

## The Point of Reference

Acts 4:32-35

What is the point of reference in your life? We all have one, whether we realize it or not . . . whether we like it or not. As a business person, athlete, parent, teen, even as a friend, that point of reference often determines who we are and subsequently what we do. Little can we appreciate the power of that example, model, or point of reference that has such significance in shaping our character—good or bad.

Perhaps no-where is this more visibly true than in the world of athletics. There is not a basketball coach who when asked, “Which coach stands out to you as the standard of success in basketball?” wouldn’t put John Wooden at the top of the list. He influenced not simply the game but his assistants (now major college coaches) and a long list of players from Lew Alcindor, Walt Hazzard, Gail Goodrich to Jerry West. All contribute their personal success on and off the court to their point of reference, John Wooden.

In football you have Lou Holtz who is credited with training more assistants and future coaches than any other coach in modern times. All would say Holtz was their point of reference for the skills and character of a successful coach. And of course there is the legendary Coach Paul “Bear” Bryant. I remember the towering 6’3” winner of 6 national titles and 13 SEC conference championships telling me, “What you’re doing off the field is much more important than what we are doing on the field.” That year 18 of the first 22 men came to Christ and received training in evangelism. I remember Billy Scroggins and Mike Ford were not the most talented, but their “point of reference” made them National Champs and successful leaders in their professions.

What is your point of reference? How has it affected your life? Perhaps just as important, what kind of a point of reference are you in shaping the lives of others and what they do?

More specifically for today, what is our point of reference as a church? What is the template from which we look as we are shaped and influenced to do the work for which He has placed us in this very special city? Taking it to an even more significant step, to what extent do others look to us as their point of reference? When they look at FBC, do they see an imprint of the original Body of Christ, of Jesus Himself?

That today is our challenge as a church as we look toward the great potential He has for us. Few passages are more defining of that point of reference than Acts 4:32-35.

### **Life Response**

1. This week MEMORIZE and MEDITATE on John 17:20-23, “*I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.*”
  - (a) Note the significance of Acts 4:32-35 as it relates to this last prayer of Christ. What significance does it have for you and for our church?
  - (b) What are the implications of serving and meeting the needs of others in this atmosphere of unity?

2. What is the “object” or central focus of your marriage, family, Mini Church, Care Group, or Cell? To what extent can you honestly say Christ is central? That Christ overpowers your personal desires, agenda, or differences?
3. The litmus of Christ centered unity will be revealed in our most compelling desires and commitment to meeting the needs of others. How is this manifested in your personal life? (See Matt. 18:11 and Matt. 20:28) What can you as a Mini Church or Care Group or Cell do to make these two qualities your point of reference?

*“Material possessions, winning scores, and great reputations are meaningless in the eyes of the Lord, because He knows what we really are and that is all that matters.” - Coach John Wooden*

**TWO THINGS I WANT US TO WALK AWAY WITH:**

- Unity - Through a Central Focus
- Unity - Through a Common Purpose

**The Starting Point of Reference**

- Acts 4:31 - They prayed  
 - They prayed together “place they had gathered”  
 - They were filled with the Holy Spirit

**Theological principle:**

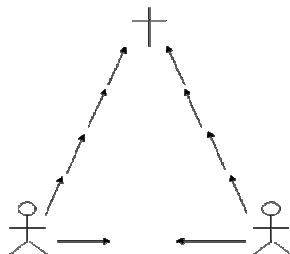
- At spiritual birth the believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit eternally.
- ... A believer can chose to be “filled” with the Holy Spirit or
- ... A believer can chose not to be “filled” with the Holy Spirit and reflect human nature/carnality.

**Unity - A Central Focus** Acts 4:32

- Not by any means ... Compatibility
- ... Nationality
- ... Common interest
- But ... One heart and soul through belief in Jesus Christ

1 Cor. 1:4-9 Central – Jesus Christ 9x  
 1 Cor. 1:10

Absolutely NO Divisions (Carnality)



Eph. 2:13-16

**Unity - A Common Purpose** Acts 4:33-35

To become the “Point of Reference” of the resurrection

“with great power”

“giving witness”

. . . lived out the purpose of Christ

A. “To seek and save that which was lost” Matt. 18:11

B. “Not to be served but to serve and give His life a ransom for many”

The result?

A people of “grace”

“Not a needy person among them”