



Growing God's Church In a Changing World

Study in The Book of Acts

Introduction

We are beginning an eight-week study in the book of Acts, which describes how the early church exploded with growth. Acts tells the story of an infant church that begin in Jerusalem with a message that Jesus gave to twelve disciples/apostles. As a result of the evangelistic efforts of the twelve disciples who journeyed from Jerusalem, Judea, Samara, and to the uttermost parts of the earth sharing the gospel the Lord's church grew. The story is very interesting because the only message that the disciples/apostles had was of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection.

Acts is a missionary book, Acts 1:8, where the church leaders were motivated by the Holy Spirit. Growing churches do not grow without the power and activity of the Holy Spirit.

In this Study

1. You will learn about the mission of the church.
2. Understand the power of the Holy Spirit
3. Understand how the church grew
4. Examine your role in growing God's church

Definition of Church Growth:

The church expanding numerically through the sharing of the gospel of Jesus.

Characteristics of Growing Churches:

1. They have leaders that lead
2. A Desperation for God's power
3. They believe that greater things are in store
4. They are full of ordinary people
5. The church is full of passion
6. They take ownership of the Great Commission
7. There is a willingness to change and adapt
8. Generosity is embraced

The Church Growing in Acts

Underline the words in the following verses that indicate that the church was growing:

- a. Act2:47 – “The Lord added to the church daily as such as should be saved”
- b. Acts 4:4 – “But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.”
- c. Acts 5:14 – “An all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number.”
- d. Acts 6:7 – “The word of God kept on spreading and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priest were becoming obedient to the faith.”

Session 1: The Church Praying

Objective: To conclude that prayer is the key catalyst active in the everyday life of the church to the point that people’s lives are saved.

Background: Acts was written by Luke to Theophilus, who was a Roman official who simply wanted to know more about Jesus, 1:1 and Luke 1:1-4. Luke would be considered the first church historian, because he lays out the historical development of Christianity – first in the ministry of the life of Jesus Christ (in the gospels) and second in the outreach of the church (in the book of Acts).

Luke was a companion of Paul. Luke used the pronoun “we”, referring to his association with Paul and the missionary work they were doing. Acts 16:10-17 & 21:1.

Luke was also a physician, Colossian 4:14. Note that as a doctor, Luke was a leader in the church and in the movement of the growth of Christianity.

I. The Power that Promotes Growth

Read Acts 1:5-8

How many times is the phrase Holy Spirit mentioned in vs. 1:1-8: _____

The Holy Spirit was the key catalyst of the apostles and their ministry work in the book of Acts.

What did Jesus say they would receive in vs. 8: _____ .

What did Jesus say they would be as a result of the Holy Spirit: _____ .

How do you know Jesus wanted the gospel to spread vs 8:

Let's talk about the Holy Spirit:

1. The Holy Spirit has the responsibility to reveal life to the Saints, I Cor. 2:10-11
2. The Holy Spirit is a teacher that is responsible for bringing things to your remembrance, John 14:26

A believer in order to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, should be full of the Spirit.

A believer is full of the spirit as a result of their relationship with the Spirit and the Spirits control in a believer's life. A person is full when there is plenty of evidence that shows the Spirit is at work. The fullness of the spirit should be evident to others. If there is fullness of the Spirit, the person will bear fruit and their ministry will be effective.

Read Ephesians 5:17-19

Vs. 19 – reveals what a steady state of fullness is in the life of a believer.

Read Luke 4:1 – Why do we need to be full of the Spirit?

II. The Church On One Accord

Scripture Reference: Acts 1:13-14, 2:46

The Upper Room, was the place where the early church awakened and mobilized for prayer. The Upper Room was a place filled with prayerful activity.

The above scriptures say that the disciples were on one accord, they were together, and they had passion. When believers collectively have hearts of passion and unity, God's work is able to be done. Also, when believers are in fellowship and agreement of purpose and assignment, God's work advances.

When God's people sense and feel that they have been called by God and seek God's power and direction, God is able to move mightily. When they call on God with like passion, God will move.

QUESTION: What is the key characteristic of a growing church from Acts 1:13-14