wants done, His name is Jesus.

Romans 12:4-5 ESV

⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

We, Christians, make up the body by bringing to a group collective our different personalities and abilities to do what He says to do.



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This body like all manifestations of human physical form reflects God's image, like a collage, like one of those "**Photo Mosaics**" where up close you see one image and upon panning out all the little images make up one giant picture. This image is what declares to the world that God is real, He is seen in the image of Christ, He came to save sinners to give eternal life. So, when the world looks at our church, we should be displaying an accurate picture of Christ, and that should be a **Vibrant body full of life and health**. Last week we started to breakdown that image so we can better understand that body image.

[REVIEW]

One of the ways the church is a witness to the world is to display the attractiveness of Christ. Unlike the flesh the body of Christ becomes more beautiful as it ages and as a church grows it should be growing in its' beauty. Last week we started looking at this body to see how it begins to lure God's elect out of the world, how it becomes the city on the hill.

Last week we said it starts with **DEVOTION**. Just like in our physical bodies, you want to lose weight, you want to be healthier, you want to become stronger, whatever that goal is one must become devoted to the activities that develops the body. Last week we saw these first converts replace things in their lives with a new devotion to the things of God.

(v.42) First and foremost was to the teaching of the Word, and we said it was the most important because if you can't do that rightly or if it doesn't get the attention as the priority, then the body can't get any traction. God's Word is the mold that the body gets poured into. Secondly, these folks were devoted to fellowship; that was a day-by-day commitment to living with each other. Thirdly, to the breaking of bread, means meals and the observance of the Lord's Supper, whereby Christ is put as the center of the Fellowship, and the body recognizes His preeminence as the head and leader. Fourthly, they devoted themselves to the prayers, ongoing to Jesus the new High Priest of their religion that hears everyone's prayers, and we concluded that is why corporate prayer is desired because the church is able to come together and hear the work of the Spirit among them.



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[INTRODUCTION]

Now a people who are that devoted to God and each other, they will begin to draw attention to themselves. When that happens, when people look a little closer at the church, they zoom in, past the parking lot, past the pews, to the individuals they see something more than just devotion, they see a **radicalness** in these lives, something that makes them say, **“that’s not normal”**.

[ILLUSTRATION] I call it the **WIM HOFF** experience. Wim Hoff is a Dutch sport extremist and researcher that has developed what is known as **Cold Therapy** whereby he uses extreme/radical cold environments to force the nervous system to become responsive to conscious thought.¹ Hoff, has the attention of thousands and has done a lot of great work in the area neuroscience, but what he offers **is uncomfortable** even though it is **highly beneficial**.

God was doing the same thing with these new Christians, He was having them do something that was uncomfortable to themselves and at the same time, so shocking to those on the outside that it seems radical/crazy to those that are not a part of the body.

⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were **selling** their **possessions** and **belongings** and **distributing** the **proceeds** to **all**, as any had **need**.

People were giving up the thing that the world recognizes makes them secure and comfortable, **their MONEY!** It is one of the most shocking things one can see in scripture. I know a lot of Christians that don’t doubt that Jesus walked on water, that He cast out demons, or that HE can raise the dead, BUT getting people to give up their money!? That is a miracle that stands on par with these other things, and what’s ore they were doing it voluntarily not under compulsion! Here’s the big thing I want you to walk away with today if anything.

Main Point: Regenerate People should be Generous People

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8ALm2M09qA>



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Today I want to discuss the pieces of developing a Radical lifestyle, a lifestyle that makes the world go “**YOU CRAZY!**”, because the people on the outside looking in, also hold the elect, that are hiding from us. God uses the church, that gets to that radical phase, to call His people to come join Him, to become His disciples, and to take part in the Great Commission.

1. The Problem that keeps us from Generosity.

Much like in the 1st century church there is a lot of opportunity for the church to rise up, and to be noticed. Back in the day of the Apostles the church would have been under intense political and economic strain that we need to comprehend.

The Jews, the first converts, of Palestine were under two separate forms of governing control. On one side we have the Romans providing for the peace of the land. It’s just that the way the Romans provided peace, during the *Pax Romana*, was through extreme means.² In order to have 2 centuries of peace (up to Marcus Aurelius, 180 AD, of Gladiator fame) it meant political annihilation of anyone opposing Roman rule **by force**. On the other side the Jews were controlled by the Sanhedrin or the governing power of the temple. If you did not do right according to your national standards ultimately you could be cast out of temple life leaving you with no property, no heritage, no family/friends, which also meant for the practicing Judaizers no ticket into heaven.

Let this be a warning, the more political power you give people in your life the less freedoms you will have. I just thought I would mention that as we head to midterm elections. Corrupt people with the power you give them will do corrupt things and it does not matter their race or background.

Currently here’s where we stand in comparison with the ancient world.

- Yes, the economy doesn’t seem to be bouncing back as it should, as a matter of fact the federal government is doing all it can not to get you to look at it.

² <https://www.history.com/news/pax-romana-roman-empire-peace-augustus>



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- Yes, it seems as if our current administration is in no rush to fix it for that does not fit their agenda.
- Yes, most people in America right now (61%) are living paycheck to paycheck.³
- Yes, the government is weaponizing its' federal officials to strong arm people into compliance with not just laws but beliefs.⁴⁵
- YES, in the face of all that, **the church can and will take care of its' own**, and that is the most important and sustainable truth for that has happened for over 2,000 years. If you want insurance and relief from this world, it is a great day to be a part of the church!

Now, we do though, need to address a problem here that can keep us from looking Radical and can keep us from experiencing relief from some unstable times.

Matthew 19:21-22 ESV

²¹Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."

²²When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

[GOSPEL]

Jesus understood the issue; it's **the heart**. He goes right after it, and it's good to ask for us, is that our problem too? Maybe today you have a problem with generosity not because you have a lack of means, but because your heart has a rear-naked-choke-hold on what you value.

The rich man unlike the disciples could not see what was in front of Him. Jesus stands in front of Him from whom all blessings flow. The problem is for him that he's not just selfish but that he's proving our main point. His heart is

³ <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/the-number-of-consumers-living-paycheck-to-paycheck-has-increased-year-over-year-across-all-income-levels-301596552.html>

⁴ <https://www.heritage.org/crime-and-justice/commentary/fbi-justice-department-twist-federal-law-arrest-charge-pro-life>

⁵ <https://cointelegraph.com/news/biden-is-hiring-87-000-new-irs-agents-and-they-re-coming-for-you>



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unconverted, he's more in love with what he has gotten in this physical world instead of in love with the King of Heaven. The greatest treasure in the Universe was standing in front of Him and he missed it! Remember **regenerate people are generous people.** Let's not fool ourselves family don't be afraid to examine yourselves.

- We think money keeps us safe until we reach heaven, and Jesus says money is that which will keep you out of heaven!
- The love of money is the physical representation of self-reliance and the demonstration of a heart that knows not the Lord.
- The correct thing to keep in mind is that all wealth in money and possessions is to put to use to multiply God's Kingdom represented by men's souls. [Matthew 25:14-30](#) (parable of the talents)

This morning family I want you to know it is a serious problem not to become too dependent on wealth, especially in our current environment, SO it is good to know that God has a way to help fight this. He wants to save us, He wants you to know freedom, and He wants us to show the type of radical lives that brings people to Jesus so they too may be saved.

2. The Unity needed to develop Generosity.

⁴⁴ And all who believed **were together** and had **all things in common.** ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

Verse 44 is there for a reason, it is to give a reason for v. 45. It is a funny thing how scripture will be very clear about its' meanings if you stay faithful to its' content. Regenerate people are generous people and **what creates an atmosphere of generosity** is a body that is unified not just in their denomination, not just in their beliefs, but in everything about themselves. These people had **ALL things in common.**

This is where people who have played team sports, and even more than that, people who have played on successful sport teams will tell you that unity breeds generosity. **When a team begins to lose individual identities and begins to develop a corporate identity is when teams begin to experience**



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winning. Players on a winning team, focused on unity, don't care who gets the ball, they don't care who gets the fame, they don't care who makes the points, they just want to win! On a winning team you will find teammates who are all about helping others get better at what they do, they are all about following team rules, they are all about sacrificing for each other, because the spirit of unity has made them generous in their hearts towards each other.

You will find the same approach when you talk about special opps, specifically the Navy Seals. That is a body of soldiers who spend a lot of time together in extreme situations sleep deprived and under constant stress. In order to stay alive and get back home they all keep focused one thing, the health and security of their brother-in-arms. Isn't it interesting that when you get life in the right perspective, that it's dangerous and you may not come back alive, that valuing self goes out the window! A sense of sacrifice for your fellow man is what sustains you and delivers you back home, and again a spirit of generosity permeates that team because they are willing to give it all for one another. **(If you are looking for a good experiment on this check out Francis Schaeffer's story)**

Jesus spent 3.5 years with His men to teach them the value of loving one's neighbor as themselves. They were constantly on the move, like rebels in a hostile land, sleep deprived and scared, all the while wondering why they ever left home. Jesus on purpose sets up the discipleship process that once you committed to it there was no going back, they had to rely on Him first and then they had to keep an eye out for their brothers. Jesus works this strategy perfectly and then prays in confidence before His death:

John 17:12 *While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.*

Jesus sacrifices everything for them and unites them and creates a bond stronger than their desire to go back home, through the **generosity of his sacrifice**. They have become generous in all things, and it has replicated in these first converts because they were together in their belief about Jesus.



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My family, again that is why it has to start with a devotion to God's Word, because there and only there can you build an accurate picture of the life of Christ. We are all bound together by the same Spirit which wants to build unity around the resurrected Lord. This same spirit will build in us a radicalness, a craziness if you will, like the Navy Seals, that says I am ready to give it all for my brother or sister 'BECAUSE' we get to live for Jesus as He lived for us! I pray and hope that is your position today because if it is there is more to come out of that!

[CHALLENGE / APPLICATION]

3. The Benefits that come out of Generosity.

We are going to go to one more place in scripture where Paul is talking about being a Cheerful Giver, whereby most of us have heard this famous verse:

2 Cor 9:7 ESV

*"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a **cheerful giver**."*

Later in this same chapter, Paul describes the benefits to cheerful giving which if ever a church was trying to stand out for Christ in this world it was the church at Corinth. There were so many things they were trying to overcome, there was so much wealth and the allure of what it can buy you in Corinth, that they needed to see the benefits of generosity and know that their efforts were not in vain. Paul shows them the true treasure in becoming radical in their own way.

2 Corinthians 9:11-12 ESV

¹¹You will be **enriched** in every way to be **generous** in every way, which through us will **produce thanksgiving** to God. ¹²For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.



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1st – You will be enriched in every way v. 11. That’s a good way of saying that being generous is not just about money. God does bless those who are generous with the capacity to be more generous, but it is in every way. We all have different ways in which we can be generous including our money.

There are multiple ways in which we can bless people. You like to cook take someone a meal in this church on a busy school night and see how that blesses you. You like to clean come up here once a week and clean the building, Heather has been doing it recently because that’s the way she likes to love you. You like to camp, prep a camping trip and take another family along and serve them help make camping as much fun for them as it is for you! You like to fix things around your house do you know how much pleasure it is to fix something at someone else’s house that can’t do it for themselves?

Take what you love, or at least what you are good at, and do it for someone else and use it to bring glory to God. And if it does not bring you joy well at least use that to pray about your heart (see point one). You will be enriched in every way when you choose generosity so have some faith and put that to the test.

2nd – The saints will glorify God.

2 Corinthians 9:13-15 ESV

13 By their approval of this service (church), they will **glorify God because** of your **submission** that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the **generosity** of your **contribution** for them and for all others,

Going back to that Navy Seal example earlier, as the church, we have to remember, it is about helping other people make it home. **Perseverance of the Saints ‘IS’ a doctrine dependent on God, but God most the time enacts that teaching through the work of the church.** He doesn’t work around His people, He chooses to use His people to ensure their well-being.

In v. 13 Paul says their approval of this service (generosity) they will glorify God based on one’s submission to the gospel and the generosity of the contribution. Giving God glory is not a natural thing so when you help your



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brothers and sisters testify to God's goodness in the face of a hostile world that's a BIG DEAL.

When you submit to the Gospel and love others as yourself, the people that you do that to, will let others know. It is because it is so alien that they have to share it! If you want to work on this, which btw 'IS' an aspect of evangelism, loving others gets them to tell people about Jesus, **be even more generous!** The more you give even when it is uncomfortable the more, they will testify to God's goodness. That is the example of the Gospel, **the best thing in all the universe was given for undeserving sinners, and that generosity is what caused us to glorify Christ!** You saw that in the sermon at Pentecost, here is the Messiah and here is the death HE died for you, and those that heard were like sign me up, I'm leaving this all behind! That is glorifying God and it works the same way through your sacrifices.

Hey, it is hard to be generous when things don't come easy, but it creates a greater impact for God's kingdom. There are things right now that you don't have to give but if you could it may be the life-changing even in someone's life.

I get it, you don't have a lot of time, I know me too, but the opportunity is so big when you sacrifice for someone your valuable time to give them the gospel. Perhaps you are not eloquent in words, forget that, you say about 2 words all day, you hate talking! Most people will know that when that's you, but you have such a great opportunity Mr./Mrs. Stoic, for when you are generous with your words people will listen! Maybe you're the type that is known for 0 patience, I hope not, BUT if the shoe fits let's use it for God's glory. What if instead of becoming impatient with someone remember you are a screw up too and show grace and then watch if that doesn't change someone's life. The bigger the sacrifice the greater the opportunity to bring God glory. Are you ready to be radical yet?

3rd - You will receive the benefits of prayer!

¹⁴ while they long for you and **pray for you**, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!



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Alright, if you tell me you don't want prayer then you're a liar get out! C'mon how many times have we asked people to pray for us? You know you hate asking it, because many times you are thinking what's the point. BUT the principle being played out here is that **people are treating you the way you treated them, with love**. Maybe they can't return the favor and that's ok we aren't doing it to gain advantages over people, but God's people the church, their responses to generosity, a radical way of life, is to pray for you!

You want to see more success in your life as a Christian, then keep loving others with a sacrificial heart! God has built around us all a positive feedback loop. That's a psychological idea that speaks to the environment whereby the more you do action A the more of response B you will receive which in turn produces more of Action A! The more generosity, the more prayer, and the more prayer for your life the more generosity you will beget!

Family the way we get people to notice the witness of this church, is to become Radical in our live towards each other by our generosity. Your actions will not go unnoticed.

You have a hard heart towards others the way you work on that is by being generous. You want to work on that a little more, then start with being unified around Christ, His teachings, and live life in community with this body. You want to reap the benefits of personal enrichment, glorifying God, and having others pray for you practice radical generosity? Put these things to the test and see if what God is teaching is not true so that you may discover and live it out for yourself:

Regenerate people are generous people

Yes, they are a people that reflect their God rightly...



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[PRAYER]

[COMMUNION]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that was supremely generous with the gift of His only Son.

Go in the name of the Son, that was supremely generous in sharing with us His inheritance of eternal life.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that was supremely generous with us, granting us spiritual life by grace.