

All things in common—Communism and socialism

Acts 4:32-37 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. [33] And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. [34] Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, [35] And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. [36] And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, [37] Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

- a) These passages reveal many things such as the people being in **unity**. All the possessions they brought and laid at the feet of the apostles and "they had all things common."
- b) We also see a great deal of generosity, a very good thing.
- c) Believers sold **all** their possessions and laid the prices of the sales at the feet of the apostles that distributed to everyone according to their needs.
 - i) I do not know if I would advise anyone to sell all their possessions. Of course, they did this of their own, but I would discourage it. I could see problems down the road.
 - ii) People have to hear from the Lord for themselves to do certain radical things, but as leaders we may need to turn down or discourage some of the things they want to do.

- iii) How about those that had no possessions? What were they to bring? They were going to benefit from the rest that had worked hard, planned, saved, invested and all.
- d) These saints in Jerusalem agreed that they were to do all things together and in common.
 - i) Notice that later there was poverty in Jerusalem because they gave all things away and had all things in common. Soon they would discover how flawed this way of living was.
 - ii) Simply put, they were living a **communal lifestyle (Communism)**. Their hearts were right and there was a benefit of unity and one accord, but that was only for a short time.
 - o There is not much unity when people are broke, poor, and starving. Shortly, the saints in Jerusalem were broke and broken (Romans 15:26).

Note:

- ① Everyone's need was not the same.
- ② Each person's contribution was not equal yet all their needs were met. This was not fair to those that worked harder. It would be discovered soon.
- ③ The lazy benefited from the hard work of the hard worker. This benefited more of those that did not work harder and took away from those that did.
- ④ This system would discourage hard work
- ⑤ It was not fair. Few of the people carried the heavy load of all the rest.
- ⑥ Soon these things given would run out and poverty or lack would follow. There has to be personal responsibility. Living a communal lifestyle would not permit that.
- ⑦ No one should take the responsibility of meeting everyone's needs—not the church as well.

Communal living hampers increase and prosperity. If you want people to increase, you hold each one accountable and have them work with their own hands for their own provision.

Someone said "Jesus was a socialist, man. He broke bread and gave it to everyone." If Jesus were a socialist, he would have TAKEN everyone's bread.

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