

Subject	Lessons from Acts Series	4406
		Acts 6
Title	7 Lessons from Acts 6	
Proposition	To study Acts 6.	
Objective	To consider seven lessons which Acts 6 helps me to consider and appreciate and apply in my own life.	

7 Lessons from Acts 6

Introduction:

1. Acts 6 only has FIFTEEN verses, but we need to read and study and learn from those words.
2. We are greatly blessed that Luke was used by the Holy Spirit to provide us a record of our history!

DISCUSSION: Acts 6 Helps me in that it—

I. Demonstrates baptism into Christ does NOT automatically remove deep-seated emotional feelings (1).

Acts 6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

1. It was the Grecians AGAINST the Hebrews.
 - 1) Both groups had certain things in common.
 - 1- They would all have been of JEWISH background.
 - 2- They all had heard the gospel preached.
 - 3- They all had determined in their hearts that obeying God meant becoming a part of His church.
 - 4- There was a great deal they did have in common.
 - 2) The thing that separated them was merely the surroundings and environment and language that they had been immersed in up to this point in time.
2. There had always been (in the past) and obviously to some degree continued to be a lack of closeness between the Jews of Palestine and those of the DIASPORA (those living elsewhere, James 1.1).
 - 1) The Palestinian Jews pretty much “looked down on” their Hellenistic (Greek-influenced) brethren.
 - 2) WHY? Because they felt that these Jews who lived among the Gentiles in other lands had been polluted by their association with those other people.
3. It is very likely that most people in both groups would have been familiar with the two languages: Hebrew and Greek.
 - 1) Still the Palestinian Jews would have used Hebrew more in their daily activity.
 - 2) Whereas the Jews who lived in different places would have used the Greek language more frequently.

- 3) **A part of the Hellenization process when Greece was the world power was the spread of their beautiful language.** *There was a period when Greece was the dominant force in the world.*
 - 1- **Naturally, the Greeks thought everything Greek was BETTER.**
 - 2- **They were very proud of their language and while they were the major power they diligently spread the Greek language and Greek culture.**
 - 3- **They took pride in their culture.**
- 4) **That same thing was true of the Jewish culture.**
 - 1- **They loved Hebrew.**
 - 2- **They loved the concept of being God's chosen people and the fact that God had given them the land they occupied**
 - 3- **They took great pride in the temple at Jerusalem.**
4. **What we see in Acts 6 is the COMPLICATION that came with UNITING two groups who had much in common, yet had differences.**
5. **Those things were not overcome immediately.**
 - 1) **Rather they caused some problems in relationships within the church.**
 - 2) **As it was in the 1st Century, it will always be the case that to accept those who are DIFFERENT from me will be challenging!**
6. **Because of WISE GUIDANCE from the apostles, this problem was properly handled in the Jerusalem church.**
 - 1) **In the church today we must learn that even though we may differ in many ways, in God's eyes, we are merely His servants.**
 - 2) **We are FELLOW-servants IN CHRIST!**
 - 1- **IN CHRIST, all of these differences MUST be set aside and we must be united.**
 - 2- **Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.**
7. **We should study James 2.1-13.**
 - 1) **James here challenges the churches NOT to show partiality in dealing with one another.**
 - 2) **When a poor man comes into the assembly we must not tell him to GO SIT DOWN AT MY FEET (v. 3).**
 - 3) **We must NOT dishonor the poor man (v. 5).**
 - 4) **He tells US that if we show partiality toward the rich man, we are committing sin (v. 9).**
8. **The early church was learning that some thoughts related to culture can create serious problems in associations.**
9. **UNITY is always, always, always worth working hard to accomplish.**
10. **Here, in Acts 6 we see a demonstration of striving for unity and working IMMEDIATELY to solve problems that disunity can cause.**

Acts 6 Helps me in that it—

II. Teaches me to have a compassionate heart toward those who are less fortunate (1).

Acts 6:1 **And in those days**, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in **the daily ministration**.

1. The expression **IN THOSE DAYS** seems to indicate a considerable time had passed since the events of Acts 2.
 - 1) Coffman suggests perhaps 6 to 8 years may have passed by already.
 - 2) It is difficult to know for sure, but that is a possibility.
2. It is important for us to notice that here seems here to be proof that there was no general **COMMUNISTIC-type** redistribution of wealth by the Jerusalem church.
 - 1) Some try to make that case from Acts 2.44.
 - 2) Acts 2:44 **And all that believed were together, and had all things common**;
3. Instead of some massive redistribution of wealth the early church had a simple solution of daily distribution of food, evidently.
 - 1) **TODAY**, when the church involves itself in benevolent activities, we are following the example of the NT church!
 - 2) By the very nature of the case, not having others to provide for them, the **WIDOWS** would be mentioned.
 - 3) They would likely be the group most in need of assistance.
4. To be like the NT church, Maple Hill will need to continually develop a compassionate heart toward those less fortunate.
 - 1) We will need to be actively involved in benevolent work.
 - 2) I am so appreciative for the decision of the elders to appoint Barry Travis as a deacon to guide us in that good direction.
 - 3) At the same time, of course, we must have concern for the **SPIRITUAL** needs of those that are physically needy.
 - 4) Actually, this work is quite deserving of both our interest, participation, and our prayers

Acts 6 Helps me in that it—

III. Shows how the Jerusalem church fit Paul's picture of the church as the **BODY OF CHRIST** (2).

Acts 6:2 **Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.**

1. **IT IS NOT REASON THAT WE SHOULD LEAVE THE WORD OF GOD, AND SERVE TABLES...**
 - 1) The word **REASON** here is from *arestos*, which means: *agreeable, fit, pleasing*.
 - 2) Same word: John 8:29 **And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that PLEASE him.**

- 3) **1 John 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.**
- 4) **For the apostles to quit doing the work they were the best equipped to do and spend their time doing other things would not have been pleasing to God.**
2. **Instead, they suggested a solution to the problem which would involve the whole congregation.**
 - 1) **The appropriate figure of the church as a body is set forth by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12.12ff.**
 - 2) **The apostles had the Spirit-inspired word which they needed to be teaching others.**
 - 3) **There were other members of the body who would take care of the daily ministrations.**
 - 4) **This way, everyone working together would accomplish wonderful things as each part of the body contributes.**
3. **And so, we are taught here the tremendous importance of TEACHING the word of God.**
4. **We learn the value of prayer.**
5. **We see the great value of properly set priorities.**
6. **Amongst any congregation of God's people there are multi-talented individual members.**
 - 1) **None of us have identical abilities.**
 - 2) **All of us have something to contribute to the smooth functioning of the body.**
 - 3) **Our congregation will not be what it could be unless each member is contributing his or her UNIQUE abilities to the smooth operation of the group as a whole!**

Acts 6 Helps me in that it—

IV. Reminds me of the close connection between PRAYER and MINISTRY OF THE WORD (v. 4).

Acts 6:4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

1. **This is a simple observation, but it needs emphasis.**
2. **In order to have good success in the spread of the gospel message, which we all desire, the teaching and preaching must be accompanied by PRAYER.**
3. **Just now, STOP, think about the last time in your own personal prayer life that you prayed to God about the spread of the gospel of Christ.**
4. **Was it yesterday, last week, a month ago? Longer?**
5. **It is wonderful that we have, in our assemblies, prayers regarding the spread of the gospel.**
 - 1) **We should pray specifically for those men we are helping financially to preach in other places.**
 - 2) **BUT, what about in our prayers away from the assembly?**
 - 3) **Do I often include in my personal prayers some petition about the spread of the gospel?**
 - 4) **If not, why not.**

6. The apostles teach us here that they will be spending their time and efforts in teaching and in praying.
7. We have many things to do, much to accomplish in every single day that we live.
 - 1) Is there something that is more important for you and me to do than to connect prayer and ministry in the word?
 - 2) I think if we are honest, we might find here an area of weakness.
 - 3) The NT church, and how they dealt with a problem in Acts 6, ought to help us to see the importance and value of prayer connected to spreading the word of God!

Acts 6 Helps me in that it—

V. Tells of a very significant development in the history of the church (v. 7).

Acts 6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

1. A GREAT COMPANY OF THE PRIESTS WERE OBEDIENT TO THE FAITH... Can you imagine how much that must have encouraged and blessed the lives of the Christians in Jerusalem?
2. These Jews who had obeyed the gospel and been added to the Lord's church would have automatically been the recipients of much abuse and disrespect and peer pressure of the VERY STRONGEST kind.
3. Now, however, they are beginning to see that there is an acknowledgement that they had absolutely done the right thing.
 - 1) They are seeing with their own eyes that which they would not have believed could have happened.
 - 2) The priests were obeying the gospel and becoming a part of their assemblies.
 - 3) What an amazing demonstration of Paul's statement in Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.
 - 4) Yes, it was true, the gospel was even penetrating the hearts of those priests.
 - 5) What an amazing development!
4. Yet, at the same time, this was actually going to make things more difficult for them.
 - 1) Most likely, it was this very movement of priests into the church that would be largely responsible for the SEVERE PERSECUTION from the Jews which we will read about in Acts 8.
 - 2) Satan will continue to use the Jews to do battle against the faithful Christians.
5. But, even this further and more severe persecution had its own blessings.
 - 1) When we skip ahead to Acts 8 we learn that the persecution became so severe that many Christians left Jerusalem.
 - 2) And what did these devoted Christians do when they left Jerusalem? Acts 8:4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

- 3) Without doubt, we see God working within the hearts of these early Christians.
- 4) They had difficulties, but they bore them and remained faithful.

Acts 6 Helps me in that it—

VI. Shows HOW miraculous gifts were obtained in the 1st Century (vv. 6, 8).

Acts 6:8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

1. The ONLY way Stephen was able to perform the miracles he performed was that the apostles had laid hands upon him.
 - 1) Acts 6:6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.
 - 2) The apostles received POWER in Acts 2.1-4 when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit.
 - 3) The only other way that miraculous gifts were distributed was by one of these apostles laying hands on someone to transfer a spiritual gift to them.
 - 4) In 1 Corinthians 12.8-10 we have a listing of the NINE spiritual gifts.
 - 1- No person had these gifts except the apostles and someone on whom one of the apostles had laid hands.
 - 2- There was not some other way to receive supernatural powers.
 - 3- We see that further demonstrated in Acts 8 when Simon saw Peter and John come to Samaria and lay hands on certain ones in Samaria.
 - 4- When Simon saw this, his reaction is recorded for us by Luke In Acts 8:18-19 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, (19) Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.
 - 5- Of course Simon was rebuked for his ungodly thoughts about BUYING spiritual gifts.
2. Since the ONLY way to receive spiritual gifts was either to be an apostle or someone an apostle had laid hands on, we can be SUPER confident that those claiming to have such gifts today are not telling us the truth!!!
3. Those miracles were never intended to be a permanent fixture for the church.
 - 1) Rather they are better thought of as scaffolding put up to construct a new building.
 - 2) When the building is completed, the scaffolding is removed.
 - 3) The purpose of those miraculous gifts was to produce faith (John 20.30-31).
 - 4) When the completed written revelation was available, no longer were the spiritual gifts needed.

Acts 6 Helps me in that it—

VII. Shows how that TRUTH has NOTHING TO FEAR (v. 10)

Acts 6:10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

1. Stephen's defense of the gospel was so powerful that he won a great victory.

2. **As NT Christians, we today, have ABSOLUTELY NOTHING to fear in a presentation of what we believe.**
3. **We are able to support our doctrine and practices with a BCV from Holy Scripture.**
4. **In the same way that 1st Century opponents of the truth were unable to be successful, so will our opponents fail to be successful in opposing our teaching!**
5. **This ought not to make us boastful or disrespectful of other people who have been deceived by error but it rather should BLESS US to have the same BOLDNESS they had in the 1st Century church!**
6. **1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:**

Conclusion:

1. **What a blessing to have such a heritage as we can read about in our history book: THE BOOK OF ACTS.**
2. **Let's continue to study it and learn its valuable lessons!**