

N O R M A L

R A D I C A L

GROUP NOTES

WEEK 2

OPENING QUESTION

Where do you find your deepest relationships?

SCRIPTURE

Read Acts 4:23-33 (You may want to review 4:1-22 for context)

BIG IDEAS

Today's big idea is this: **Great grace is given when we're together on mission.** As you read this section of Acts, you'll notice the powerful description of the early Christian community that Luke gives us. He tells us of many of the ways the early church experienced deep togetherness. But, one thing he doesn't tell us is that they were gathered around a shared affinity – common tastes. The early Christians did not unite because they were the same, but because their mission was the same – to spread the amazing news of their amazing savior.

>> Have you ever felt rejected by a social group? How does the idea of coming together around the mission of God make the church different from a standard social group?

The early church experienced togetherness as a family on mission. In vv. 23 an interesting word is used that we translate to "friends." But in Greek the word simply means, "their own." That is, they belonged to one another. Grace was poured out because of their commitment to each other. And, their commitment to each other arose from their commitment to the mission.

>> What was the church celebrating in vv. 23-24? What was the effect in the community? What was the last "mission win" you got to celebrate with your spiritual family?

Because the early church was so tangibly united around the mission that Jesus left with them – to go make disciples – God poured out abundant grace upon them. We can see at least 5 ways God's grace was shared with his people:

- Grace of deep relationships (v. 23)
- Grace of powerful prayer (vv. 25-30)
- Grace of powerful signs and wonders (vv. 31, 33)
- Grace of material provision (v. 32)
- Grace of powerful gospel proclamation (vv. 28-30)

>> Take a moment and look over each of the above ways God's great grace was given to His people. How does radical unity around God's mission prepare a way for these evidences of grace?

It's pretty incredible to think of all that God promises to do when our hearts are united with His by faith in His Son, and when that commitment causes us to love each other well. God does indeed give great grace when we're together on mission. Therefore, it is the design of our enemies – the world, our flesh, and the devil himself – to keep us from missional unity.

>> In 2 Cor. 2:11, Paul encourages the Corinthians not to be ignorant of the schemes of the devil. In what ways have you found your love for others in our church challenged by the schemes of the enemy? Are you willing to turn from believing his lies? What would that look like in your life?

PRAY

Take some time of extended prayer and repentance. If you have any lingering offense or hurt held against anyone in your group, go to them and repent. Ask God to unify our church around the mission of making disciples who bring the truth, grace, and changing power of the gospel.