

Acts 2:42 (ESV)

⁴² And they devoted themselves:

- (1) to the **apostles' teaching**
- (2) and **fellowship**,
- (3) to the **breaking of bread**
- (4) and the **prayers**.

Acts 2:43-47 (ESV)

- (1) ⁴³ And **awe** came upon every soul, and
 - (2) many **wonders and signs** were being done through the apostles.
 - (3) ⁴⁴ And all who believed **were together**
 - (4) and had all **things in common**.
 - (5) ⁴⁵ And they were **selling their possessions** and belongings
 - (6) and **distributing the proceeds** to all, as any had need.
 - (7) ⁴⁶ And day by day, **attending the temple** together
 - (8) and **breaking bread** in their homes,
 - (9) they received their food with **glad and generous hearts**,
 - (10) ⁴⁷ **praising God**
 - (11) and having **favor** with all the people.
 - (12) And the **Lord added to their number** day by day those who were being saved.
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I greet you with grace, mercy and peace from God our Father, Jesus Christ our Risen Lord and the Holy Spirit who lives within us as believers, empowering us.

The book of Acts identifies four characteristics in the lives of early believers and twelve results that followed. Those characteristics are teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. The believers acted, and God produced the results. Yet, there was an unmistakable connection between what believers were attentive to and the results that followed, and this presents several questions.

First, are those results possible today? The answer is: Of course, “²⁵...**with God all things are possible.**” (Matthew 19:25 ESV)

The second question follows the first: Can this happen in the lives of *our* family, friends, and community? To answer this question, we simply seek to understand what was happening in the lives of those early Christians. Their results will be our results, since we serve the same God.

It says, in Acts, that the believers were devoted. The word "devoted," according to Webster's Dictionary, (7th Collegiate Edition), is defined as: “to dedicate by a solemn act...to give up wholly or purposefully...to center the attention or activities...to set apart for a particular use or end.” In Greek, the word "devoted" literally means: “to be earnest towards...to preserve...to be constantly diligent...to attend closely... to continue...to wait on continually” (Strong's, ref. 4342, pg 61). In the King James Bible, the word "steadfast" is used in place of the word "devoted." Those early believers were steadfast, devoted, preserving, earnestly attending, waiting and diligent toward four areas of life.

THE APOSTLES' TEACHING – THE WORD OF JESUS – THE WORD OF GOD

We start with the apostles' teachings, which were Jesus' teachings that the apostles continued. Jesus' words and those given by the Holy Spirit to the apostles have become what we now know as the New

Testament of the Bible. Jesus spoke of the written word saying, **“For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”** (Matthew 5:18 ESV)

The law, what we know as the Old Testament of the Bible, is accurate, truthful, lasting and comes to pass just as it is written. Jesus said, **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.** (Matthew 24:35 ESV) He spoke of the very eternal words of God, and being God, His words are eternal. This is a statement of his deity. Just as the Old Testament words come to pass, so, also, do His words.

The people of the Old Testament only had the book of the law, and they were directed to the word of God, just as we are today. For example, upon the death of Moses, the Lord came to Joshua concerning the word and its effect on his life, saying,

“⁷Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. ⁸This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. ⁹Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:7-9 ESV)

. King David, in Psalm 1, speaks of life as a believer and how important God's word is by saying,

“¹Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.” (Psalm 1:1-2 ESV)

Throughout the Bible, God commanded those believers to receive the word each day. So, too, we, as believers, need to receive that word in our daily lives. The emphasis is not only on receiving God's word, but, also mediating (pondering) on it day and night and applying it to our everyday lives, which takes discipline.

FELLOWSHIP – WALKING AS ONE

Because the apostles taught as a part of their lives, this naturally led to fellowship and mutual consolation with other believers. They studied, applied and lived the Word of God. They were there to care for and to encourage each other. Fellowship is walking together, united as one body, in the truth that is taught, not undermining the teaching. The apostle John said,

“³that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ... ⁶If we say we

have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:3, 6-7 ESV)

They walked with one mind, practicing the truth of the Word of God. They let scripture explain itself and didn't deny the truth, thinking they had a better idea.

BREAKING OF BREAD - COMMUNION

Next, there was the breaking of bread, or what we refer to as communion. In Acts 2:46, they were “breaking bread in their homes,” which simply meant eating meals together. As we eat and drink, we remember that our Lord taught the real presence of His body and blood --“in, with, and under the bread and wine,” as described by Martin Luther.

PRAYER

Finally, they were given to prayer. Prayer is to be an ever present part of our lives as believers. Paul wrote...

...to the Ephesians, “¹⁸ **praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,**”
(Eph. 6:18 ESV)

...to the Philippians, “⁶ **do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**”
Philip. 4:6 (ESV)

...to the Colossians, “² **Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.**”
(Col. 4:2 ESV)

...to the Thessalonians, “¹⁷ **pray without ceasing**” (1 Thes 5:17).

...James wrote, “¹⁵ **And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.** ¹⁶ **Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.**” (James 5:15-16 ESV)

...Peter wrote, “¹² **For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.**” (1 Peter 3:12 ESV)

You get the idea that they were diligent in prayer, bringing their requests to God.

...James tells us, “² **...You do not have, because you do not ask.** ³ **You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.**” (James 2b-3 ESV)

Payer is to be accorded to Jesus for the glory of God.

...Jesus says... “¹³ **Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.**” (John 14:13 ESV)

We continue in prayer for what is best and right according to His will.

LOOK WHAT THE LORD BRINGS

With these four characteristics: **teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread (communion), and prayer**, along with the twelve results that the Lord brings, we can get an idea of what is possible in our lives. The Lord is at hand and affects our lives supernaturally. God still provides signs in response to the prayers of His people. However, the public miracles that were done through the apostles have decreased and are given as signs of that time. We now, however, have the completed sign -- the Word of God. We live in awe of God, which means to have a holy fear of the Lord, not being afraid, but being reverent and aware of living in His presence.

The greatest sign of all is the forgiveness of a rebellious sinner, who is granted life after having been dead in trespasses and sins. This is the sign provided to all who believe in and receive Christ. That forgiveness is for you. I hope and pray that you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior. I also hope that having received and turned to Him in repentance, you are diligently receiving the word of God through teaching, fellowship, communion, and prayerful living. In His name we pray, AMEN.

May the peace of God that passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. AMEN.