

TO BE OR NOT TO BE . . . IN COMMUNITY?

MEMORY VERSE: Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.-Philippians 2:4

LESSON IN A SENTENCE: We are a communal people.

THE BIG PICTURE: God never intended that any one person walk this life alone. While different personalities require different amounts of social interaction, we all need one another. Sometimes this is not just for help, but also for fun!

Many people can go through life surrounded by people and still feel lonely. God offers us the model of a community through the Holy Trinity, one God three persons. We are created in God's image therefore we are made to be with other people.

Faith within the world community has come to be thought of as a private matter, for behind closed doors discussion only. Scripture talks of praying in a closet so as not to boast, but more frequently it says to find others, to share your beliefs, to build relationships. Our faith is to be worked out by the way we live, the way we love, and the community we help build.

DISCOVER [DISCUSS]: What if you were given everything you ever needed? How would that change your life? For the better or the worse?

READ: Acts 4:32-37-

The Believers Share Their Possessions

³² All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. ³³ The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. ³⁴ There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them ³⁵ and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

³⁶ For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means "Son of Encouragement"). He was from the tribe of Levi and came from the island of Cyprus. ³⁷ He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles.

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DISCOVER [DISCUSS]:

1. What things are easy for you to share?

Verse 32 says that the people were united, of one mind. So united in fact that they considered all they had to be for the common good.

This is a really hard way to live, even for the most generous of people

Verse 34 says there was no needy person among them. What would the world be like if there was no one left needy?

2. Would you find it comforting to know that if you ever found yourself in need, you would be cared for?
3. How would you ensure no one took advantage of this system?
4. Would you be tempted to take advantage of it?

MAKE IT PERSONAL: We all have more than we realize. We all need other people more than we care to admit. Living in either extreme does not honor God or help to build a community. Even Jesus asked for water when He was thirsty.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: In pairs, take a few moments to consider where you are blessed and where you have need. Pray for one another that God may show you specifically a way that you can offer what you have to better the community, pray also that you are open enough to ask for and accept help when you need it.