



*From Believers to Disciples*

**CLASS #102: ANCHORS**

**Faro Church Discipleship**

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**Student's Name**



# Hello and Welcome!

At Faro Church, we believe you are **deeply loved by God** and **have tremendous value** in His Kingdom. When you chose to follow Jesus, you stepped into a **daily walk** with Him that goes beyond religion. We're excited you've responded to God's call to grow and connect through our Discipleship program, and we're honored to guide you as you deepen your relationship with **Christ, the Bible, and Faro Church**.

Our desire is that these Discipleship classes serve not only as a path to membership but also as a journey of personal growth and deeper fellowship. In our first class, *Foundations*, we explored **Faro Church's identity, core beliefs, and doctrine**. Now, in this second class, *Anchors*, our goal is to help you **cultivate a rooted relationship with God** and a **healthy connection to His Church**.

By the end of *Anchors*, you will:

- Understand the **essentials of a daily devotional life**
- Recognize the **importance of tithing**
- Value **regular fellowship** with other believers
- Have the opportunity to **pray and be prayed for** by our church leaders

We pray that God will continue to ignite your passion for His mission.

**Let's get started!**

— *Pastor Steve Pinto*



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## PART 1: ANCHORED TO GOD

### SIMPLY DEVOTED:

#### *A Lesson on the Importance of Daily Devotionals*

##### INTRODUCTION: *Justification to Sanctification*

Salvation is the **free gift** God offers to anyone who trusts in Christ's finished work on the Cross. It doesn't depend on our efforts; it depends on **Christ and His faithfulness**. When we come to Christ, we are **born again, forgiven, and promised eternal life**. This initial step is called **Justification**.

However, justification is only the beginning. Once we are saved, God declares us **holy and righteous**—this is called **Positional Sanctification**. God not only wants to declare us holy and righteous, but He also wants to **transform** us into people who are set apart. This ongoing process is called **Experimental Sanctification**. Sanctification is the Greek word *hagiasmos*, meaning **"separated unto God."**

- **Justification** is a free gift that we receive and embrace
- **Sanctification** is the process that **reveals** we truly are saved, as God's thoughts become our thoughts, and His will becomes our will

Justification before God does not depend upon us but upon God, Sanctification on the other hand, depends mostly upon our willingness to submit to the spirit and word of God.

In justification (**past tense**), our **spirit** is saved:

- We receive eternal life
- We become partakers **in** Christ
- We're freed from the **penalty** of sin

In sanctification (**current process**), our **soul** is being saved and transformed:

- We live out Christ's life daily
- We continue partaking **of** Christ
- We experience freedom from the **power** of sin

*The central avenue by which God works the process of sanctification in us is*

\_\_\_\_\_.

## 1. THE \_\_\_\_\_: *Be Still*

*The prerequisite to listen to God is to be still.*

***“<sup>10</sup> Be still, and know that I am God!...” (Psalm 46:10 | NLT)***

Dallas Willard once said, ***“Ruthlessly remove all hurry from your life.”***

To stay spiritually healthy, we must learn to eliminate hurry.

Consider how **hurry** often brings:

- **More activity and less progress**
- **More weariness and less effectiveness**
- Starting many things but maintaining few
- Overspending our time to feel needed or noticed

Often, the path to “success” and the path to an emotional breakdown are the same road: **hurry**. Our adversary (the devil) majors in **Noise, Hurry, and Crowds**, aiming to keep us trapped in “muchness” and “manyness.” Psychiatrist Carl Jung famously said, **“Hurry is not of the Devil; it is the \_\_\_\_\_.”**

To overcome these attacks, we must enter times of **“recreating silences,”** the “inner world of contemplation” and “the school of contemplative prayer.”

*Those who walked through the pages of the Bible knew the ways of \_\_\_\_\_ and modeled it:*

- **Isaac** meditated in the fields (Genesis 24:63).
- **David** reflected on God (Psalm 63:6 | Psalm 119:148 | Psalm 1:2).
- **Elijah** heard God’s still, small voice (1 Kings 19:12-13).

They weren’t heard because of special abilities; they heard God because they were **willing to listen**.

**Jesus** is our \_\_\_\_\_ of solitude and prayer:

- Spent 40 days alone in the desert before starting His ministry (Matthew 4:1-11)
- Prayed all night before selecting the twelve disciples (Luke 6:12)
- Withdrew to a remote area upon hearing of John the Baptist’s death (Matthew 14:13)
- Went into the hills to pray after feeding the 5,000 (Matthew 14:23)
- Rose to pray in an isolated place following a long night of work (Mark 1:35)
- Took the disciples to a quiet place when they returned from a preaching mission (Mark 6:31)
- Withdrew to the wilderness after healing a leper (Luke 5:16)



## 2. THE \_\_\_\_\_: Time at Jesus' feet

*Prioritize your time at the feet of Christ.*

*“<sup>38</sup> As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. <sup>39</sup> Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, “Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me.” <sup>41</sup> But the Lord said to her, “My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! <sup>42</sup> There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.””*  
(Luke 10:38-42 | NLT)

Martha did nothing wrong by working hard for Jesus—it was good and necessary. Her issue arose when she **became distracted** by her many tasks. Distracted from whom? In essence, she lost sight of the One for whom she was actually serving, Jesus. Many people become **irritable** in their service to the Lord, similar to Martha. Yet Martha's true challenge had nothing to do with Mary; it was Martha's **own distraction** and her failure to keep her eyes on Jesus. She had become distracted and had taken her eyes off Jesus.

- **Those like Mary:** They know how to serve faithfully while also spending time at Jesus' feet.
- **Those like Martha:** They sincerely and diligently serve God but, without adding a consistent focus on Jesus, they end up frustrated and anxious.
- **Those doing neither:** They aren't in the house with Jesus at all; they're simply too preoccupied with their own pursuits.

### *Undivided Devotion*

**1 Corinthians 7** is primarily dedicated to the topic of marriage, but it has an underlying theme concerning **devotion**. Paul explains that marriage demands significant devotion between spouses. Therefore, if a person is single and not burning with passion, Paul encourages them to remain single, thus enabling a fuller devotion to God.

However, if you are married, Paul counsels in **1 Corinthians 7:29**:

*“...So from now on, those with wives should not focus only on their marriage.”* (NLT)

Paul's intention is not to suggest neglecting family responsibilities. Rather, he urges married couples to keep their **primary devotion** fixed on God. This means, we should not live as though our earthly relationships are all that matter; we are to **live with an eye on eternity**.

In **1 Corinthians 7:35**, he says:

*“I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.”* (NIV)

His central point is that our devotion to God must be **undivided**, whether we are single or married. In the NIV, the words “devoted” or “devotion” appear three times in this chapter:

- “...**devote** yourselves to \_\_\_\_\_...” (1 Corinthians 7:5 | NIV)
- “...**devoted** to the Lord in both \_\_\_\_\_...”  
(1 Corinthians 7:34 | NIV)
- “...live in a right way in \_\_\_\_\_ **devotion** to the Lord...”  
(1 Corinthians 7:35 | NIV)

Paul recognizes that a person without family obligations is typically \_\_\_\_\_ (more **free**) to serve God. This is why he favored the unmarried state for himself—he had fewer commitments that might distract him from his service to God. Ironically, many single believers today find singleness to be a **burden** rather than an opportunity. Instead of viewing it as a distraction, single Christians (whether temporarily or permanently single) should see it as a **special chance** to dedicate themselves more fully to God.

### 3. THE \_\_\_\_\_: *Gaining Wisdom Through Devotions*

*The principle behind devotions is to gain wisdom.*

*“<sup>11</sup> These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age.” (1 Corinthians 10:11 | NLT)*

*“<sup>4</sup> Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God’s promises to be fulfilled.” (Romans 15:4)*

How do we gain wisdom? We either learn through **our own consequences** or through \_\_\_\_\_ **people’s experiences**. It’s far less painful to acquire understanding by observing the mistakes and successes of others. The Bible is filled with **raw, unedited stories**—some portraying obedient, faithful individuals, and others revealing disobedient or negative choices. Because we are living in the era upon which the end of the ages has come, we carry a greater responsibility to **heed the warnings** found in Scripture. Israel’s failures, for example, serve as a cautionary tale to help us avoid repeating their errors.

Hebrews 11:4 illustrates this point:

*“<sup>4</sup> It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. Abel’s offering gave evidence that he was a righteous man, and God showed his approval of his gifts. Although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us by his example of faith.” (NLT)*

Even today, when we spend time in devotions, we have the privilege of learning from people like:

- **Daniel:** who guarded himself against defilement and strove for excellence
- **Joseph:** the dreamer who rose above immense trials
- **Timothy:** the young leader called to bold service
- **David:** the humble warrior-king who pursued God’s heart

**Psalm 119:98-100** underscores the value of Scripture as a **superior source of wisdom**:

<sup>98</sup> *Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are my constant guide.*

<sup>99</sup> *Yes, I have more insight than my teachers, for I am always thinking of your laws.*

<sup>100</sup> *I am even wiser than my elders, for I have kept your commandments.” (NLT)*

As VanGemeran explains, “The comparison is not a prideful assertion of superiority, but a form of exultation in the Lord himself, whose wisdom is more direct and superior.” The psalmist faced enemies—some evil and some proud—who likely boasted of their own intellect or status. Yet he remained confident that **God’s Word** had granted him a wisdom surpassing theirs. In these verses, the writer clearly states that he has become wiser than his adversaries (Psalm 119:98), his teachers (Psalm 119:99), and even his elders (Psalm 119:100). He attributes this insight not to personal brilliance, but to **faithfully keeping God’s commandments**.

#### 4. THE \_\_\_\_\_: *How do I do It?*

The word **devotion** conveys the idea of “profound **DEDICATION** or **CONSECRATION**.” Usually, when we refer to devotions, this is our basic understanding. However, in the Old Testament, the concept of devotion carries a deeper significance.

The Hebrew term for devotion is “**cherem**” (**khā'·rem**). Cherem literally refers to a “devoted thing” or something “dedicated,” but it can also mean something to be “utterly destroyed” or “appointed to complete destruction.” Thus, spending devotional time with the Lord involves more than a routine act of consecration; it implies a deliberate **setting apart** of one’s life to undergo transformation.

In cherem, anything that might be misused or that hinders us from fully dedicating ourselves to God is removed or destroyed. In this sense, devotions carve out a segment of our daily schedule—cutting away all else—so our **lives can be shaped** by God’s will. Dietrich Bonhoeffer famously noted, “**When Christ calls a man, he bids him COME AND DIE.**”

By making daily devotions central, we actively remove obstacles that compete for our attention, giving way to the **building** of what God wants in us.

#### ***The Tools to Bring:***

- \_\_\_\_\_: Expect God to use His Word to bring wisdom into your life. Read it like your spiritual food; it’s there to **nourish** you.
- \_\_\_\_\_: This helps you underline verses that capture your attention by the Holy Spirit’s prompting, signaling your intention to follow through.
- \_\_\_\_\_: Think of it as a “GPS” through Scripture—guiding you to read the entire Bible in a year or at a steady pace. Plans like those found on **YouVersion** offer different schedules and tracking tools, making it simpler to keep God’s Word part of your daily rhythm. It’s amazing what insights God reveals when we consistently immerse ourselves in His truth.
- \_\_\_\_\_: Whenever a verse particularly resonates with you, jot it down. This practice helps you recall, reflect on, and apply what you learn.

***Journal Example #1: The Acrostic S.O.A.P.***

**S- Stands for** \_\_\_\_\_: Write down the specific verse or passage that stands out.

**O- Stands for** \_\_\_\_\_: Listen to what the verse is communicating—its interpretation. Keep in mind that Scripture has only one correct interpretation, though there can be various ways to apply it.

**A- Stands for** \_\_\_\_\_: Determine a practical, measurable step you can take right away. This distinguishes true **revelation** from mere **information**.

**P- Stands for** \_\_\_\_\_: Respond by writing a brief prayer, asking God to help you live out what you've discovered.

***Journal Example #2: God, Me, Enemy***

\_\_\_\_\_: What does this passage reveal about God's character or ways?

\_\_\_\_\_: What does it say about my own heart, actions, or motives?

\_\_\_\_\_: What insight does it give into the enemy's strategies, and how can I respond?

**5. THE \_\_\_\_\_: *Positioning Yourself to Be Used by God***

***"2 You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others." (2 Timothy 2:2 | NLT)***

Paul's instruction to Timothy highlights a clear principle: God never intended for Timothy to **keep** the ministry entrusted to him, but rather to **share** it with others. Throughout Timothy's time with Paul, he received a wealth of biblical teaching and personal discipleship. An essential task of his pastoral calling was to **invest** these truths in those around him.

When searching for individuals who could carry on *apostolic doctrine and practice*, Timothy was not told to look for people who were necessarily **highly educated, charismatic, physically strong, or socially prominent**. Paul's requirement was singular: **faithfulness**. The pressing need was for faithful men (and, by extension, faithful women) who would safeguard the teaching and then pass it on to others.

This underscores a vital reality for all believers. We, too, are called to **position ourselves** in a place where God can use us to pass on His truth. Ultimately, we must remember:

***THE CENTRAL AVENUE BY WHICH GOD WORKS THE PROCESS OF  
SANCTIFICATION IN US IS DAILY DEVOTIONS.***

## PART 2: ANCHORED TO THE CHURCH

### C4-A CHURCH ON THE MOVE:

#### *A Lesson on the Importance of Church Attendance*

##### INTRODUCTION: *Institution vs. Movement*

Let us begin by highlighting our church's **vision statement**:

***“TO BE A CHURCH WHO ENGAGES CULTURE, ENCOUNTERS GOD, EQUIPS BELIEVERS, AND EMPOWERS MINISTRY.”***

How do we achieve such a vision? In short, we must think of the church **less like an institution** and **more like a movement**. The church is not simply a business or organization—it is a **living organism**, the Church of the Living God. Scripture clearly portrays the church as a dynamic, advancing body rather than a static structure.

We cannot view the church through the same lens as a corporation. Instead, we must recognize it as a **movement** led by the Holy Spirit.

Institutions	A Movement
Have a tendency toward <b>equilibrium</b>	Has a tendency toward <b>expansion</b>
Leaning toward <b>Security</b>	Thinks in terms of <b>advancement</b>
<b>Minimize Risk</b>	<b>Takes risks</b>
<b>Count</b> numbers and quantity	<b>Weigh</b> hearts and character
Pursue “ <b>the bottom line</b> ”	Pursue <b>people</b> and quality
Act <b>globally</b> , think <b>locally</b>	Act <b>locally</b> , think <b>globally</b>
Settle— <b>Settlers</b>	Develop— <b>Developers</b>
Form a <b>subculture</b>	Embody a <b>counterculture</b>
Strive to <b>make money</b>	Invest <b>money</b>
Emphasize <b>indoctrination</b>	Emphasize <b>discipleship</b>

To truly **think like a movement**, we need the Holy Spirit to:

- **Empower** us at the **Core**
- Bind us in **fellowship** within the **Church**
- Propel us toward **outreach** in the **Community**
- Send us into **missions** throughout the world—the **Cosmos**

## 1. EMPOWERMENT AT THE \_\_\_\_\_

*“**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**”* (Acts 1:8 | NLT)

Despite lacking modern comforts or widespread acceptance, the Early Church **flourished** and **multiplied** under intense persecution. Neither harassment nor oppression could halt its progress—it thrived in the midst of turmoil. Why? Because it was **supernaturally empowered** by the Holy Spirit. No force on earth could overthrow what God was **empowering**.

### ***Receive Power***

The Greek term for power in Acts 1:8 is **dynamis** (dü'-na-men), meaning **strength, capability, or ability**. The English and Spanish term “dynamite” owes its origin to the same root. This is the **Spirit-given power** that equipped the early believers to fulfill the missionary mandate.

### ***Be My Witnesses***

Acts 1:8 not only promises power but also points to its purpose: to be **witnesses**. The Greek word for witnesses here is **martys** (mä'r-tüs), from which we derive the term “martyr.” A martyr is someone who is willing to suffer or even die rather than deny Christ. Beyond that, a martyr also bears testimony—like in a courtroom—of truth personally known or experienced. They willingly **sacrifice** important things to advance God’s kingdom and endure hardship for their Christian witness.

The passage in Acts 1:8 offers a **blueprint**:

- **Jerusalem**
- **Judea**
- **Samaria**
- **The ends of the earth**

These geographic designations form the **outline** of the Book of Acts:

- **Acts 1–7: The gospel in Jerusalem**
- **Acts 8–12: The gospel in Judea and Samaria**
- **Acts 13–28: The gospel expanding to the end of the earth**

What fueled the rapid spread of the Early Church? **The Holy Spirit**. What **empowered** them as witnesses? **The Holy Spirit**. Why did it **function like a movement** rather than an institution? **Because of the Holy Spirit**. For us to be living witnesses, we too need this same empowerment.

What was the result of this **Spirit-outpouring**? Besides receiving supernatural power, they also entered into a new way of life—this is what we see next...

## 2. COMMITTED TO THE \_\_\_\_\_

The **promise** of Acts 1:8 was **fulfilled** in Acts 2, on the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit arrived suddenly, like the rush of a violent wind, **filling** the house where the disciples waited. All were filled with the Spirit and began speaking in tongues as He enabled them. Jews from many nations, gathered in Jerusalem, heard these believers speaking their own languages and stood in awe. Some mocked, saying, “They have had too much wine” (Acts 2:12-13).

In the midst of these powerful signs and wonders, **Peter** stepped forward and said, in effect: “Let’s have a Bible study. We need to see how this fulfills Joel’s prophecy (Acts 2:16) and how it aligns with David’s words (Acts 2:25).” Peter then delivered the **first sermon** of the church, and Scripture records the people’s response:

*Acts 2:37-38, “<sup>37</sup> Peter’s words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” <sup>38</sup> Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (NLT)*

That day, about **3,000** souls were **added** to the church. But note what **immediately** followed their conversion and baptism:

*Acts 2:41-42, “<sup>41</sup> So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. <sup>42</sup> They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” (NASB)*

*They were* \_\_\_\_\_

While the **rushing wind**, the **tongues of fire**, and the **3,000 conversions** were extraordinary, the **ongoing legacy** of that day appears in Acts 2:42. These new believers became **devoted** to church life. The Greek term **proskarterountes** means **to be earnest, to persevere, to remain constantly diligent, or to adhere closely**. These thousands of believers actively “glued” themselves together in a new community.

They didn’t simply continue speaking in tongues and marveling at miracles. They formed a **structured and committed fellowship**. Notice how the Holy Spirit’s power **enabled** their commitment:

1- Devoted to the \_\_\_\_\_

They relied on **apostolic teaching** to understand who Jesus was and what He accomplished. Their devotion to learning parallels the Great Commission's mandate to **“teach them to observe all that I commanded you”** (Matthew 28:20).

These Apostles were devoted to teaching, and the Believers were devoted to learning everything that Jesus had commanded.

2- Devoted to \_\_\_\_\_

The Greek term **koinonia** (*koi-nō-nē'-ä*) conveys a rich concept of **association, communion, fellowship, and active participation**—in essence, it describes a group of people who share life in common. A clear biblical illustration of this is found in **Acts 4:32**, which reads:

*“<sup>32</sup> All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had.” (NLT)*

This remarkable **unity** testified to the Holy Spirit's active work among them. Because they were of one heart and mind, they prioritized **people over possessions**. In contrast, many of us today have a tendency to **love things yet use people**. Let us instead be a church that **loves people and uses things**—reflecting the very heart of God.

It is important to note that such togetherness in the early church was neither coerced nor a form of **communism**. At first glance, one might see parallels, but communism (especially in modern contexts) is a **top-down system** imposing communal living regardless of personal desire or faith conviction. In the **first-century church**, however, sharing resources was **entirely voluntary**. As the next verses in Acts indicate, believers still retained **private ownership** of their goods, selling them *as needed* to meet specific needs.

LaSor offers a striking comparison:

**“Communism says, ‘what is yours is mine; I’ll take it.’ Koinonia says, ‘What is mine is yours; I’ll share it.’”**

This significant difference underscores the **spirit of generosity** and unity in the early church. Moreover, **1 Timothy 5** provides practical **guidelines** for assisting those truly in need, ensuring that love and stewardship go hand in hand. By following these biblical principles, the church fosters genuine fellowship that honors both God and one another.

3- Devoted to \_\_\_\_\_

In the Book of Acts, Luke mentions **“the breaking of bread”**, and we cannot be entirely sure if it refers to an ordinary meal or the **Lord's Supper**. It could very well indicate an **Agape Feast**—often called a Love Feast—an important part of the early church's communal life and worship. During such gatherings, believers typically shared a fellowship meal followed by participation in the Lord's Supper.



Yet, as the church matured, there were moments when believers drifted from the intended spirit of these gatherings. In Corinth, for example, Paul had to address a situation in which the **meal** existed but not the **love**. According to

**1 Corinthians 11:20-21:**

*<sup>20</sup> When you meet together, you are not really interested in the Lord's Supper.  
<sup>21</sup> For some of you hurry to eat your own meal without sharing with others. As a result, some go hungry while others get drunk.*" (NLT)

Here, Paul alludes to the custom of merging a **love feast** (akin to a potluck-style meal) with the Lord's Supper. In today's context, we usually celebrate communion with a sense of reverence and decorum, but **Corinthian** believers came from a pagan culture filled with **rowdy banquets** honoring other gods, so it didn't initially seem off to them that a church meal might include drunkenness. Their attitude underscored the deep **class divisions** of ancient society—a perspective that greatly troubled Paul, since true **koinonia** acknowledges no caste or social hierarchy. Instead, believers recognize:

- The same **Lord**: \_\_\_\_\_
- The same **Standard**: \_\_\_\_\_
- The same **Goal**: \_\_\_\_\_
- The same **Desire**: \_\_\_\_\_

Furthermore, **Acts 2:46** indicates they met together "**daily**." Similarly, **Hebrews 10:24-25** exhorts us to avoid neglecting fellowship, urging us to spur one another on toward love and good deeds—especially as we see the Day of Christ's return approaching. Abandoning fellowship can lead swiftly to **discouragement**, but God has given the local church as a place of **growth, strength, and sanctification** for all believers.

**4- Devoted to** \_\_\_\_\_

Boice notes that, in the original Greek, the text literally reads "**to the prayers**." In **Acts 2:42**, the believers devoted themselves "**to the breaking of bread and to the prayers**," suggesting a formal aspect of communal worship and praise. Historically, whenever God's people undertake His work, they gather for both **prayer** and **worship**, two inseparable practices that fuel and sustain the church.

In fact, prayer is meant to **saturate** the entire life of a believer, extending well beyond church walls—Scripture teaches us to **pray continually**, to **pray in the Spirit**, to **pray without ceasing**, and to **seek, ask, and knock**. As we devote ourselves to prayer, we align our hearts with God's will and invite His power into every sphere of life.

### 3. OUTREACH IN THE \_\_\_\_\_

*“<sup>1</sup> Now But as the believers rapidly multiplied, there were rumblings of discontent. The Greek-speaking believers complained about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food. <sup>2</sup> So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, “We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program.” (Acts 6:1-2 | NLT)*

One outcome of the early Christians’ deep commitment was **community ministry**—in this case, a **food pantry** for widows. Throughout the Book of Acts, whenever believers took steps to **reach out**, Satan launched attacks to create **internal divisions**, hoping to pit one group of believers against another in an effort to “divide and conquer.”

*Ministry is \_\_\_\_\_*

Serving alongside others in a local church quickly brings our personal flaws to light. We confront our **lack of punctuality**, **lack of patience**, **lack of commitment**, **prayerlessness**, and **pride**. Yet these sometimes uncomfortable interactions provide a **redemptive opportunity**: fellow believers can address our weaknesses in a spirit of love, offering us both accountability and a **safe place** to confess, repent and grow.

The Apostles, faced with a crisis of unfair food distribution, modeled a solution in Acts 6:2–4:

*“<sup>2</sup> So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, “We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. <sup>3</sup> And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility. <sup>4</sup> Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word.”” (NLT)*

*The problem would be solved through Godly members \_\_\_\_\_.*

Remarkably, they neither **dismissed** the complainers, **divided** the congregation, nor **avoided** the issue. They also didn’t force the pastor to handle it alone or convene endless committee discussions. Instead, they **delegated** ministry tasks to trustworthy believers, because those currently serving needed a chance to **refill**, and others needed the opportunity to **be filled**.

The Apostles insisted on individuals **full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom**, meaning they were both **spiritually minded** and **practically minded**—a rare yet crucial combination. True **Spirit-filled** servants are never content merely occupying a seat; they sense a divine **push** toward the community, meeting tangible needs through the Spirit’s power. As a result, the entire church benefits: those who lead can focus on prayer and the Word, while new leaders step forward to serve—and everyone becomes part of a vibrant, Spirit-empowered ministry.

### 4. SCATTERING THROUGH THE \_\_\_\_\_

*“...A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria.” (Acts 8:1 | NLT)*

By the time we reach **Acts 8**, the early church in Jerusalem has a solid foundation, a Spirit-filled volunteer ministry, and significant commitment among its members. Yet there is one major gap: they have not yet **gone out into the world** as Jesus instructed. Their mandate was to **Win, Build, and Send**. They had won souls and built a community of believers, but they had neglected the **sending** aspect. Now, through persecution, God **compels** them into action. Sometimes, when a church does not send people willingly, the Lord allows adversity to propel them outward, prompting them to fulfill His calling.

**Casting** \_\_\_\_\_

The notion of being “scattered” in **Acts 8** evokes the image of **sowing seeds**. In **Acts 1:8**, Jesus had already commanded His followers to extend the gospel beyond Jerusalem to **Judea, Samaria**, and ultimately **the entire world**. Yet until this point, they had remained in Jerusalem. Through persecution, God effectively **shook** them out of their comfort zone, dispersing them so they would carry the good news to places they had not planned to go.

**Wherever they went they** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 8:4, “<sup>4</sup>But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went.” (NLT)**

Those who left Jerusalem did not do so as formal, trained preachers. Most became what we might call “**accidental missionaries**,” simply sharing what Jesus had done for them in their daily interactions. In much the same way, **we** can spread the gospel in our ordinary routines, telling others about the transformative power of Christ. Historically, most people do not come to faith through professional clergy but through **everyday believers** who openly share their testimonies.

Charles Spurgeon once faced a question: “Will those who have never heard the gospel be saved?” He famously responded, “**It is more a question with me whether we—who have the Gospel and fail to give it to those who have not—can be saved.**” His challenge underscores the urgency of **personal evangelism**.

**The most effective** \_\_\_\_\_

We believe the most **effective** evangelism occurs through **people inviting people**. A life profoundly changed by Christ naturally reaches another life. Evangelism ought to be a **normal, everyday** part of following Jesus, as we cultivate authentic relationships and share our hope. As a church, we partner with our members by providing **meaningful, heart-engaging** services that friends, neighbors, and family can attend, encounter God, and respond to His truth.

**“To be a church who engages culture, encounters God, equips believers, and empowers ministry.”**

## PART 3: ANCHORED TO HIS MISSION

### LIVING GENEROUSLY:

#### *A Lesson on the Importance of Giving*

#### INTRODUCTION: *Stories Demonstrating Faith and Generosity*

We begin with **three stories** demonstrating faith and generosity:

#### 1. A \_\_\_\_\_ Mom: The Widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:7-16)

During a severe famine, God directed the prophet Elijah to stay with a widow who had only enough food left for one final meal for herself and her child. Yet God instructed her to feed Elijah first. Remarkably, as she obeyed, the Lord **resupplied** her flour and oil. This narrative reminds us that every time we sense God prompting us to **give**, whether by tithing or other forms of generosity, we can be afraid we will lack. However, the Widow of Zarephath's example proves God's ability to **replenish** what we surrender in faith.

#### *An Illustration About Faith, Generosity, and Which "Idiot" We Choose to Be*

This illustration involves two individuals—**Fred** and **Ted**—and three possible "levels" of action: **A**, **B**, and **C**. Each level represents the degree of faith (or seeming "foolishness") we're willing to exercise when God prompts us to give. The question posed is: "**What 'idiot' do you want to be—Fred or Ted, 'A,' 'B,' or 'C'?**"

#### 1- Fred (Option A)

- Fred is cautious, almost to a fault. When he senses God leading him to give generously—whether to a church, a mission, or someone in need—he calculates every possible cost. Fred's attitude is: "If the budget is tight or my resources are uncertain, I can't risk it."
- Fred might seem practical, but this approach often leaves no room for God's miraculous provision.
- Fred is stuck in **Option A**: minimal trust, minimal risk, minimal faith.

#### 2- Ted (Option B)

- Ted is a bit more open-handed. He's willing to give something when prompted, as long as it doesn't stretch him too far. He might think, "I'll give a moderate amount—I'm still prudent, but at least I'm doing something."
- Ted has partial faith: more than Fred, but not quite at the level of radical trust.
- While Ted's approach can honor God to a degree, it often stops short of experiencing the full joy of surrender.

### 3- The “C” Experience

- Then there’s the person who might appear downright “foolish” in the eyes of the world: the believer who says, “Lord, everything I have is Yours. If You ask me to give—even if it looks impossible—I’ll obey.”
- This is the “C” experience: radical trust. It involves the kind of faith the Widow of Zarephath demonstrated, giving her last bit of food to Elijah before feeding herself.
- To an observer, this might look like a reckless risk—“What an idiot!”—but in reality, it’s a **holy risk** that trusts God’s promise to refill what is poured out in faith.

#### The Point

Being an “A” or “B” type might seem safer or more logical, but it often robs us of seeing God’s extraordinary provision. Choosing “C” often means letting go of our safety nets and trusting that God can and will resupply what we sacrificially give. Though the world might call that foolish (or “idiotic”), Scripture paints it as the very heartbeat of genuine faith. The question remains: **Which “idiot” do we want to be?**

#### 2. A \_\_\_\_\_ King: David’s Census (2 Samuel 24)

Early in his life, David experienced **blessing** because of his devotion to God. Yet he stumbled by ordering a census of his army, a decision driven by **pride**—he began believing his success was the result of his own ability. A close adviser tried to dissuade him, but David persisted. Once he recognized his folly, he humbled himself and built an altar to demonstrate true **repentance**.

When someone offered to cover the cost of the sacrifice, David refused, insisting on **paying** for it. He wanted it to **cost him** something so that God would see his heart of worship and humility:

*“<sup>24</sup> But the king replied to Araunah, “No, I insist on buying it, for I will not present burnt offerings to the Lord my God that have cost me nothing.” So David paid him fifty pieces of silver for the threshing floor and the oxen. <sup>25</sup> David built an altar there to the Lord and sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings. And the Lord answered his prayer for the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.”*  
(2 Samuel 24:24-25 | NLT)

- Expressions of generosity reflect the \_\_\_\_\_ of our hearts.
- Our **gifts** reveal what matters most to us, they reveal our \_\_\_\_\_.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ of our gifts speaks volumes about our **devotion**.

#### 3. The Widow’s \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 21:1-4 | Mark 12:41-44)

*“<sup>1</sup> While Jesus was in the Temple, he watched the rich people dropping their gifts in the collection box. <sup>2</sup> Then a poor widow came by and dropped in two small coins. <sup>3</sup> “I tell you the truth,” Jesus said, “this poor widow has given more than all the rest of them. <sup>4</sup> For they have given a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she has.””* (Luke 21:1-4 | NLT)

Jesus teaches that \_\_\_\_\_ **gifts** can be incredibly significant in God's eyes. While generous amounts from those who have much are still good, they often involve \_\_\_\_\_ **personal sacrifice**. By contrast, this widow's two coins were **all she had**—her \_\_\_\_\_ overshadowed the amount. In God's economy, it's not the **size** of the \_\_\_\_\_ that matters most, but the **faith** behind the giving.

### \_\_\_\_\_ **God's Work**

What does **Scripture** say about committing to God's work financially?

When it comes to **financially supporting God's work**, Scripture places significant emphasis on understanding **His perspective**. In the Book of Malachi, the Lord directly addresses this issue:

***“From the days of your fathers you have turned away from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord of armies. “But you say, ‘How shall we return?’<sup>8</sup> “Would anyone rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings.<sup>9</sup> You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the entire nation of you!<sup>10</sup> Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and put Me to the test now in this,” says the Lord of armies, “if I do not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.<sup>11</sup> Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruit of your ground; nor will the vine in the field prove fruitless to you,” says the Lord of armies.<sup>12</sup> “All the nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,” says the Lord of armies.”*** (Malachi 3:7-12 | NASB)

Within this passage, we find **three key points** concerning our commitment to give:

#### **1. GOD'S \_\_\_\_\_: “You are \_\_\_\_\_ Me!**

God's complaint is that His people were robbing Him. When the people asked, “How are we robbing you?” God's answer was immediate: **“In your tithes and offerings.”**

Here, the Lord refers to **two forms of giving**:

- 1- A Tithe** – Literally meaning **10% of your income**.
- 2- An Offering** – Any amount **beyond** the tithe.

Although **100%** of what we have belongs to the Lord, He specifically asks us to **honor Him** by returning the **first fruits** of our income. Failing to do this, He says, is similar to **robbing Him**. Many people approach giving differently, paying bills and expenses first—mortgage, rent, car payments, credit cards—and then checking if anything remains for God. But God makes it clear that He does not want our \_\_\_\_\_; He **deserves** our \_\_\_\_\_ of our income.

***“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.***

***<sup>9</sup> Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce.***

***<sup>10</sup> Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine.”*** (Proverbs 3:5, 9-10 | NLT)

**Trusting God** in your finances is demonstrated by giving Him the first portion of your income—before you ensure everything else is covered. This is an act of faith, showing you believe He can and will provide. Many in our church already practice this, experiencing **blessings** tied to generous, faith-filled giving. The question is: **Does God have a legitimate complaint against you?** Are you inadvertently **robbing** Him by withholding the first fruits of what He has entrusted to you?

Remember, we don't tithe or give solely because the church needs money; we give because **we need God's blessing**—and He has promised to use our faithfulness as a conduit for it. Ultimately, giving becomes a **spiritual discipline** that aligns our hearts with God's heart and our priorities with His purposes.

2. GOD'S \_\_\_\_\_: *Bring the \_\_\_\_\_ into My \_\_\_\_\_!*

*God's storehouse is where God's ministry takes place.*

In biblical times, the **storehouse** was simply **where God's ministry took place**—in the Old Testament, it was the **Temple**, and in the New Testament era, it is the **local church**. God expects us to bring **His** tithe to this storehouse so that His work can be carried out.

Some people argue against tithing because they view it solely as an **Old Testament** requirement. While it's true that tithing was part of the Old Testament Law, **Abraham** practiced tithing long **before** God gave the Law to Moses. In the New Testament, we live under **grace**, not law, but Jesus Himself **spoke of tithing** without suggesting its abolishment:

*“<sup>42</sup> What sorrow awaits you Pharisees! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore justice and the love of God. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.” (Luke 11:42 | NLT)*

When Jesus affirms something we ought to do, that alone settles the matter for many believers.

*A Faith-Based Approach*

At Faro Church we operate our budget on faith.

Instead of having members sign **pledge cards** or basing our budget on promised amounts, we ask, “**What do we believe God wants us to accomplish this year?**” Then, by **faith**, we trust the Lord to supply the necessary resources through His people. While the mechanics of giving have changed over centuries—from agricultural produce to modern currency—the **motive** behind it remains paramount.

How you give isn't important. What is important is why you give.

*Three levels of motivation to give:*

1- “I \_\_\_\_\_ to!”

In the Old Testament, tithing resembled a law or tax; Jews gave out of duty. Some Christians give grudgingly, as if it were a spiritual “tax”, feeling it is an obligation they can’t avoid.

2- “I \_\_\_\_\_ to!”

This is a **struggling** stage. Individuals at this level realize Jesus commended tithing but still find it challenging. They might say, “I’m not required to tithe to be saved, but Jesus said we *ought* to, so I guess I’ll do it.”

3- “I \_\_\_\_\_ to!”

This is the **highest** level—giving out of **love**. We don’t tithe from fear of breaking a rule, but because we **love Jesus** and want to honor Him.

\_\_\_\_\_ *in Giving*

The New Testament encourages **cheerful** giving, it ought to be a pleasant experience:

*“<sup>6</sup>Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. <sup>7</sup>You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.”” (2 Corinthians 9:6-7 | NLT)*

The Greek word for “**cheerful**” is *hilarion*, the root of our English word “**hilarious**.” Imagine that—Scripture depicts giving as something **joyful**, even **fun**! When we understand it’s an act of **love** rather than duty, **giving becomes an occasion of delight**, both to us and to God.

3. GOD’S \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_ *Me on This!*

In **Malachi 3:10**, God presents a distinctive challenge that appears nowhere else in Scripture. Typically, **He tests us**—but here, in this single instance, **He invites us** to test **Him**:

*““...put Me to the test now in this,” says the Lord of armies...” (Malachi 3:10 | NASB)*

He commands us to **stop robbing** Him through our lack of tithing and instead **begin** to do so faithfully. If we obey, the Lord promises **three key results**:

1- God will pour out his \_\_\_\_\_ on us

*““...put Me to the test now in this,” says the Lord of armies, “if I do not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.” (Malachi 3:10 | NASB)*

God says He will open the windows of heaven, pouring out such blessing that we **cannot contain it**.

This **doesn’t** mean God promises to make us **wealthy**; rather, He promises blessings far more **valuable** than money—like **joy, peace, and purpose**—the things money **cannot** buy.



2- God will devour the \_\_\_\_\_ before he strikes

*“...put Me to the test now in this,” says the Lord of armies... <sup>11</sup> Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruit of your ground; nor will the vine in the field prove fruitless to you,” ...”*

(Malachi 3:10-11 | NASB)

Satan is described by Jesus as a **thief** who comes to **steal, kill, and destroy**—the true devourer.

God pledges that if we **honor** Him through tithing, He will **rebuke** this enemy on our behalf.

Many of us know seasons when expenses pop up one after another—what if God prevented some of those costs from ever materializing?

This doesn't guarantee you'll never face hardships like hospital visits, but He does promise a **protective** and **preventative** covering in ways we often don't see.

3- God will \_\_\_\_\_ joy

*“...put Me to the test now in this,” says the Lord of armies, ...*

*<sup>12</sup> “All the nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,” says the Lord of armies.”* (Malachi 3:10, 12 | NASB)

God declares that **if** we honor Him with our tithes, others will **recognize** His favor upon us; our lives will be marked by **blessing** and **delight**.

It is God's **plan** not only to provide for us but to ensure we **enjoy** life under His gracious hand.

When God dares us to **test** Him, He's inviting us to **trust** Him with our finances in a way that releases His abundant blessings, spiritual protection, and renewed joy in our lives.

4. MY \_\_\_\_\_: “I Will Begin to \_\_\_\_\_ in God!”

Up until now, we've seen how the Lord challenges us **not to rob Him** through neglecting tithes and offerings. We've examined passages in **Malachi 3**, where God effectively says, **“Stop withholding from Me and test Me instead!”** We've looked at examples like the Widow of Zarephath who gave Elijah her last bit of flour and oil, David who refused to offer God a sacrifice that cost him nothing, and the poor widow whose two small coins in the temple offering box testified to her faith. Each of these stories underscores a central theme: **God looks at our heart of obedience, not merely the size of our gift.**

With that backdrop in mind, we arrive at a pivotal moment—**our decision**. We can either choose to **test God** by trusting Him with our finances and our entire lives, or we can **test money**, continually relying on our resources and our own calculations. But Jesus made it plain in **Matthew 6:24** that we can't serve **both** God and money at the same time.

*“<sup>24</sup> “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” (Matthew 6:24 | NASB)*

### *Identifying What’s \_\_\_\_\_*

If you’ve sensed a subtle emptiness in your faith—an elusive feeling that **something** is not quite as vibrant or complete as it could be—it might stem from **withholding** what the Lord has asked you to surrender. Perhaps you never realized this was “robbing God,” but now that you do, you can’t ignore it. The question becomes: **“What am I going to do about it?”**

Sometimes the barrier is fear—fear that there won’t be enough for bills, emergencies, or future plans. Other times, it’s a misunderstanding of God’s nature, assuming He only wants to take from us when, in reality, the entire **purpose** of His commands is to **bless** us and set us free. Throughout Scripture, He promises joy, peace, purpose, and even divine protection when we act in faith.

### *\_\_\_\_\_ God with Malachi 3:10 and John 3:16*

If we struggle to trust God in the practical realm of our finances—**Malachi 3:10**—it calls into question our ability to trust Him in the eternal realm—**John 3:16**—where He offers the greatest gift of all: **salvation through Christ**. The principle is simple: if we doubt Him in the day-to-day arena of needs, how firmly are we holding onto His promises about eternity?

### *Different Situations, Same Principle*

From previous discussions, we noted **three categories of givers**:

#### **1- Managed Earners (Afflicted with Affluence):**

- Those who have plentiful resources.
- Jesus taught that “to whom much is given, much is required” (Luke 12:48). Such individuals often face the subtle temptation to **trust** in their abundance, rather than the God who provided it.

#### **2- Middle Earners:**

- These believers maintain a moderate income and aim to be faithful as they progress from “A” to “B” to “C” in their levels of generosity.
- Consistency is the key—giving regularly, even if it requires careful budgeting and incremental growth in faith.

#### **3- Meager Earners:**

- Like the widow who put in her last two coins, their gifts might look small by worldly standards, but in heaven’s eyes they’re deeply **significant**.
- God often uses these humble offerings to **stir** His heart and demonstrate faith in remarkable ways.

No matter which category you identify with, the **core principle** remains the same: God delights in **faith-filled obedience**. He's not primarily after our money—He's after our **heart**, and finances are simply one channel through which we learn to trust Him.

*From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_-Filled*

Making the decision “**I will begin to trust in God!**” might feel risky. Yet every example we've encountered—from Elijah's widow to David's altar to the poor woman in the temple—highlights the supernatural provision and favor that follow radical obedience. When you choose to give God your firstfruits, you're essentially saying, “**Lord, I believe You are who You say You are, and I believe You can do what You say You can do.**”

This commitment doesn't guarantee life will be trouble-free—people still face illnesses, unexpected bills, and challenges. But it does mean you invite **God's active involvement** in your circumstances, opening the door for His **preventive protection** and the sort of blessings that money can't buy: serenity, a clear conscience, and confidence in His unfailing love.

*Embracing the “C” \_\_\_\_\_*

Recall the illustration of Fred, Ted, and the “C” experience. Fred stays on the safe side, giving minimally or not at all. Ted gives a bit more, but still hesitates to go all-in with God. The person at “C,” however, chooses radical faith—trusting God's ability to resupply and multiply whatever is offered. While this might appear “foolish” to the world, it's the same spirit that moved the widow of Zarephath to feed Elijah before herself, and the same spirit that drove the early church to share their possessions.

*Moving \_\_\_\_\_*

If God is stirring your heart, ask Him for grace to take that **next step** of obedience. Maybe it means starting to tithe consistently, or perhaps you already tithe but sense God nudging you to give sacrificially above that level. Wherever you are, let your giving **reflect** the love and generosity of the One who gave His all for you.

Finally, remember that your financial faithfulness ties directly into your **spiritual growth**. By entrusting God with what you have, you will see His provision in ways that fortify your faith and deepen your intimacy with Him. As you obey and believe Him for the outcome, you're not only fulfilling a biblical command; you're stepping into a partnership with the living God, who has promised to be your supply, your protector, and your **great reward**.







## **Salt and Light**

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