

Plus and Negative Patterns in Acts of the Apostles:

Which Will You Live Out?

by Chaplain Frank Wm Nagy

The Plus Pattern of Acts

Almost everybody in the church thinks it would be great if we could return to the days of Acts of the Apostles. They want to live on the plus side, in the “plus pattern of Acts.”

Christians lament the flow of grace seen in Acts of the Apostles is not seen as they would like it in the church of today. I am one of them. Yet, the very flow of grace evident in the Acts could have led to curses for the early church had they not obeyed God’s commands.

This is one of the ways how the church of today fails and falls into idolatry. The Lord shows us something that we glory in for a time, but then we fall back into old habits that deny the power we have already exercised in Him. If we do not continue in faith, we have only one other option, and for those who remain in that condition, the Bible clearly says God is not pleased with us:

“For therein is the **righteousness** of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written: The just shall live **by faith** (Romans 1:17).”

“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My Soul shall have no pleasure in him (Heb 10:38).”

We start to hold the truth in unrighteousness and begin to hold “a form of godliness, but denying the power of it (2 Tim 3:5)” making us become exactly what Paul told us to avoid.

We study the Acts of the Apostles. These chapters present the wonderful cycle of blessings planned for the Christian living life as God means us to live. Jesus speaks to his people. They obey his command and the Spirit falls upon them as promised. The Spirit, who has fallen upon them, acts in power to bring a crowd to the 120 and stirs Peter to explain what just occurred. 3,000 respond to God’s word through Peter. They believe and join the 120. They submit themselves to the apostles and come in to a blessed relationship of brotherly love. This pleased God, so He gives another command to apply. They hear and obey yet again. Then, God blesses them further and give them still more commands to obey. Thus this cycle of Word, obedience, and blessing repeats again and again. Everyone would do well to enter the same cycle of love and power God offers us in our day. Let God tell you what He wants you to do, obey his commands and watch what our Lord does from there.

Living Out Acts-Like Applications is Not Only Possible, It is Our Heritage

Do something you know God has called you to do. Obey that and expect it to be blessed and grow. As that expands, some other applications will present themselves as a logical

outgrowth of what you have already done. The Father will make a next step or steps known to you, so you may walk in this new way. As you do, you'll be blessed again. God will show you his next opportunity. This is part of expanding the Holy Spirit's rule in your life and his authority over us and our world.

Yet, We Cannot Help, But See the Negative Pattern of Acts

500 Saw Jesus After He Rose

1 Corinthians 15:4 [Jesus] was buried, and he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: :5 He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve: :6 After that, he was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once...

They Were Told To Stay

Acts 1:4 Being assembled together Jesus, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, you have heard from me.

120 Did What They Were Told

Acts 1:12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. :13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. :14 These continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. :15 ...the disciples (they numbered about a hundred twenty).

Do the Math!

500 told to wait
-120 waited
380 disobedient

Only 24 percent of those who saw Jesus after he rose again did what the resurrected Jesus, God Himself, told them to do!

Acts 5: I Surrender Most

Were the times of Acts any better than those of the Old Testament for people of God, who were disobedient? Please note Acts 5:1-10, then 11-14:

Acts 5:1 But a man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. :2 They kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

:3 Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 While it remained, was it not your own? After it was sold, was it not in your power? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? you have not lied to men, but to God."

:6 The young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

:7 About three hours after, his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

:8 Peter asked her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?"
She said, "Yes, for so much."
:9 Then Peter told her, "How is it that you agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, those who buried your husband are at the door, and shall carry you out."
:10 Right then she fell down at his feet and yielded up the ghost. The young men came in, found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.
:11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.
:12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.
:13 And of the rest no man dared join himself to them: but the people magnified them.
:14 And more believers added were to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

Deuteronomy 28:58 If you will not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, so you may fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD YOUR GOD;
:59 Then the LORD will make your plagues wonderful, and the plagues of your seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.... :63 And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to naught; and you shall be plucked from off the land where you go to possess it.

Deuteronomy 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live:

God set before them life and death, blessing and cursing. Why did they continually take death and cursing?

Do we really want the power of God evident in our every-day? Heaven help those not striving to be obedient.

(As to Ananias and Sapphira's holding out, while saying they gave it all, consider this: The writer/editor has watched out for lightning-bolts at the congregational singing of the song, "I Surrender All." In past years, the writer/editor has been aware of his own shortcomings in follow-through well enough to sing that song with adjusted lyrics, saying, "I surrender MOST!" Just now, after following the Lord for more than thirty-five years, he feels ready and willing to sing the correct lyrics with any self-assuredness that he really means it with all of his heart.)

**Don't Get Singed Singing,
"I Surrender ALL!"**

**If You Really Mean,
“I Surrender MOST!”**

**-- Ananias and Sapphira
{R.I.P. circa A.D. 34}**

Lord, help me surrender all.

Lord, help us surrender all.