

How Are You At Math ?

Text : **Acts 2: 37-47 & II Peter 1: 5-11**

S#1.

INTRODUCTION :

A. There is consensus that we are a nation in decline.

S#2.

1. This is apparent in many ways, but none more evident than in our education system.
 - a. When compared to other “developed” nations we are less than average.
 - b. Every three years the “*Program for International Student Assessment*” (PISA) tests millions of 15 yr. old students from the 34 nations which belong to OECD. (*Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development*)
 - c. For the last few tests the U.S. has been sliding lower in the scoring.
 - d. In the last reporting the U.S. scored less than 50% on every subject.
2. We did especially poorly on Math. (*only 481 out of 1000*)
 - a. We ranked below 26 of the 34 countries. (*21st in science*)
 - b. We were below both of our primary competitors, China and Russia.
 - c. We were even behind such countries as Slovakia, Poland, Spain, Italy, Lithuania
 - d. China was first with 7 out of the top 10 being Asian countries. (*incl. Korea*)
3. A full 25% of U.S. students fell below the minimum score for adequate functioning
4. We are 5th in spending per child but score below countries that spend less than 50%

S#3.

B. Reading about these appalling national scores in math caused me to wonder

S#4.

“How are we doing in our spiritual math?”

1. Our country is not falling behind other countries in math because we lack resources or because our students are not as bright as those in other countries.
 - a. Many blame the problem on poor teachers.
 - b. Others blame it on poor parenting.
 - c. These are factors, but students will only learn if they desire knowledge and work.
2. In the spiritual realm we will see that God teaches us to :
 - a. Add
 - b. Subtract
 - c. Multiply
 - d. And divide
3. Spiritually, as in the secular realm, some excel while others do not.

S#5.

We will use this lesson to consider God’s math and our use of it.

S#6.

I. Like secular math, God's math starts with simple addition.**S#7.****A. First of all, one must be added to the body of the saved.**

1. **Acts 2: 46-47** Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. **S#8.**
 2. Notice : One is not saved and then joins the church.
 - a. God automatically adds saved people to the assembly of believers, i.e., to the church.
 - b. Members of the church do not vote if they want to accept the newly saved person.
 - c. There is no waiting period; believers are added day by day, i.e., the same day.
 3. God adds one "into Christ Jesus" at baptism. (cf- **Acts 2: 38 ...Sins are forgiven**) **S#9**
Rom. 6: 3 – Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? (cf- **Gal. 3: 27**)
 4. Baptism places one into the body of Christ. **S#10.**
 - a. **I Cor. 12: 13 – For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all
 - b. It is God who places one into His body. **S#11.**
I Cor. 12: 18 – But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.
 - c. The body into which baptized believers are placed is the church. **S#12.**
Eph. 1: 22-23 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
- * **THUS, one is saved at baptism and immediately added to the church by God to function in a way which God has predetermined.** (cf- **Eph. 2: 8-10**) **S#13.**

B. Secondly, the Christian must constantly add elements of maturity to his faith.

1. **II Pet 1: 5-7 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith** **#14**
supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶ and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, ⁷ and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.
- a. There is a logical progress toward maturity ... **Eph. 4: 11-16 fullness of Christ**
- b. We must apply **great diligence** to add these character traits to our faith.
- c. Faith is the starting place in our relationship with Christ.

2. There is a need for the Christian to continually be adding to these character traits.

II Pet. 1: 8-9 For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render **S#15.** you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins.

- a. God requires that we be increasing each of these character traits.
- b. Those who don't add these traits are useless to God and unfruitful in His service.
- c. To fail to keep adding to one's faith is an indication of spiritual blindness.

3. Adding these is relative to one's eternal security

S#16.

II Pet. 1: 10-11 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; ¹¹ for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you

- a. Adding makes one's eternal home certain ... keeps commitment focused.
- b. Practicing your addition keeps the Christian from stumbling.
- c. Thus, these additions make one's eternal destiny secure.

* **Therefore, all Christians must become proficient with God's addition.**

S#17.

II. There is also subtraction in the kingdom of God.

A. Many have been subtracted by martyrdom.

S#18.

1. **Acts 7** ... Steven (the deacon) was martyred for publically proclaiming his faith.
2. **Acts 12** ... The Apostle James was martyred because of his faith.
3. **Acts 8** ... The Jews killed untold thousands of Christians.
4. Rome martyred many hundreds of thousands of Christians.
5. Still today the Muslims are martyring Christians in many places around the world.

S#19.

B. Those who fall below the standard of conduct established by God are subtracted.

1. **Acts 5** ... God struck down Ananias and his wife, Sapphira for lying to Him.
2. **I Cor. 5: 1-7** ... God instructs that Christian who practice immorality be subtracted.
3. **Titus 3: 10** ... Those who are quarrelsome and disruptive must be subtracted.
3. Some will choose to subtract themselves by falling away. (cf- **I John 2: 19**)
 - a. **I Tim. 4: 1** – the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the f
 - b. **Heb 3:12**– any one of you an evil unbelieving heart that falls away from the living Go

C. Eventually death will subtract every member if the Lord doesn't return first#20.

1. Subtraction by attrition affects every congregation.
2. God has instructed us all to insure that the congregation is not destroyed by attrition.

*** Therefore, it's essential that every Christian add faster than attrition subtracts.**

III. God's division must be practiced in order to keep Satan's division out. S#21.**A. God wants His people to be culturally divided from the world.**

1. **John 17: 14** – I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, **S#22.**
because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.
2. **I Cor. 6: 17** – “Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,” says the Lord.
“And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you.”
3. **John 17 (esp. 18)** and **I Cor. 5** explains that we must function among them,
but be separate in values and in conduct.
4. The very word translated church means “*those who are separated from the others.*”

B. Avoid Satan's division; it's designed to destroy God's church. S#23.

1. The very first division in the church was about earthly concerns.
 - a. **Acts 6: 1-7** ... The Greek speaking widows were not treated equal to the locals.
 - b. These were Jewish converts from areas outside Judea ... Remember **Acts 2: 9-11**
 - c. The Apostles refused to be distracted by it. They appointed men to take care of it.
2. **I Cor. 1-2** ... They brethren were divided over issues of ego. (*Lacking love*)
3. **Acts 15: 38** ... Paul and Barnabas divided over personal opinion. (*Family loyalty*)
4. **Gal. 1** – cf – **Acts 15** ... Brethren were divided over doctrine.

*** The scriptures strongly admonish us to avoid and to eliminate Satan's divisions.**

I Cor. 1: 10 – Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **S#24.**
that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but
that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

S#25.**IV. It is VITAL to the survival of God's church that we practice God's multiplication.****A. The multiplication of members is a clear pattern in the N.T. church.**

1. The first day 3,000 were added and then they began to multiply.
2. Notice the pattern of growth : **S#26.**
 - a. **Acts 2: 47** ... There were daily additions.
 - b. **Acts 4: 4** ... The number of men reached 5000. (*Not including women*)

- c. **Acts 5: 14** ... Men and women were constantly being added.
 - d. **Acts 6: 1** – Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying,
 - e. **Acts 6:7** – number of the disciples multiplied greatly .. many of the priests .. obeyed
3. Multiplication by only a factor of 2 would increase them to more than 20,000.

B. When the persecution by Saul of Tarsus ended, the churches multiplied. S#27.

- 1. **Acts 9: 31** – Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied. (NKJV)
 - a. The church had been multiplying under persecution.
 - b. They multiplied even more when there was peace.
- 2. Any time the church dwells in peace it should result in the salvation of souls. S#28.

I Tim. 2: 1-4 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

C. God gives us the key to His multiplication. S#29.

- 1. **Acts 5: 42** – And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.
- 2. **Acts 2: 42** – They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
 - a. Christianity demands devotion of time and attention.
 - b. Christianity requires daily service.
 - c. Multiplication is a product of that devotion to daily service.
- 3. Multiplication does not occur when only the leaders share the gospel. S#30.
 - a. **Acts 8: 1** – ... they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.
 - b. **Acts 8: 4** – Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.
- 4. Jesus realized that we would be going about in the world so He instructed us to share the message of salvation along the way. (“go” = middle voice .. *continue on*)
Mark 15: 16 – “(as you) Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”

D. God gives increase as a reward for faithfulness. S#31.

- 1. **I Cor. 3: 6** – I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.
 - a. Every Christian must contribute to the soul-winning effort of the congregation.
 - b. Some cultivate, some plant, some water, some reap, some prop up, etc.

2. All growth is from God.

Col. 2: 19 – ... the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. (Cf – **Eph. 4: 16**)

CONCLUSION :

- A. As a nation we seek to improve ourselves by monitoring to see if we are progressing or we are declining.**

S#32.

1. By nature we are always more proficient in some subjects than others.
2. We tend to concentrate our efforts on the core subjects because they affect others.

- B. Likewise, in the spiritual realm, God instructs us to monitor if we are progressing or declining.**

S#33.

1. **I Tim. 4: 15** – Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. (*Progress is expected*)
2. **II Cor. 13: 5** – Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! ...

- C. How proficient are we at God's math ?**

S#34.

1. Are we multiplying those who follow Christ ?
2. Are we striving to prevent division in the body of Christ ?
3. Are we subtracting all unwholesome practice from our lives ?
4. Are we seeking to add the Christian virtues to your character ?
5. Have we been added to the body of Christ ?

INVITATION :

Come ! Jesus is ready to add you to His body.

S#35.

Lesson Text :

Acts 2: 37-47

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” **38** Peter *said* to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” **40** And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” **41** So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. **42** They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. **44** And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; **45** and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. **46** Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

II Peter 1: 5-11

5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, **6** and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, **7** and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love. **8** For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins. **10** Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; **11** for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.