

MISSION POSSIBLE Christ's Great Commission STUDY THREE

An E-Ticket for Reaching the Lost

Acts 2:41–47

When the church is doing what it ought to be doing, the world discovers what it's missing. Then, when the world sees what it does not have, it wants to know what it is that makes the Christian so different, so unique, so full of zest and life and enthusiasm and purpose.

—Charles R. Swindoll

If onlookers from the first century could pull back the curtain of time and glimpse civilizations today, who knows what they would think about. Medicine's many cures. The cell phone and Internet. Central air and heat. Automobiles and airplanes. Supermarkets and malls.

Even with humanity's finest inventions, the most powerful force for good has remained the same for two thousand years: the church. God showers humanity with His eternal blessings through Jesus Christ and His church. Renewed lives. Restored relationships. Clarity of purpose. Faith. Peace. Hope. Joy. Love.

From the first portrait of the first church in Acts 2:41–47, we see an example of the church humming according to Jesus' design like a perfectly tuned engine. Doctor Luke made certain to detail the church's innerworkings in a way that could be understood and replicated by any church—no matter its era of history, the language spoken by its congregation, or the land where it is located.

We will explore with Chuck Swindoll this remarkable passage so we might learn how to live out Jesus' Great Commission in the community of His people.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before we examine God's Word, take a moment to pray for the Holy Spirit's help. Since the Bible is God-breathed, we depend entirely upon the Spirit to illuminate our minds, soften our hearts, and receive what God says. Record your prayer below.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

In these *Searching the Scriptures* studies, we study the Bible just as Chuck studies the Bible. Through this method, the pages of Scripture come to life before our eyes and we see God as we have never seen Him before.



Observation: Awe Came over Them All

Begin observation with a couple of slow readings of *Acts 2:41–47*. Let the passage grab your imagination. Hear the prayers. Taste the bread. Watch the miracles. Feel the joy. Afterward, record your observations.



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List the characteristics of the church that Luke mentioned in this passage.

What two ways did the non-believers respond to the church?

In the most natural and zealous and exciting way, they shared their lives that had been transformed by Christ, and the church made room for the growth of brand-new believers. They just kept their arms open and the welcome mat out. —Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: What Every Church Must Have

Through the Bible, God refers to His people as His bride. For example, in Revelation 19:7, John wrote:

*Let us be glad and rejoice,
let us give honor to him.
For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb,
and his bride has prepared herself.*



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For this reason, Chuck created the acronym **W.I.F.E.** to describe the four components of a true church, which we see in Acts 2:41–47.

- 1) **W**orship: every church devotes itself to worship of the true God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit.
- 2) **I**nstruction: every church devotes itself to the apostles' teachings.
- 3) **F**ellowship: every church practices baptism as well as the Lord's Supper, and its members love one another with a selfless love.
- 4) **E**xpression: every church shares the gospel message, and its members share their transformed lives with non-believers.

How did the first church, portrayed in Acts 2:41–47, exemplify these four traits?

Why did God give power to the apostles to perform miraculous signs and wonders (Acts 2:43)?



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Why might the origin of the believers have caused the need for such generosity (Acts 2:44–45)? Secondly, how might their radical unity, perceived from each believer's ethnic diversity, have attracted outsiders? Do not forget to consult your commentary, Bible dictionary, or [online resources](#) during interpretation.

Evangelism is not a “churchy” thing. Evangelism is a Christian thing. It is the life of Christ being shared with someone else. We need to remember that. Evangelism happens outside the church so that the people of the church might then grow while meeting and gathering together. —Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: The Lord Grows the Church

Acts 2:47 says, “Each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.” Luke showed how *the Lord grew the church* as the church increased in number all over the world in its beginnings.

But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of men who believed now totaled about 5,000. (Acts 4:4)

Yet more and more people believed and were brought to the Lord—crowds of both men and women. (5:14)

So God's message continued to spread. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too. (6:7)

The church then had peace throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and it became stronger as the believers lived in the fear of the Lord. And with the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it also grew in numbers. (9:31)

The same thing happened in Iconium. Paul and Barnabas went to the Jewish synagogue and preached with such power that a great number of both Jews and Greeks became believers. (14:1)



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Again and again, the church expanded, spreading all across the Roman Empire because the Lord produced the growth. How does God's primacy in church growth both encourage and direct Christians today as we seek to foster healthy churches?



Application: His Global Mission through the Local Church

In this epoch of time, local churches are springing up by the Spirit of God. Disciples are making disciples, who are making more disciples. The Great Commission is not yet fulfilled; therefore, it will go on until all people of all languages hear the gospel, and then the Father will say, "It is time."

During this portion of our Bible study, we will provide Chuck's own principles from Acts 2:41–47 for you to create specific steps you can take to implement God's Word today.

Principle One

The first Christians were unique and creative in their outreach.

Consider how you might contribute to your church's outreach in ways you have not done before. How might you and your church be unique and creative in your outreach?



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Principle Two

Their outreach was not limited to church gatherings.

How does your church already reach out to the community and across cultures in a way that is not through regular worship gatherings? Have you considered helping or organizing an outreach program in your local community? What can you do to help this work?

Principle Three

Outreach was usually connected to nonreligious events.

What might this look like in your local community? Are there fun events, organizations, or clubs that you can get involved with in your community, which would allow you to shine the gospel light?



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Principle Four

Church growth was never the result of force or coercion.

God drew non-believers to Jesus through the attractive and winsome community of Christians. What are two ways you can ensure your outreach is winsome and attractive instead of forceful and coercive?

Principle Five

The majority of first-century Christians did not personally leave home to serve Christ on foreign soil.

The great British missionary to India, William Carey, could not have completed his mission without faithful believers holding the rope and supporting him. Andrew Fuller stayed home raising support, creating awareness, and sending encouraging letters to the far-off Carey. In what ways do you and your church currently hold the rope for those on foreign soil? Is there an area or two in which you could strengthen your aid to those who are reaching non-believers in foreign cultures?



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Those who believed were together. They were really in harmony. They were in unity, not uniformity. Many different personalities, many different cultures, different languages represented in this group . . . different colors, but they were together in heart. They had things in common, and with the awe and the wonder and the intermingling of their lives and the absence of selfishness, there were love and forgiveness and acceptance and joy and the magnetism of Christ. —Chuck Swindoll



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, without some having made the sacrifice of going, giving, and telling, I would not know You. But I do know You. I have come to know You as a good and faithful Father who takes care of His children. I realize many around me have not come to know You in that way, and so many across the world have never known the name of Jesus. I depend on You for the strength and wisdom to use what time and resources You have given me to further the Great Commission of my Lord, Jesus Christ. For the sake of His name among all nations, amen.



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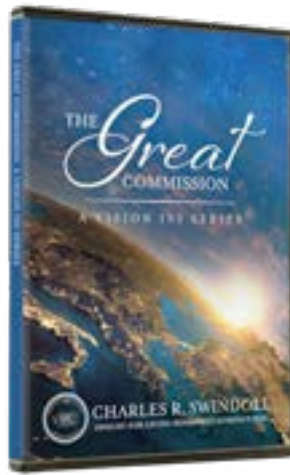
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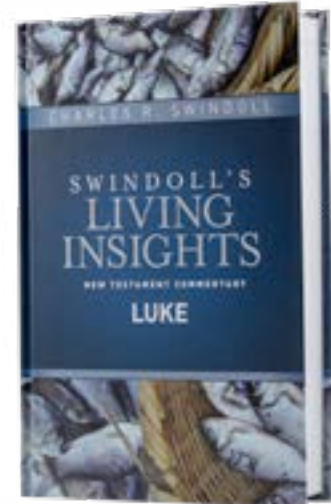
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.

