

How To Establish The Right Identity In Daytona Beach **Acts 11:19-30**

Introduction:

1. As beautiful as this building is, it is not to be worshipped. But rather it provides a place to worship God. It is simply a **tool** to accomplish the work of God. This property – the educational building, the gymnasium building, etc. – is all to be used to further God’s work.
2. As people drive by our property and see these buildings, what do they think? What **should** they think? Let’s examine the church at Antioch in Acts 11. It was a unique church with a great story, just like our church.
3. This church serves as a great example of the identity that we should desire as a church today. We must continue to establish the right identity in this city. How can we do this?

First, by staying God-centered

1. This church begins in vs. 19-21. Barnabas came to see it in verse 22, and notice in verse 23 it states that Barnabas saw the grace of God!
2. Humanism starts with man; the Bible starts with God!
3. When people come into this building and see our church, they should see a church that exists for God, where God is first, and our ultimate goal is to please and glorify God.
4. When people come here, they should see and experience God, not only through our worship services, but through our godly personal lives – through our genuine love.
5. Remember, if God is not glorified in this church we have failed, no matter how much outward success we may enjoy.
6. Many churches today are becoming man-centered in their approach to ministry. They desire to appeal to man while sprinkling their approach with references to God or the Bible.
7. This is a flawed approach to ministry. While it may seem expedient in the moment, it will not please God and lead to eternal reward and divine commendation. It will result in a worldly type of social gathering rather than a place where life change occurs.
8. God never commands the church to have bigger crowds, bigger budgets, or bigger buildings. But He does command the church to do all things in the name of Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17), to do everything unto the Lord and not unto men (Colossians 3:23), and do all to the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

Second, by exalting Jesus Christ

1. Notice how this church was founded (vs. 20). It was all about Jesus Christ.

2. In every ministry that goes on through this church, we should endeavor to exalt Jesus Christ and the marvelous work He did for us through His death on the cross and His glorious resurrection.
3. This great church at Antioch didn't preach philosophy, politics, or man's opinion. They preached Jesus Christ. What was the result? vs. 21
4. If we are driven by an all-encompassing passion to exalt Jesus Christ, God's hand (power) will be displayed through us. The Father longs to see His Son exalted. The Holy Spirit's longing is to see Christ exalted. He empowers us to do this. John 16:14; Acts 1:8

Third, by remaining Bible-based

1. Verse 19 is a key when it states that this church was founded upon "...preaching the Word." What did Paul tell Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2-5?
2. The Bible is inerrant, infallible, God-breathed, and therefore must be the final authority for everything the church believes and does. It is the catalyst for change in people's lives.
3. When people see CrossRoads, may they know that there is a church where every ministry and program is rooted in God's Word, where the preaching and teaching of God's Word holds the highest priority.

Fourth, by committing ourselves to prayer

1. Let's turn to Acts 13:2-3 and see another passage about the church at Antioch.
2. What do most churches do after an ordination service? Everybody pigs out and eats! These people fasted and prayed.
3. The church at Jerusalem was birthed in a prayer meeting (Acts 1:14) and they experienced the energizing power of the Holy Spirit.
4. In a church where God's people have a lively prayer life together, regenerating power is present, life is there, and the lost are converted.
5. Where prayer is not a central focus, there may be an outward shell of growth and productivity, but within it is empty, dry, and dead. May CrossRoads be known as a place of prayer.

By showing ourselves friends of sinners

1. This church was unique in that they sought to evangelize Jews and Gentiles – vs. 19-20.
 - They just wanted to reach people, period (cf. vs. 24). They were friends to sinners, just like Jesus.
2. Remember, as a church, we don't just exist for ourselves. We exist for others. May we look beyond the walls of this building to serve and minister to unbelievers, demonstrating to them the love of Christ.
3. Remember, it is not lost people's responsibility to seek out this building; it is our responsibility to seek the lost. May this community know that CrossRoads is a friend of sinners!

By demonstrating constant growth and change

1. People in the community saw change in these people's lives and referred to them as Christians (vs. 26). They were followers of Christ!
2. May CrossRoads be a place where discipleship is taking place, people are growing in Christ, and changing to be more like Jesus. God's plan is for us to change. Romans 8:29; Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:11-14
3. May this building simply be a place where we come together, learn God's Word, and grow and change to be more like Jesus. Then, as we leave here and go out into this community, people see the change in our lives.

By exhibiting a heart for the world

1. This church obviously realized that the work of God was greater than any one local church. They were willing to give away to others many of the blessings God had given to them.
 - 11:27-30 – They sent a love offering to suffering believers in Jerusalem.
 - 13:2-3 – They sent Paul and Barnabas out to do church planting work.
2. Remember, the goal of CrossRoads is not to see how big we can get. The goal is to see how much we can do to further God's work in this world.
3. We must remember that it's not all about us. It is about others. It is about reaching out to others!