



LESSON 7

Equal Parts



“So *continuing* DAILY with ONE ACCORD in the temple, and *breaking bread* from house to house, they ate their food with GLADNESS and SIMPLICITY of *heart, praising* GOD and having *favor* with ALL the people. And the LORD *added* to the *church* DAILY those who were being SAVED.”

Acts 2:46-47

A decorative banner at the top of the page features a white rectangular box with a thin black border. The box contains the text 'IN SEASON' in a serif font at the top right, 'Equal Parts' in a large, elegant cursive font in the center, and 'LESSON 7' in a smaller serif font at the bottom center. The background of the banner is a collage of various fruits, including a large red apple on the left and several green olives on the right, all set against a light, textured background.

IN SEASON

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ACTS 2:42-47

My early years of believing in Jesus was a very dynamic experience for me. I'd been going through great sadness and trying to resolve it and find my way by myself. But when I responded in church one Sunday morning to the Lord's invitation of salvation through the pastor, I realized God's presence in my life. I recognized as never before God's love and forgiveness in Jesus as He directed my steps and answered prayer. I was blown away at His tender care. I did not want to do anything that would not be His will, so I went to church services and Bible studies whenever possible, read my Bible, prayed, only listened to Christian music, and changed my group of friends. It was a very, very special and powerful time in my life that built a strong Biblical foundation. I attended a Young Adult Bible Study group that met weekly and had fellowship and prayer as much as possible. God moved so tenderly. We had a fun, loving teacher who knew the Word and loved to share it, and his wife was very special, too. Those were Acts 2:42, times learning how to walk with the Lord through commitment and devotion to Jesus and the Word, fellowship, prayer, and serving together.

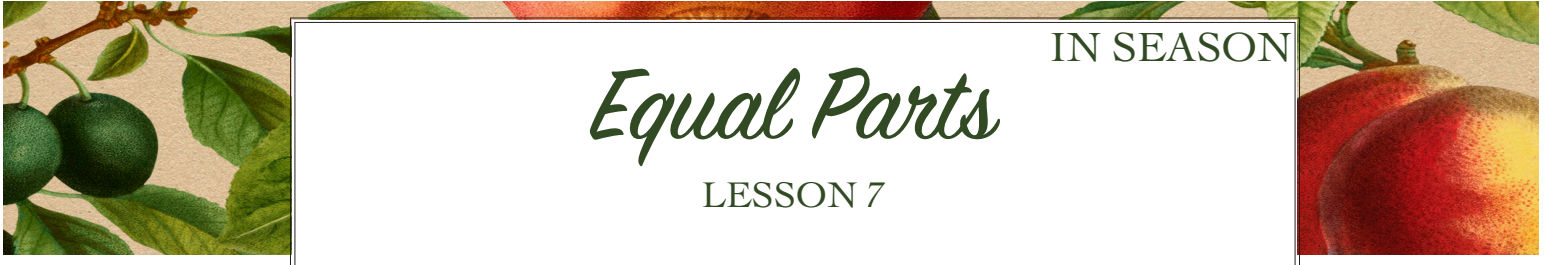
Even growing up in a Christian home, every person has a special encounter with our Savior that causes life-changing faith, resulting in fresh commitment, devotion, and surrender, like the response we see in Acts 2:42.

Many years have passed since those foundation years, but their value has resulted in a continuous faith in my life. There've been times of plenty and great famine. I've made poor choices in times of loss and questioning, but the Lord has never been more than a cry away and is always faithful to answer prayer and deliver, carrying me through and advancing His Kingdom's purpose.

I love the springtime because it reminds me of new Christian love that is fresh and responsive, like spring rains on wildflowers and grass. It's so mind-boggling that our Lord wants to refresh and restore us with the fresh power of the Holy Spirit calling us to "all in" surrender that we see demonstrated in the early church.

As we look at and study these verses in Acts 2 this week, may God refresh and restore our commitment and devotion to Him, resulting in absolute surrender and openness to His call no matter where we are in life, leading us in service to Him and one another through the various giftings He's given to each, fitting us together in the Body of Christ.

"I pray that out of his glorious riches, he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:16-19



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1. It's good to think back and review how the Lord called you and refreshed you. Write down a few details here or in a prayer journal thanking Him.

Foundation of the Church—Prayer

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42 NKJV).

2. Write out Acts 2:42

To grasp the whole extent of what’s happening in the above verse, please read Acts 2:1-41.

This day of Pentecost is the birth of the church. The Holy Spirit filled the 120 believers who gathered together in prayer, exhibited with visual fire and unknown tongues to communicate God’s praise and glory. Peter then shared a powerful sermon about what was happening — that which had been prophesied from the Old Testament, particularly in Joel 2:28-32 (filling of the Holy Spirit), and the consequence of their unbelief resulting in crucifying Jesus (their Messiah) and Jesus’s powerful resurrection from the dead. The result of their hearing this powerful message is described in Acts 2:37-41.

3. What was the effect, and what was the question they asked because of Peter’s Holy Spirit-empowered sermon? (see Acts 2:37)

4. What was Peter’s answer to this great awakening? (vs 38-40)

5. What was their response? (vs 41)

6. How many were saved and became believers that day?

7. What was the practice of these new believers after this total change in thought and attitude by the power of the Holy Spirit? (vs 42)

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These new converts were Jewish believers (the majority were probably pilgrims visiting Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost).

Acts 2:42 describes the qualities of these believers. “Everything else we read about the power and glory of the early church flows from the foundation of the Word, fellowship, remembrance of Jesus’ work on the cross, and prayer.” (David Guzik, Blue Letter Bible)

8. How did the new believers continue?

Define these words:

9. Repentance:

10. Steadfast:

11. Devoted:

12. Committed:

13. Generosity:

Let’s look at each practice listed in this verse to understand its importance.

Apostles Teaching:

14. Who taught the apostles what they were teaching the new believers, and what might have they been sharing? (See Matthew 5-7, John 10, John 13-15 for example)

The apostles’ teachings were the very words of Jesus, with the Holy Spirit bringing all things to remembrance.

15. How did the new believers receive the Word in Acts 2:41?



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16. Do you pray when you're reading or hearing the Word of God? Why is prayer important when receiving the Word personally?

17. Are you teachable, and do you resist when something isn't according to your previous thoughts or even could be corrected? (After checking the Word if you have a question about what is being said to you). Please write your thoughts here or in your prayer journal.

Fellowship:

18. Look up these verses about fellowship. 1 Corinthians 1:9, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, Philippians 1:3-6, 1 John 1:1-7. What do you understand from these verses to be the meaning of fellowship?

19. In Acts 2:46, how is fellowship described?

The Greek translation of the word **fellowship** here is *Koinonia*. Strong's Concordance definition is: "*Partnership, literally participation, or social intercourse, or pecuniary benefaction: to communicate, communion, and fellowship.*" (This included great willingness to participate in each other's lives because of Christ's love for them. They truly loved one another.)

Although they were from different culture classes or even areas, they shared everything in common. They were devoted to the Word of God to apply the teachings and were devoted to each other. If anyone had a need, they were generous and provided what they could for each other, including monetary, material, time, wisdom, friendship, and support. They were honest and forgiving towards each other.

20. How would you describe your fellowship circles?

21. How would you pray to improve your fellowship with other believers?

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22. Do you have prayer partners to pray with to share struggles and victories that happen in day-to-day life? What are some blessings you've experienced because of this support?

Breaking of Bread:

23. What did Jesus command for His disciples to do and why? (Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26)

24. Each time you have the opportunity to partake of the Lord's Supper, pray that the Lord would meet you and show you deeper meaning to participate in illuminating fellowship with Him. (See 1 Corinthians 10:14-17, 1 Corinthians 11:23-28). What do you learn from these verses?

Remembering the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for our sins allows us to realize the price paid for our sins and redemption by our Beloved Savior. Please spend some time confessing sin, worship, and prayer, thanking Jesus. Take some time to journal these thoughts.

25. Look at Acts 2:46. How is the breaking of bread together described?

The breaking of bread wasn't only in communion of remembrance but extended to sharing meals and life together.

Prayer:

Prayer was a dynamic part of the foundation of the church. Even though prayer is listed last, it is very important. Prayer was their lifestyle. They prayed together for each other, and they prayed in everything they did throughout the day. (I believe the most important part of the day is our individual time with the Lord when we first get up to set the day and prepare our hearts.)

The Greek word is *proseuche*, meaning *prayer (worship); by implication, an oratory (chapel)*. They prayed earnestly with and for each other until results were seen, known, and felt. (God speaking back to them through the Word, the apostles, and each other.) (Strong's Concordance)

26. How does Jesus pray for future believers in John 17:20-26?

27. Looking at Ephesians 6:18-20, Philippians 4:6, and Colossians 4:2, how did the New Testament writers instruct believers to pray?

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29. How can you improve your prayer life from what we learn in these verses?

The church's growth depended on these practices and resulted in continuous growth in faith and the fear of the Lord.

Acts 2:43: *"Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles."*

30. Please look up the definition for *"The fear of the LORD."*

31. Look up these verses: Job 4:14-17, Luke 1:12, Luke 7:16, Acts 5:11-14. Comment on the result you see of the *"fear of the LORD."*

32. The fear of the Lord brings blessings to those who adhere to it: See Psalm 19:9, Psalm 25:14, Psalm 33:18, Psalm 103:12-14. What are some of the blessings?

The fear of the LORD is a holy awe—literally afraid, in terror, of God's holy purity in love and any awareness of sin in our lives. It's the fear that causes great humility and conviction to pay attention, honestly confess, and stop sinning. The Holy Spirit convicts and gives this fear for our good and God's glory. The fear of the Lord keeps us close to Him. (For an example of living in the fear of the Lord, see Psalm 1.)

33. Acts 2:44-47 describes their Christian body life as a result of the being in the Word, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. They had all things in common and gave willingly and generously. Who really owns all of our time and money, possessions, etc.?

They lived and were surrendered to this lifestyle. The practice of communal living was a necessity at this time because of the influx of new believers who probably stayed in Jerusalem.

34. Ask the Lord to search your heart and reveal any area of your life that may hinder "all-in" surrender to Him and each other.

35. What is the most valuable word the Lord has impressed on you, and how are you going to commit to the Lord to give Him freedom to move in your heart? (Please share with your group or prayer journal.)

