

BE012008

WHO DO YOU LOVE?

4. The 7 G's

Last week, Dan used this great metaphor from a beer company to introduce the WHO DO YOU LOVE series. Sam Adams beer company said in their commercial how passionate they were about beer. Great beer is their product, and their love. So everyone at the company, no matter what they do, even if they're a sales rep or in the legal department, learns how to make beer.

- so not only do they make great beer, they make great beer makers.

Now HOW do we do that? A beer company isn't just satisfied with slapping any old brew together. They're looking for a specific flavor in their product. And that requires a specific process. With their beer and their beer makers.

That's what we're going to talk about today. The Product and the Process of what WE Christ Followers are passionate about: **making disciples**. What is the flavor we're looking to put into disciples? And how do we get that done?

Let's start from the beginning and look again at our pattern laid down in the New Testament church:

Acts 2:42-47 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Follow me as I highlight THREE sets of descriptors in this passage:

- They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching... to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts, praising God.
 - o All those phrases describe a church with an *upward focus*. A core purpose: **TO LOVE GOD**

Ok, same passage but lets highlight a set of descriptors with a different theme:

- They devoted themselves to the fellowship, All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts:
 - o All those describe a church with an *inward focus* too. A core purpose to **LOVE EACH OTHER**.

Another theme arises in this description of this first church:

- They gave to anyone as he had need... They enjoyed the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.
 - o Those phrases all describe a church with an *outward focus*. Their purpose to **LOVE OUTSIDERS...**

So if this church gives us a PATTERN for a biblically functioning community, we can distill from them, three PURPOSES of the Church.

- Love God,
- Love the Church,
- Love the Lost.

Now here's the question:

- What kinds of disciples are needed to carry out this 3-love mission?
- What are the characteristics, the habits, the qualities, the flavors that need to be built into a Christian community and individual Christians – in order to move God's Covenant Community forward?

Whatever THOSE habits, qualities and characteristics are, that's what we should be trying to produce in ourselves and in others. Yes?

This is our **PRODUCT** as a church.

We again, look at our pattern, notice we get clues for what those habits and qualities and characteristics should be.

First, they gave to needy people. I suspect much of that charity was done inside the community of faith, but also we know from Lydia and others, the early church endeavored to do good deeds for all people. And look at the result: the community looked in with favor. They displayed integrity which won the respect of outsiders. They were clearly not cloistered in a walled off commune. They had relationships.

GOING

So the first quality we want to build in disciples at AC3 is the habit of GOING. In the great commission the Master starts with this word, "GO". The main imperative, command is to MAKE disciples... but that mission cannot begin unless we first GO. So we don't build a Christian ghetto. We see all our interactions in the market place as GOING. Our good deeds are preserving salt in a rotting world.

A GOER – is a disciple doing good deeds for and in authentic relationship with lost people.

Secondly you see the early church saw people regularly being saved. What that means is that they were not just a social services organization. They had a message of redemption to share. And they shared it publicly and personally. They confronted people with the Truth of God's reconciliation offer. And they invited response.

GRACE

So the second quality we want to build in AC3 disciples of Christ is GRACE. That means understanding it ourselves, and communicating God's gracious offer in spiritual conversations. With the backdrop of our joy filled, generous lives, we direct people toward relationship with God. So a

"GRACER", *is* good news and invites people to hear good news.

THAT'S HOW **LOVING THE LOST** BREAKS DOWN INTO 2 G'S:

- GOING and
- GRACE.

But the early Christians weren't making **decisions** for Christ, they making **disciples** of Christ. That means, they understood the mandate clearly: make disciples means you make people passionate about Jesus as Leader not just Savior. There was a whole way of life to learn, not just a few beliefs to acquire.

GROWING

So the third quality we want to build is that of GROWTH. Disciples who take on the yoke of Master Jesus, will engage in habits that access the power of the Holy Spirit for life change. You even see what those habits are: A) they were devoted to the apostle's teaching. That's now packaged in the New Testament. B) They were devoted to prayer.

A GROWER is a disciple who learns, understands and obeys Jesus teaching.

Then you notice also that the early Christians were a joy-filled, worshipping community. They didn't fail to meet together in the great assembly, to praise God together. It wasn't a cold followership they had, it was a warm embrace in God's grace that they enjoyed daily.

GLORIFYING

So a fourth quality or habit we want to build in disciples is that of GLORIFYING. We want to be people who worship in spirit and in truth. Who make worship a priority, who are capable of being joyful and vulnerable before God, thankful for his amazing grace.

- A "GLORIFIER" is someone who exalts God privately and publicly and seeks to do everything for the glory of God.

THAT'S HOW **LOVING GOD** BREAKS DOWN INTO 2 G'S:

- GROWING and
- GLORIFYING.

Then you notice that the early Christians were together. They hung out. They practiced hospitality. They invited each other into their homes. They ate meals together. It says they were DEVOTED to the fellowship – it means they were committed to each other.

GROUPING

So a fifth flavor we want to put into disciples around here is GROUPING. That is, Christians who don't do their Christian life in isolation. Disciples who really commit to their friendships in church. Who open up their homes. Who get to know each other deeply. Who can confess their sins to each other, and accept each other.

- A "GROUPEE" is someone devoted to the family of God

Then look again at this early church and you see them together and holding everything in common. I mean, that clearly refers to their physical belongings. But we see in Romans that translated also, not just to your stuff, but your gifts. "We each are part of one body with different work to do – we belong to each other, we need each other."

GIFTING

So a sixth quality we want to build into disciples is GIFTING. That's the idea that I have been given special talents and abilities by God to help you. I need you, you need me. We each have a part to play. We have a Kingdom assignment determined by what God made us good at.

- A GIFTEE will be leveraging their talent for serving others

Finally, you see that the early church were good stewards. That is, they saw clearly if God purchased their souls for heaven with his own Son, then God rightfully owned them. So if the Master had need of their stuff, it was offered up gladly. Generously!

(Just this week, I heard of an AC3 couple, going here less than a year, and the husband had been wondering to God about his place in the Kingdom. And the night he prayed that prayer, a phone call came from James: an AC3 couple was in crisis. They lost their jobs, their resources were gone and they were out of wood to heat their house. James knew they had their own wood stove, so could they help?

Without hesitation, this Allen Creeker said, "yes". And within 48 hours, friends and trucks were mobilized and one whole cord of wood was loaded up and delivered to the needy AC3 family. I did some research on this. Do you know how much a cord of wood costs? 250 to \$500! "They sold their possessions and gave to those in need. They shared everything.")

GIVING

So a seventh quality we want to build into disciples is GIVING. Good stewards realize that everything is God's and they return to God a portion of what he's given. This habit teaches them humility, generosity, and how to live simpler, without an addiction to things, and this habit advances the Message of Christ through the church.

- A GIVER will be investing their money in eternity.

THAT'S HOW **LOVING THE CHURCH** BREAKS DOWN INTO 3'S: GROUPING, GIFTING and GIVING.

So put it all together. Every organization has a product, this is ours: the 7 G Christian. “Until we all reach maturity.” These 7 G’s are the habits that lead to maturity which is defined by increased love

- for God,
- for the Church and
- for the Lost.

The 7 G’s may be unique AC3 short hand, but the values are not unique to AC3. This is Christian DNA right here. George Barna, in his book Revolutionaries, polls Christians that are disaffected with local churches but who still want to follow Jesus. And he asked them, apart from any church program, what are the non-negotiables you’re about regardless?

He found 7 passions of New Testament revolutionaries:

- Intimate Worship (Glorifying)
- Faith-Based Conversations (Grace)
- Intentional Spiritual Growth (Growth)
- Servanthood (Gifting)
- Resource Investment (Giving)
- Spiritual Friendships (Going)
- Family Faith (Grouping)

That’s a list he came out with 10 years after we came up with the 7 G list! It just means that we’re geniuses. No! It means that this is universal for people who take Jesus teaching seriously.

Now, we could choose to line these G’s up any way we want. If you line them up the way I have, a strategy starts to emerge. In other words, the people who are these kinds of 7’G people, start to do 7-G things.

And a PROCESS begins to take shape.

When we started working on AC3’s strategy, we looked at the unchurched people we knew, there was a few things that we wrote off right off the bat as possible starting points.

- We said, we’re not going to rely on Television as if vast numbers of non-churched people are surfing the tube Sundays just looking for a great televangelist.
- We said, we’re not going to rely on passing out pamphlets on street corners, putting on bumper stickers, or telephone call campaigns.

Why not? Because when we looked at Allen Creek Allen, we realized that in today’s world of religious and political scandals, of selfishness and family breakdown, people want to know one thing... can I trust you? When strangers approach me, my walls go up. I think, what’s your angle? What are you trying to sell me?

So the beginning point of a strategy that reaches Allan had to start with something that builds trust. And he trusts his friends... Therefore, we knew our strategy had to begin there.

STEP ONE: RELATIONSHIP

STEP TWO: INVITATION.

STEP THREE: GROWTH.

STEP FOUR: WORSHIP

STEP FIVE: COMMUNITY

STEP SIX: SERVING

STEP 7 - STEWARDSHIP.

And the best part is, at this part of the strategy, Allen is challenged and equipped to turn around and start the process all over again.

Allen now says:

I'm going get involved in taking MY unchurched friends through the same process I went through.

For as every new follower gets baptized and trained... part of their disciple training is to be sent back into the world to bring others along – into a 3 love lifestyle! How cool is this! A never ending kingdom cycle of growth that changes the world one heart at a time!

Now church PROGRAMS should never BE the purpose of the church. They should always SERVE the purpose of the church. So the Quest electives you always see are the tools and training the leaders offer so we all can actively and knowledgeably engage in your church's strategy. (may change)

- CONTAGIOUS CHRISTIAN is about LOVING THE LOST and develops the qualities of
 - o GOING and
 - o GRACE
- LIFE ON PURPOSE is about LOVING GOD and develops the qualities of
 - o GROWTH
 - o GROUPING
 - o GIVING
- NETWORK is about LOVING THE CHURCH and develops the qualities of
 - o GIFTING
- AC3 MISSION – is the overview of all this, and casts a vision for
 - o GLORIFYING God with your whole life.

Deputy Sheriff Les Brown had been called in to take another San Diego officer's beat. As luck would have it, police dispatch radio suddenly called Brown's car number. "Child choking! Handle Code Three!" ... the address was several miles from Les.

Code three! He hit the siren and the lights and put the hammer down. Every second counted! Quickly Brown reviewed the quickest route. The 101 would be packed. But there was another freeway near here, that was partially finished. Not many people used it yet. Soon he was on the new freeway.

One exit flashed by. Another. The next one should be the one he was looking for. Yet, there was no exit! A sign named the right street. But the exit ramp hadn't been finished yet! He stopped, looked over the edge of the road at a rough, steep hillside and at the bottom – a wide, deep ditch.

Somewhere beyond that, on the other side of the ditch, a child was dying. Very likely he could see the street from here. But he couldn't get there! He had no time to look for another road, no time to call another police car, either. What was he going to do?

Suddenly a voice spoke. "What's the matter, officer? Can I help?" A giant earthmoving machine had come up next to him. The driver was looking down at Brown with worry on his face.

"A child is choking to death! I have to get down there, but there's no road. I'll never make it in time if I have to go around."

"Follow me, officer," the driver said. "I'll make you a road!" Like a dinosaur waking from a nap, the giant machine slowly started to move. It rumbled down the steep hill, scattering dirt as it went. It left a flat track behind it. Just as the driver had promised, the track was a sort of road. It was bumpy, but Brown could drive on it. He followed along on the new "exit ramp" that was being made just for him.

At last the earthmover reached the deep ditch at the bottom. There the driver swung the machine's giant scoop into action. It bit into the hillside and dumped big mouthfuls of dirt into the ditch. Within minutes, the ditch was full.

Following the earthmover, Brown's police car finally rumbled up onto a city street. It was the same street that had seemed so far away only a few minutes before. Brown didn't wait to thank the construction worker. He raced to the address and there saw a weeping woman holding a baby.

The baby had turned blue. Brown grabbed the baby from her. He gave it the Heimlich Maneuver and as Brown squeezed the baby's chest, a button flew out and onto the floor. The child's color turned from blue to red, then he began to scream. He was going to be fine.

The next day Officer Brown passed by the spot on the new freeway to thank the man on the earthmover. He got out and saw the monster machine at work. The driver saw him, too. He ran toward Brown. Something more than running seemed to make him out of breath.

"The baby... The baby..." he panted. "The baby's fine", Brown said. "You helped save his life as much as I did. Man, that was teamwork!"

"I know", the man said. "But I know something else now that I didn't know then." His voice dropped almost to a whisper. "That baby we saved was my son!"

Team Evangelism. Who knows who will be touched.