

**THE BIG IDEA: Independence isn't the goal; interdependence is.**The Take-Off

Happy Interdependence Day, y'all!

I guess that doesn't have quite the same ring as the normal July 4th greeting, does it?

Interdependence doesn't sound quite as "Merican!"

But this morning, I want us to talk about another mark of the born again life that will challenge that independent thinking: community

Specifically, I want to take a look at Christian Fellowship and help us see that it isn't an optional add-on to the born again life, but rather standard equipment.

In other words, if you aren't practicing Christian Fellowship - what we call community around here - then today is a good day to ask whether or not you've truly been born again into a Kingdom that is all about it.

We'll spend the majority of our time looking at 3 key texts: 2 in Acts and 1 in Corinthians

**1. Acts 2:41-47 (NIV)**

- a. Let's just make some observations straight from the text.
- b. No opinions. I don't want any of you to raise an objection to community thinking it was my idea. It was God's idea way before it was part of the discipling process here at The Gathering.
- c. Verse 41
  - A ton of people had already taken the first step of obedience in baptism
  - Simple obedience leads to supernatural outcomes - a mega church was the result
- d. Verse 42
  - These people were devoted - Greek word means "to adhere to one, be devoted to one, to be steadfastly attentive to, to continue all the time in one place, to be in constant readiness for one, to wait on constantly"
  - That described their stance toward four things: teaching, fellowship, communion, and prayer.
  - Is that how others would describe our stance toward those things?
- e. Verse 43
  - What did their simple devotion to these things lead to?
  - You guessed it! Supernatural outcomes.
  - Not just an occasional miracle or two, but "many" signs and wonders
  - Whatever kind they were, they were the kind that left everyone "filled with awe"
  - Again, does this describe us? Do we leave church services filled with awe?
  - If we don't, it isn't the pastor's fault or the worship band's fault necessarily. Let's keep reading.
- f. Verse 44
  - All the people were together and had everything in common
  - Christian Fellowship - the kind that leads to everyone being in awe of the manifested power of the Holy Spirit - requires 2 things: presence and unity
- g. Verses 45-47
  - If verse 44 listed requirements for Christian Fellowship, then these verses list the results of it
  - These aren't things we're expected to do, but rather things that we can expect to happen in an atmosphere of communion and community
  - A desire to sell and share as needs arose
  - A desire to worship together in temples and homes
  - A desire to practice hospitality
  - A desire to praise God
  - A growing favor with people
  - A growing number of believers

**2. Acts 4:32-35 (NIV)**

- a. Let's turn a few chapters to the right and see what's happening among these first believers
- b. I think you'll notice that this. Is very similar to the previous passage, but I want you to see that what we just read about wasn't just a good Sunday or a one-time revival

- c. That's what we call it today when we experience the miraculous.
- d. The early church just called that church.
- e. Verse 32
  - They're still devoted and unified
  - Notice the phrase "one in heart and soul"
  - There is such commitment to being one that no one claimed things just for themselves only
  - There would never have been IRAs back then - no INDIVIDUAL retirement accounts
  - The word for "claimed" it's a Greek word that means "to speak up"
  - It's what happens on road trips when kids say "I call shotgun!"
  - They are claiming it for themselves - something the early believers didn't even do with their own stuff!
  - Instead, they shared everything - literally, counted everything as common
- f. Verse 33
  - The result of living in Christian Fellowship like that?
  - The NASB say they had "great power" and "abundant grace"
- g. Verse 34
  - In part that powerful testimony came because the community was a living example of it
  - People could look at the community of believers and see that they were living out what they were speaking out

### 3. 1 Corinthians 15:33 (NASB)

- a. The first 2 passages were written in the early years of the Church; our last one happens 27 years later
- b. That's almost 3 decades of Paul working with and in close observation of the faith
- c. As he's wrapping up his first letter to a church full of problems and compromise, he writes the following
- d. **1 Cor. 15:33 (NASB)** / Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."
- e. One last breakdown. Strap yourselves in.
- f. "Don't be deceived"
  - Greek word isn't about being lied to blatantly but about being led astray slowly
  - The fact that some of us think this would never happen to us reveals its truth
  - **Rev. 12:9 (NIV)** / Anything that deceives comes from the devil - that's his job and his job alone
- g. "Bad company"
  - Greek word for company literally means "companionship, intercourse, communion"
  - It's the word we get homily from
  - Only time this Greek word is used in the NT
  - These are relationships that speak into our lives, and when they are bad, we get corrupted
- h. "Corrupt"
  - To corrupt, destroy, deprave
  - **2 Cor. 11:3 (NIV)** - When Satan deceives, our minds are led astray, corrupted
- i. "Good morals"
  - Only time this Greek word is used in the NT
  - Literally means "a customary abode, dwelling place"
  - A way of being
- j. Knowing all that meaning, we could rewrite this verse as "allowing close relationships that speak anything other than the truth of God into our lives will eventually chip away at the character God wants to establish in us"
- k. The negative impacts the positive ([maybe do the chair illustration here?](#))
- l. God's remedy? **Proverbs 13:20 (NIV)**

#### The Landing

We've all heard the saying "show me your friends and I'll show you your future"

Maybe the better saying is "show me your friends and I'll see your appetite"

- Want to feed the flesh? You'll have friends who want that, too, and your hunger for Jesus will fade

- Want to feed the spirit? You'll have friends who want that, too, and your hunger for the world will fade

If you're a follower of Jesus, independence isn't the goal; interdependence is.

Let's pray