

## **GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES** (February 18, 2024)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

I grew up in the San Francisco Bay area, about 30 miles east of the city. I fell in love with baseball in my early years (yes I played basketball too ... I had to because I of my height early on ... but ball and bat were my first loves). I'm pretty sure one of key reasons was the Oakland A's. During my impressionable years, ages 10-15 in particular, the A's were on a roll. They won it all in 1972, 1973, 1974. In 1971 and 1975 they were in the league championship game. Vida Blue, Rollie Fingers (and his handlebar mustache), Reggie Jackson, Catfish Hunter, Joe Rudi, Sal Bando, Dick Green, Bert Campaneris, Gene Tenace, Blue Moon Odom ... All those names from memory. The SF Giants across the bay had their share of talent too. Juan Marichal, Willie McCovey, Gaylord Perry, Bobby Bonds, and of course Willie Mays.

Cheap afternoon tickets to the A's added to my love of the game. I didn't want to just watch baseball ... I wanted to study the game, and play the game.

As we continue learning about the early years of the Christian community we find that those who were stirred by the Holy Spirit, those who were baptized and then committed themselves to following Jesus, did not want to simply watch ... they wanted to study and to get involved, hands on, no holding back.

Soon after joining the Christian community they immersed themselves in learning about Jesus, and in identifying themselves with His name, even as the cost to do so continued to rise.

Do I have that desire and passion? Do I want to know more about Jesus? Am I willing to pay an increasingly higher price to be identified as a Christian? Are you?

I can't say I truly know the answer to that. And, I'm a pastor! I think I would pay any price. But I have not faced severe persecution because I'm a Christian. Many others have. I pray I would stand up for Jesus, that I would be willing to pay any price. But I honestly don't know. It's easy for me to be bold when my life, and my comfort, is not on the line. I do know I would need the power of the Holy Spirit to find the courage to hold onto Jesus even if it cost me everything. And honestly, I need His power even as I live out my faith day after day.

### **The Holy Spirit Through Community** (Acts 2:42-47) ESV

<sup>42:42</sup> 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."

### **WHAT DOES IT SAY?**

1. What did the new believers devote themselves to?
2. How did the new Christian community respond to those who had practical, everyday, needs?
3. What does this passage tell us about how the new Christians spent their days?

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

4. What does, "the apostle's teaching" mean?
5. What does "had all things in common" mean?
6. What does "breaking bread in their homes" mean?

### **WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?**

7. What sport or hobby are you so passionate about that it has changed how you spend your time: studying, playing, quilting, watching, traveling ...? Discuss
8. If you are Christian, why are you a Christian? If you are not a Christian what questions do you have about Jesus? Share
9. If you are a Christian how has your faith changed what you do each day, and how you live each day? If you are not a Christian, what drives your life and how has your life changed because of your priorities?
10. Would someone observing your life be able to tell what was most important to you? What you believe about God?
11. If you are a Christian, what are two areas of your life you want to change in order to grow in your Christian faith? If you are not a Christian, what can you do to learn more about God?
12. Is there someone you can help with their practical needs?

As you spend time praying, remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Thank God for His love for you. Thank God that He has provided ways to know and love Him more. Ask God to give you the desire and strength to grow in your faith. God will answer your prayers because He loves you.