

1st Century *vs.* 21st Century

The spiritual DNA of the early church accounts for the incredible, multicultural miracle that impacted their civilization.

Analyzing the church in the book of Acts, and the church in America, is more a study of Contrast than Comparison. *Note some stark differences:*

1st Century Church	21st Century Church
Life-changing preaching	Informational teaching
Daily conversions	Rare conversions
Spent ten days praying in Upper Room	Spends tens of thousands on events
House of prayer	House of activities
No buildings or budgets, but overwhelming power	Buildings and budgets, but little power
Strong convictions	Practically everything is negotiable
A profound spirit-born oneness amidst diversity	A fierce individuality that reflects regional/cultural values
Heavenly power that attracted diverse classes, languages, backgrounds—an ethnic collage	Powerlessness that attracts similar socioeconomic, cultural, and racial backgrounds
Unpredictable gatherings	Ritualistic and predictable gatherings
Supernatural unity	Carnal divisions
Compelled to witness even when facing death	Refuse to witness when faced with ridicule or job loss
Continued daily from house-to-house	Attend Sunday morning providing children don't have ball games
Balanced sermons that included instruction, rebuke, correction, with exhortation	Imbalanced sermons with soothing and non-arousing messages
Fiery warnings	Fuzzy worship
Red-hot believers	Nauseatingly lukewarm believers
Faith-based prayer that reached Heaven	Request-based prayer that can't get through the ceiling
Miracles were commonplace	Monotony is commonplace
Obedience—regardless of consequences	Obedience—based on possible outcomes

1st Century Church	21st Century Church
Abandoned Jewish customs	Obsessed with inherited traditions
Walked in the fear of God	Walks in the fear of man
BOLDNESS	<i>Timidity</i>
Martyr-spirit	“Me-first” spirit
Unshakable stand for Truth	Unwilling to identify Truth
Eternity-minded	Earthly-minded
Distinct from society	Mirrors society
Life-giving and inviting communities	In-grown communities
Ablaze with mission	Preoccupied with hair-splitting differences
Christ had the preeminence	Personality, preferences, and particulars are preeminent
Prayed with exclamation points	Prays with question marks
Addressed moral issues	Glosses over moral issues
Racial pride was obliterated	Racial pride is tolerated
Confronted sin “in-the-Camp”	Compromises with sin “in-the-Camp”

That was then. This is now.

But what happened back then needs to happen again. Whatever has taken place in history can take place once more.

Three questions must be ASKED, and ACTED upon. All three questions apply to individuals, churches, ministries, pastors, leaders, followers, men, women, and young people:

- 1. “LORD, what should I SUBTRACT?” (Listen... Obey)**
- 2. “LORD, what should I ADD?” (Listen... Obey)**
- 3. “LORD, what do I need to CHANGE?” (Listen... Obey)**

Apart from honest inquiry and immediate implementation, your effectiveness and fruitfulness IS OVER. Countless churches are shriveling away. Innumerable Christians are in the death spiral of non-vitality. But asking these questions, listening for God’s directives, and fully complying is the gateway to a new day of REVIVAL.

Get alone with God and pray through these questions. Be honest, thorough, and urgent. Divine blessing will follow as you carry out God’s instructions.

