



# Opening Your Life to Community

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*(Acts 2:42-47)*

## Choosing Jesus

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- C** — Choosing Jesus
- H** — Holding to His Word
- O** — Obeying His Commands
- O** — Opening Your Life to Community
- S** — Serving the Kingdom
- I** — Investing in Others
- N** — Nurturing Faithfulness
- G** — Glorifying God

## **Review**

This is the third lesson in our Jesus Journey series.

### **C - Choosing Jesus**

Choose to follow Jesus, surrendering your life to Him and beginning your journey of faith.

### **H - Holding to His Word**

Choose to root yourself in Scripture, for the sake of knowing Him and growing to spiritual maturity.

### **O - Obeying His Commands**

Choose obedience, prioritizing God's will above everything else, and allowing the Holy Spirit to shape your character and actions to reflect Christ.

*The next stage of our Jesus Journey...*

### **O - Opening Your Life to Community**

Choose to engage in fellowship with other believers as the family of God, for support, accountability, and encouragement.

# ◆ Introduction

## WHAT KIND OF COMMUNITY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

- We are a **Godward Community** - a people who have chosen Jesus, people who are on a journey WITH JESUS TO JESUS.
- **What is The Church? (Our Community)** — The Church is every person past, present, and future from every tribe, tongue, and nation who says with their life, “*I choose Jesus!*”

## JESUS CALLS US FAMILY

- (**Matthew 12:46–50**) — While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. <sup>48</sup> But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” <sup>49</sup> And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! <sup>50</sup> For *whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.*”
- The Church is the Family of God — Jesus says that anyone who does the will of God is our brother, sister, and mother — WE ARE FAMILY

## WHAT KIND OF FAMILY ARE WE?

- This is CLOSE family — Brothers, Sisters, and Mothers. (Not family reunion kind of family)

### ● NOTE: WE DON'T GET TO CHOOSE OUR CLOSE FAMILY

- We choose our spouse — Likewise, God made a *choice* to love us (His bride). We have a *choice*, whether or not to love God.
- We don't get to choose our brothers, sisters, and mothers

## THE CHURCH IS THE FAMILY OF GOD

This is the community we are talking about when we say “Opening Your Life to Community”. Our passage of scripture today, sets the stage for what **God’s Family** is supposed to look like.

### THE CONTEXT:

- Acts Chapter 1 - Jesus has been resurrected and spent 40 days with his disciples. He has a final meeting with them and promises that He will send the Holy Spirit to give them power to be His witnesses throughout the world. Then they watch Him ascend up to heaven.
- Chapter 2 - The Holy Spirit shows up on the day of Pentecost in a powerful way. Peter proclaims the Gospel to the crowd and about three thousand people were saved. This event is the launching of Jesus’ Church.
- Immediately after this event, we come to our passage for today, and we get to see what the Church looked like at it’s beginning...

**(Acts 2:42-47) —**

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

*Here we see in its simplest form,  
what God’s Family is supposed to look like...*

# ◆ #1 — God’s Family is Devoted to God and to Each Other

(Verse 42) —

And they *devoted* themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the *fellowship*, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

## They were devoted

- *Devoted* means: “Steadfast commitment, persistence, and wholehearted dedication.” This was not just a casual participation.

## Their devotion was fueled by all they had just experienced:

- Jesus crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension
- The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

## What were they devoted to?

- The apostle’s teaching. The fellowship. Breaking of Bread. Prayer.
  - **NOTE:** Relationships initiated and grounded in the Word of God and secured through prayer, are the kind that last.

## ◆ What does the Bible say about our devotion?

### WE ARE CALLED TO DEVOTION TO JESUS — TO BE “ALL IN”

- (Matthew 22:36–38) — “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” <sup>37</sup> And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment...

### WE ARE CALLED TO BE AS DEVOTED TO OTHERS AS WE ARE TO OURSELVES

- (Matthew 22:39) - And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

## ◆ #2 — God's Family Displays the Power of God

(Verse 43) —

And *awe* came upon every soul, and *many wonders and signs* were being done through the apostles.

### They were in awe

- **Awe:** Reverential fear, wonder, and amazement (denotes deep respect, not terror)
- **Question:** When was the last time you were in awe of God and His work through the church?

### There were many wonders and signs

- The apostles had a special manifestation of the Holy Spirit at the launching of the Church. However, *we have and access to the same Holy Spirit*.
- **Why were they seeing such power?** — The atmosphere was conducive to the Holy Spirit showing up.

### The church lacks power today for two reasons...

- The church so often puts our dependance upon mans' power and wisdom
- The atmosphere of churches today is so often NOT conducive to the Holy Spirit showing up.
- **NOTE:** When we gather together, our goal is not to make people feel welcome, but to facilitate an atmosphere where God is welcome.

## ◆ What does the Bible say about God's power through us?

### PREACHING'S POWER COMES FROM GOD

- (1 Corinthians 2:3–5) — ... I was with you in *weakness and in fear and much trembling*, <sup>4</sup> and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

### THERE MUST BE POWER IF IT'S THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- (1 Corinthians 4:20) — For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in *power*.

### GOD WANTS TO SHOW HIS POWER

- (2 Corinthians 4:7) — But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing *power belongs to God* and not to us.

## ◆ #3 — God’s Family Loves Each Other

(Verse 44-45) —

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

- **Together** — Family is together. Our togetherness defines our life as family.
- **All things in common** — Family shares. *What’s mine is yours*.
- **As any had need** — Family takes care of each other.
- **God’s family loves each other** — They cared about each other’s welfare. They wanted them to be well, to be safe, to prosper, to be happy and to grow. They gave of themselves to make it so. *This is how true family is to operate*.
  - This love is not based on personality, giftedness, or contribution.
  - There are no conditions given - they loved everyone.

## ◆ What does the Bible say about our love for each other?

### WE ARE TO LOVE EACH OTHER AS JESUS LOVES US - (IT’S A COMMAND)

- (John 13:34–35) — A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.<sup>35</sup> *By this all people will know that you are my disciples*, if you have love for one another.”

● **NOTE:** Love for each other is *the proof* that we are true disciples

### LOVE IS TANGIBLE - (NOT JUST EMPTY WORDS)

- (1 John 3:16–18) — By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and *we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers*.<sup>17</sup> But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? <sup>18</sup> Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.
- (Galatians 6:2) — *Bear one another’s burdens*, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

● **THOUGHT:** NONE OF US DESERVES TO BE LOVED LIKE THIS.

*Loving each other is how we love Jesus - 1) “If you love me, you’ll obey me.” 2) “as much as you’ve done this to the least of these my brothers, you did it to me”*

## ◆ #4 — God’s Family is Marked by Consistent, Joy-filled Worship and Fellowship

(Verse 46-47) —

And *day by day*, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with *glad* and *generous hearts*, <sup>47</sup> *praising* God...

- **Day by Day** — Family is life, not just an every now and then thing
- **Glad, generous hearts** — Family is marked by joy and generosity to each other
- **Praise** — All these things ignite praise in our hearts and on our lips

## ◆ What does the Bible say about worshipping together?

### DON'T NEGLECT THE COMMUNITY

- (Hebrews 10:24–25) — And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> *not neglecting to meet together*, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.
- We are to be “*devoted*” — the model is “*day by day*” — it is to be our *life*

### THE COMMUNITY IS A SOURCE OF GLADNESS

- (Psalm 122:1) — I was *glad* when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord!”

### THERE ARE PROMISES ONLY KNOWN WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

- (Matthew 18:19–20) — Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where *two or three are gathered* in my name, there am I among them.”

#### ● ILLUSTR: WOMAN WITH A DISABLING SPIRIT (HAD TO BE PRESENT)

(Luke 13:10–12) — Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. <sup>11</sup> And behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. <sup>12</sup> When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your disability.”

## ◆ #5 — God's Family Multiplies

(Verse 47) —

...and having *favor* with all the people. And the Lord *added to their number* day by day those who were being saved.

- **Favor** — There is favor upon God's true family
- **Added to their number** — God's true family is marked by growth.
- **Day by day** — Continuous and consistent growth

## ◆ What does the Bible say about our multiplication?

### JESUS PROMISED WE WOULD MULTIPLY

- (Matthew 4:19) — And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will *make you* fishers of men.”

### MULTIPLICATION SHOULD BE CONTINUOUS NOT RARE

- (Acts 6:7) — And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the **disciples** *multiplied greatly* in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

● **NOTE:** Multiplication is the result of true, Godward community

## **Closing**

### **O - Opening Your Life to Community**

Choose to engage in fellowship with other believers as the family of God, for support, accountability, and encouragement.

- God's Community is Devoted to God and to Each Other
- God's Community Displays the Power of God
- God's Community Loves Each Other
- God's Community is marked by consistent Joy-filled Worship and Fellowship
- God's Community Multiplies

**If you're not opening yourself up to God's Family, you are robbing yourself (and the church).**

#### **● QUESTIONS:**

- If someone were to make an assessment of your day to day life, would they find that you are Opening Your Life to God's Community?
- What changes need to happen in your life right now to ensure that you are being fully obedient to the Lord regarding His Community from this time forward?