

# Acts 9: Ingredients For Church Growth

Sunday AM 11/07/21

## Introduction:

Just about everyone is interested in “church growth.” We should all want, the Lord’s will be done and more people to obey the Gospel. It is great to have a problem with not enough parking spaces, too many teachers, crowded pews, and having to learn new names. **Acts 9** we see persecution aimed at Paul in Damascus and then at Jerusalem. Then we read this, **“Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.” (Acts 9:31)** We want to look at some things which makes for church growth.

### I) Peace

#### A) How?

1. Not necessarily with the world. Conflicts with God’s word and the world is a constant battle.
2. Jesus pointed out the persecution His disciples would have with the world and even those of their own households.

**Luke 12:51** *“Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. 52 “For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. 53 “Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”*

#### B) Internal peace

1. With God and each other.
2. We serve a God of peace.

**2 Corinthians 13:11** *Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.*

3. Jesus is called the Prince of peace.

***Isaiah 9:6*** For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**C) How the church has internal peace.**

1. Have to be focused on knowing and serving God.
  - a. When brethren seek to have peace but leave God out of the picture they will fail.
  - b. The basis of our fellowship is not just us liking each other but we are serving the God of heaven.

***Ephesians 4:3*** endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

2. We have to get along with each other and that requires us to think about the other person.

***James 3:14*** But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. **15** This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. **16** For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. **17** But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. **18** Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

- a. Envy and self-seeking leads to confusion and every evil thing. The me first, look out for number one.
- b. Wisdom from above – pure which means sincere, deals

with our intentions. Then gentle, willing to yield, doing good works, and without hypocrisy.

3. I have disagreed with a lot of brethren but still had peace with them.
  - a. Contend for the faith without being contentious.
  - b. Disagree without being disagreeable.

## II) Edification – being built up.

### A) Being built up and strengthened – in love

1. Jesus spoke of the importance of love.

***John 13:34*** "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **35** "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

2. Paul spoke of the importance of love

- a. Without love

***1 Corinthians 13:1*** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. **2** And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

- b. With love

***1 Corinthians 8:1*** Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

### B) Knowledge with love edifies.

***Philippians 1:9*** And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,

1. Knowledge teaches me how to love God and my brethren.
2. To think of others instead of myself, to serve instead of being served.
3. While I do not want to minimize knowledge, we have to realize knowledge without love is dangerous. Some brethren in times past have acted like being right is an excuse to be unloving, an excuse to constantly being fighting, and being cantankerous.

**C) Walking humbly before God edifies.**

***Micah 6:8*** He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?

1. Walking is a manner of life. What we do on a daily basis.
2. Humility is the opposite of pride but it is not degrading oneself.
3. To yield to God's will, acknowledge our need for God and depend on Him.
4. The idea of reverence comes to mind.

***Acts 10:1*** There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, **2** a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.

**IV) Comfort of the Holy Spirit**

**A) In times of distress we need comfort.**

1. The Holy Spirit is called the "Spirit of truth" (***John 15.26***), the spirit of God in numerous passages, also the "helper".

***John 15:26*** "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

2. There are times we need help in our prayers.

**Romans 8:26** Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. **27** Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

3. Through the revelation the Holy Spirit has given us, we are guided by the spirit.

**Galatians 5:16** I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

**Galatians 5:25** If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

#### **B) We need guidance in our lives**

1. The church of the first century had a single focus, we cannot walk down two paths at the same time.
2. We are either being led by the Spirit of God or the world.
3. Spiritual growth depends on spiritual food, spiritual goals, and spiritual work.

#### **Conclusion:**

Let us strive to have these qualities in our lives.