

Generosity & Thankfulness

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Acts 2:42-47

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And **all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.** And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, **praising God** and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:42-47, ESV)

Introduction

Last week we mentioned Micah 6:6-8 and how God has asked only that we do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God and connected it with how this Acts 2:42-47 passage can be likened to a snapshot of the second stage of the sanctification process. I believe that there are at least six aspects to this process of sanctification, and that these six aspects of the sanctification—you could call them spiritual disciplines—describe how the first believers grew in practical holiness. Just as devotion to the teaching of the apostles and to the fellowship helped the disciples to learn to do justly, and as devotion to the breaking of bread and to prayer helped them to walk humbly with God, their devotion towards giving to the needs of others and praising God helped them to love mercy.

1. Giving to the needs of others. (Ze 7:8-14, Mt 25:31-40, 1Ti6:17-19)

a) God is the God of the widow, fatherless, homeless and poor.

b) As we have done to “the least of these” we have done to Jesus Christ.

2. Praising God. (Ex 15:1-2, Ps 148:1-14, 2Co 9:6-15)

a) Praise is the appropriate response of every living thing.

b) A balance of giving, receiving, and giving thanks to God is a vital part of the life of faith.

For our prayerful study, discussion and application:

1) Compare Micah 6:6-8 and Acts 2:42-47 and discuss God's desired lifestyle.

2) Read the Scriptures above and discuss “giving to the needs of others.”

3) Read the scriptures above and discuss “praising God.”

Conclusion

Giving to the needs of others and thanking God for the ability to give as well as the blessing of receiving are two spiritual disciplines that go hand-in-hand.

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