

February 10, 2019
THE GOD I NEVER KNEW - Part 3

“The Spirit Works Through Community”

We are created in God’s image.

The Triune God - God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - is relational in His very nature.

Genesis 2:18 (NIV): “The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’”

We were created for relationships, and we function best in life when we’re engaged in healthy relationships or community.

Acts 2:42 (NIV): “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

FOUR MARKS OF THE CHURCH, EMPOWERED BY GOD’S SPIRIT:

1. “the apostles’ teaching”

2. “the fellowship”

The early church understood that Christianity wasn’t meant to be a solitary faith - it was always lived out *in community, in fellowship, with other believers, as a family.*

See the “One Anothers” on our Find It page: www.gateway-community.org/find-it

3. “the breaking of bread”

Luke 22:19-20 (NIV): “¹⁹And [Jesus] took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ ²⁰In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.’”

These regular gatherings kept Jesus’ death and resurrection at the center of their faith and lives.

4. “prayer”

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NIV): “pray continually”

Sometimes we pray, “be with me Lord,” but if we’re a believer the Holy Spirit lives in us and that prayer is *already fulfilled*.

Acts 2:43-44 (NIV): “⁴³Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common.”

Luke says, “all the believers were together,” which is, essentially, a picture of family.

Members of the early church were so committed to their church family, that they were willing to sacrifice what they had and be generous for the sake of others.

Acts 2:45 (NIV): “Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.”

2 Corinthians 9:10-13 (NLT): “¹⁰For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. ¹¹Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. ¹²So two good things will result from this ministry of giving – the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God. ¹³As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ.”

Gracious generosity was a hallmark of the early church.

Generosity was and is a powerful picture of the love of Christ for us and for all.

Members of the early church loved each other, understanding that “love” wasn’t simply a feeling but an action.

Acts 2:46-47 (NIV): “⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

By *daily* being faithful to Christ and these practices of the early church, the Lord God used them to reach more people and transform them through faith in Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Social media can create the illusion of community, while actually serving as a vaccine against the real thing.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV): “²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

God gives us the ultimate model - He didn't stay in heaven but sent His Son to be with us, who sent his Spirit to live in us, so that we'd be able to have a continual, intimate, personal relationship with God.

Christianity isn't a solitary faith - it's meant to be lived in community with other disciples.

Jesus created the church and empowered it through his Spirit, working through the community of faith, to continue and build our loving relationship with God and our neighbor.

Next Week: The Spirit Over the World (Acts 5:12-42)

Get the *Life Journal* Bible Reading Plan at gateway-community.org/Find-it

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