

MYTH BUSTERS (WEEK 2): "I CAN BE OK WITHOUT THE CHURCH"

LAST WEEK'S MYTH WAS: "I NEED TO FIND A CHURCH THAT I LIKE."

- The topic of the church is important right now, just look at the national statistics.
- Remember that the Old Testament Jewish nation and the church in the New Testament both show God wants to create a people who will live in His wisdom and protection as well as complete His mission.
- This statement above only works if we like what Jesus likes.
- The church is God's idea—God's church is God's idea.

Matthew 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

THIS WEEK'S MYTH: "I CAN BE OK WITHOUT THE CHURCH." IS THIS TRUE?

- So many want a church they like, and others say, "There is no church I like."
- What does God's Word say?
 - Jesus made disciples and then sent them out to make disciples—to build the church. (**Matthew 28:19-20**)
 - The proper understanding of scripture asks, "How did the writers mean for what they said to be lived out?" Acts us shows what they meant.
 - To become a Christian in this culture means you are going to be different than the world you lived in, and that could be dangerous.

Acts 2:36-47 ³⁶Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah. ³⁷When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." ⁴⁰With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." ⁴¹Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. ⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

KEY PHRASES IN THIS TEXT

- "they" and "all" and "those who accepted the message were devoted to..." (verse 41): All generations and ethnicities
- "were baptized" (verse 41): picture of new birth into a new family
- "devoted" (verse 42): means "steadfastly persisting in, loyal to, or be faithful to"
 - "to stay by," "to persist at," "to remain with." In connection with persons it means "to be loyal to someone." In connection with objects, it means "to occupy oneself diligently with something," "to pay persistent attention to."¹
 - Why would they need to be devoted to it?
 - ⇒ Because there were people there.
 - ⇒ They would forget, which was why Paul had to write Ephesians to remind them constantly.
- "they devoted themselves to..." (verse 42)
 - "...the apostles' teaching": their authority and teachings
 - "...fellowship": *Koinonia* in Greek
 - "...the breaking of bread": Can have two meanings
 - ⇒ Communion or the Lord's supper, which bound them together
 - ⇒ Meals—the Jewish culture places special meaning on eating together.
 - "...prayer"
 - They were also devoted to sharing (verse 44-45)

NOTICE THE PHYSICAL PLACES THEY MET: TEMPLE COURTS AND HOMES.

- Large group meetings
 - Small group meetings
 - Ministry meetings (see **Acts 6** where they address the Greek widows' needs)
 - One-on-one relationships
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NOTICE WHEN THEY MET: DAILY.

Acts 20:7–11 ⁷On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. ⁸There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. ⁹Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. ¹⁰Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “He’s alive!” ¹¹Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left.

1 Corinthians 16:1–2 **Hebrews 3:12–13** **Acts 2:42–47**

EVEN BACK THEN, SOME PEOPLE WANTED JESUS WITHOUT THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS (THE CHURCH).

Hebrews 10:23–25 ²³Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Romans 12:4–6 **1 Corinthians 12:12–21**

SEE HOW IT ALL FIT TOGETHER:

- Teaching from God was given to teachers.
- Unpacking and (properly and practically) applying it in groups
- Encouragement for living wisdom out in life

NOTICE THE EFFECT ALIGNMENT HAD ON THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD:

- People experienced God with awe and encouragement.
- God worked, and people noticed.
- The church enjoyed the favor of all the people and God added to their number daily. (**Acts 4:47**)

ARE YOU DEVOTED?

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS IN LIFE GROUPS OR WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Myth to bust: I can still be good with God without the church.

Passages to consider: Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12; Hebrews 10:19-25; or select one from the sermon.

How did the thoughts and steps from last week’s discussion/sermon impact your week?

From this week’s sermon, what was meaningful to you?

Read through Acts 2:42-47 a couple of times. A) What do you see is significant in how the people interacted as the church Jesus left? Observe all you can. Share what stands out to you.

What has been your experience with being devoted to the teaching of God and being devoted to relationships with fellow believers? A) How are both significant in following Jesus? B) What’s it like when one is missing?

What helps you press into biblical relationships? A) What helps you seek and align to God’s truth? B) What can get in the way of either one of those?

What is your action step and response to what God is showing you?

Next Week: Myth Busters (Week 3): “I attend church, so I am a mature believer.”

Passages to prepare your heart: Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 8:29; Ephesians 4:17-5:2; Colossians 3:1-17

¹Grundmann, W. (1964–). καρτερέω, προσκαρτερέω, προσκαρτερήσις. G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), Theological dictionary of the New Testament (electronic ed., Vol. 3, p. 618). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

All scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright 1978 by New York International Bible Society. [emphasis added]