

SOLEMN ASSEMBLY
JUNE 2024



AUDACIOUS
Faith

SOLEMN ASSEMBLY

J U N E 2 0 2 4

JAN-FEB

LOVE FEARLESSLY

MAR-APR

LIVE UNCOMMONLY

MAY-JUN

PRAY AUDACIOUSLY

JUL-AUG

OBEDY RADICALLY

SEP-OCT

SERVE SELFLESSLY

NOV-DEC

GIVE RECKLESSLY

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3400 Moanalua Road, Honolulu, Hawaii 96819

www.firstaog.com

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Foreword

Audacious Faith—His Mandate My Mission

Luke 11:5–10 NLT

*Then, teaching them more about prayer, He (Jesus) used this story: “Suppose you went to a friend’s house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, ‘A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.’ And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can’t help you.’ But I tell you this—**THOUGH HE WON’T DO IT FOR FRIENDSHIP’S SAKE, IF YOU KEEP KNOCKING LONG ENOUGH, HE WILL GET UP AND GIVE YOU WHATEVER YOU NEED BECAUSE OF YOUR SHAMELESS PERSISTENCE.**” And so I tell you, **KEEP ON ASKING**, and you will receive what you ask for. **KEEP ON SEEKING**, and you will find. **KEEP ON KNOCKING**, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. **Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.**”*

Luke 11:8 NIV

*I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, **YET BECAUSE OF YOUR SHAMELESS AUDACITY HE WILL SURELY GET UP AND GIVE YOU AS MUCH AS YOU NEED.***

In an article written by Rick Warren, “How To Trust God for Your Big Dreams,” he stated, “**SOMETIMES, FOLLOWING GOD’S DREAM FOR YOUR LIFE REQUIRES AUDACITY. Audacity is the courage to think big, show initiative, and take risks for a dream while facing the possibility of failure.**”

Rick Warren was referring to Genesis 37, the story of Joseph who had a dream so incredible—so audacious—that nobody in the world believed him. He dreamed that one day he would be a great leader and all his brothers would bow down to him, even his parents.

Was his audacious dream the truth? Yes. Was the dream from God? Yes. Was it fulfilled? Yes. Was Joseph a little crazy to tell his brothers? Yes. When Joseph shared his audacious dreams with his family in Genesis 37:5, 10 NIV, “they hated him all the more ... When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, ‘What is this dream you had?’”

Like Joseph, following God’s path requires audacious faith—even when it does not make sense, even when people ridicule you, even when you are afraid, even when the odds are against you. **If God puts a dream in your heart, He will honor you when you step out in faith to fulfill it.**

JOSEPH MADE ONE AUDACIOUS DECISION AFTER ANOTHER IN FAITH. As a result, he got the promotion of a lifetime—he eventually became a great leader and ruled over all of Egypt.

In which areas do you need to be audacious? Where do you need to trust God? Maybe you need to take the initiative to step out in faith, think big, or take a risk. When you follow God’s dream, you know He will honor the big steps you take in faith.

In the parable in Luke 11:5–9 NIV, Jesus told His disciples, “I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.”

Shameless audacity is the key to believing and obeying God’s dreams. It is the secret to petitioning the Father and receiving as much as we need to make it a reality. Shameless audacity is the key when it comes to making God’s mandate our mission in:

- Loving Fearlessly
- Living Uncommonly
- Praying Audaciously
- Obeying Radically
- Serving Selflessly
- Giving Recklessly

It takes more than wishful thinking to believe in and follow God’s dreams. **It requires audacious faith to pray audaciously until the dreams become reality.**

**Klayton Ko, Senior Pastor
First Assembly of God, Hawaii**

Notes:

Called to Solemn Assembly: June 2024

Week 1 – Personal Preparation (May 26–June 1, 2024)

Week 2 – Corporate Prayer And Fasting (June 2–9, 2024)

Regional and Corporate Prayer Schedule (June 3–9, 2024)

Morning Prayer	6:00–7:00am	Mon–Fri	Red Hill Central Oahu Metro East Honolulu
	6:00–7:00am	Mon, Wed, Fri	Leeward
	6:00–7:00am	online only	Windward
Corporate Noon Prayer	12:00–1:00pm	Mon–Fri	Red Hill
Corporate Evening Prayer	6:00–8:00pm	Mon–Fri	Red Hill
Personal and Family Prayer	Anytime	Sat	
Thanksgiving and Exhortation	6:00–8:00pm	Sun	Red Hill

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL CONCERNING PRAYER TIME

Please do not fellowship during times of prayer. Let us honor the presence of God and guard the spiritual sobriety and sanctity of the occasion. Be encouraged to wait on God and hear Him. Take notes of what you hear.

Evening Prayer Schedule:	6:00–6:30pm	Personal Prayer
	6:30–7:30pm	Corporate Prayer
	7:30–8:00pm	Personal Prayer

DAILY PRAYER FOCUS FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 2–9, 2024

Day 1 (Sunday)	Ministry of the Word (AM and PM services)
Day 2 (Monday)	Consecrated to Make His Mandate My Mission
Day 3 (Tuesday)	Obey Radically
Day 4 (Wednesday)	Serve Selflessly
Day 5 (Thursday)	Give Recklessly
Day 6 (Friday)	Anointed to Live Uncommonly
Day 7 (Saturday)	Personal and Family Prayer
Day 8 (Sunday)	Thanksgiving and Exhortation

SOLEMN ASSEMBLY PART I: WEEK OF PERSONAL PREPARATION May 26–June 1, 2024 (Sunday to Saturday)

Six Steps To Preparation For Solemn Assembly

Sunday, May 26 to Saturday, June 1, 2024 is a week of personal preparation before the Solemn Assembly. Like the Levitical priests who carefully prepared themselves before they entered the Tabernacle to minister to God, it is important that we take time to prayerfully prepare ourselves to enter Solemn Assembly in the spirit and posture of heart that is pleasing to God. Record all that God will be speaking to you throughout this season of prayer and fasting on the pages provided in this booklet.

STEP 1: Plan your week's schedule to include times for corporate and personal prayer.

STEP 2: Personal preparation (Psalm 51:1–19 NKJV)

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.”

1. Prepare your heart to come before God in humility and contrition.
2. Allow the Holy Spirit to do a deep searching of your heart and life. Bring everything to light and let nothing be hidden.
3. Pray through Psalm 51. Repent and ask God to forgive you, cleanse your heart, and renew a right spirit within you.

4. Ask God to open the eyes of your understanding; remove all unbelief, hardness, pride and resistance to His Holy Spirit. Ask God to put truth and wisdom in your inward parts.
5. Make relationships right with God and with others.

STEP 3: Prepare as a family (Joshua 24:14–15; Psalm 133 NKJV)

“Now, therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! ... But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

1. Heads of families: help prepare your family and share the personal application of Solemn Assembly to every person in your household.
2. Minister unity and oneness; bring healing and reconciliation to all relationships in your family, repent of sins committed against each other, and minister love and forgiveness towards one another.
3. Married couples: read 1 Peter 3:1–7 and Colossians 3:18–19.
4. Parents and children: read Colossians 3:20–21.
5. Have a family communion time to seal the oneness of spirit, love and peace; pray Psalm 133 and Colossians 3 into your family.

STEP 4: Spiritual house-cleansing (2 Chronicles 34:3–27 NKJV)

“For in the eighth year of his (Josiah’s) reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images ... in the eighteenth year of his reign ... he sent Shaphan ... to repair the house of the LORD ... because your heart was tender ... and you humbled yourself before Me ... I also have heard you, says the LORD.”

1. Do spiritual house-cleansing (2 Chronicles 34:1–33); if there is any item in your possession that contains spiritually defiling material and is not pleasing to God, get rid of it.
2. These things defile us and our homes, and become gateways for the enemy to infiltrate.
3. Repair your personal and family altar (daily devotions, prayer and the Word).

STEP 5: Prepare all ministries (Colossians 3:12–15 NKJV)

“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another; and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.”

1. Heads of ministries: prepare all helpers and others under your care, and ensure that everyone is informed concerning the purpose and times of prayer.
2. Exhort all to participate in the blessing of Solemn Assembly.
3. Minister unity, reconciliation and oneness; if there is any rift in ministerial relationships, prayerfully bring reconciliation and oneness.
4. Renew commitments to God and each other; pray Psalm 133 and Colossians 3 into your ministry.

STEP 6: Ask God to infuse great faith in us (Hebrews 11:6 NKJV)

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

1. Seek God diligently and believe in Him for great things.
2. Step into the week of Solemn Assembly with a contrite heart and great faith.

WHAT IS SOLEMN ASSEMBLY?

The Call To Humbly Seek God In Prayer And Fasting

Joel 1:14 NKJV—“Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God and cry out to the LORD.”

Solemn Assembly is a corporate and personal call to humbly separate ourselves unto God for a time of Consecration, Prayer and Fasting to seek His face for a specific purpose. It is humbling ourselves before God in

repentance and consecration. It is a time to:

- “Break up the fallow ground” of our hearts before God.
- Repent of all sins and return to God wholeheartedly.
- Totally consecrate ourselves to God as His redeemed people.
- Wait on God to hear from Him and take heed.
- Resolve to obey and please Him alone.

What Is Fasting And Prayer?

Fasting and prayer are spiritual ministries that God responds to. In fasting, abstinence from food (and other things) is an outward demonstration of an inward heart of contrition and repentance towards God. It is a spiritual act of humbling and emptying ourselves before God in submission to His Lordship. Fasting crucifies our flesh and self, enthrones God, and brings us into total submission to Him. We deny all that is of ourselves—our will, needs, appetites, desires, priorities, and motives—to embrace all that is His. There are different ways to fast. Let the Lord lead you at all times. We fast on:

- Food (depending on God’s direction).
- Time (setting aside time to pray and wait on God).
- Priorities (denying personal agendas to make seeking Him our first priority).
- Pleasures (abstaining from things we enjoy to devote that time and energy to God).

How Do We Fast?

We are to fast as the Holy Spirit leads us. Let God show you what He is dealing with in your life. All fasting must be accompanied with prayer. There are three different ways we can fast:

- Partial fast—abstain from certain meals or reduce normal portion sizes (no snacking to make up for meals).
- Total fast—abstain from solid foods and consume only liquids (if you have a health condition, consult with your doctor first).
- Daniel fast—abstain from specific types of foods, beverages and/or pleasures (e.g. internet, social media, television, entertainment, sports, recreation, shopping, etc.).

Sunday, June 2: Ministry of the Word

..... LUKE 11:5–10 NLT

*Then, teaching them more about prayer, He [Jesus] used this story: “Suppose you went to a friend’s house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, ‘A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.’ And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can’t help you.’ But I tell you this—**THOUGH HE WON’T DO IT FOR FRIENDSHIP’S SAKE, IF YOU KEEP KNOCKING LONG ENOUGH, HE WILL GET UP AND GIVE YOU WHATEVER YOU NEED BECAUSE OF YOUR SHAMELESS PERSISTENCE.** And so I tell you, **KEEP ON ASKING**, and you will receive what you ask for. **KEEP ON SEEKING**, and you will find. **KEEP ON KNOCKING**, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. **Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.**”*

..... LUKE 11:8 NIV

*I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, **YET BECAUSE OF YOUR SHAMELESS AUDACITY HE WILL SURELY GET UP AND GIVE YOU AS MUCH AS YOU NEED.***

..... PHILIPPIANS 2:5–11 ESV

*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. **And being found in human form, HE HUMBLED HIMSELF BY BECOMING OBEDIENT TO THE POINT OF DEATH, EVEN DEATH ON A CROSS.** Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

..... JOHN 5:30 NKJV

*I [Jesus] can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because **I DO NOT SEEK MY OWN WILL BUT THE WILL OF THE FATHER WHO SENT ME.***

..... JOSHUA 22:5 NIV

*But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: **to LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD, to walk in obedience to Him, to keep His commands, to hold fast to Him and to SERVE HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL.***

..... MATTHEW 20:28 NLT

FOR EVEN THE SON OF MAN CAME NOT TO BE SERVED BUT TO SERVE OTHERS, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE AS A RANSOM FOR MANY.

..... JOHN 12:26 NKJV

If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and WHERE I AM, THERE MY SERVANT WILL BE ALSO. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

..... EPHESIANS 6:7–8 NIV

SERVE WHOLEHEARTEDLY, AS IF YOU WERE SERVING THE LORD, NOT PEOPLE, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

..... JOHN 3:16–17 NLT

FOR THIS IS HOW GOD LOVED THE WORLD: HE GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY SON, SO THAT EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. God sent His Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through Him.

..... HEBREWS 10:12–14 NLT

BUT OUR HIGH PRIEST OFFERED HIMSELF TO GOD AS A SINGLE SACRIFICE FOR SINS, GOOD FOR ALL TIME. Then He sat down in the place of honor at God’s right hand. There He waits until His enemies are humbled and made a footstool under His feet. FOR BY THAT ONE OFFERING HE FOREVER MADE PERFECT THOSE WHO ARE BEING MADE HOLY.

..... JOHN 15:13 NLT

THERE IS NO GREATER LOVE THAN TO LAY DOWN ONE’S LIFE FOR ONE’S FRIENDS.

..... JOHN 14:15–24 NKJV

“IF YOU LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. HE WHO HAS MY COMMANDMENTS AND KEEPS THEM, IT IS HE WHO LOVES ME. AND HE WHO LOVES ME WILL BE LOVED BY MY FATHER, AND I WILL LOVE HIM AND MANIFEST MYSELF TO HIM.” Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to

Monday, June 3: Consecrated To Make His Mandate My Mission

LEVITICUS 11:44–45 NKJV

FOR I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD. YOU SHALL THEREFORE CONSECRATE YOURSELVES, AND YOU SHALL BE HOLY; FOR I AM HOLY. *Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. FOR I AM THE LORD WHO BRINGS YOU UP OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, TO BE YOUR GOD. YOU SHALL THEREFORE BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 NKJV

FOR HE MADE HIM WHO KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN FOR US, THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1–8 NLT

Finally, dear brothers and sisters, WE URGE YOU IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS TO LIVE IN A WAY THAT PLEASES GOD, as we have taught you. You live this way already, and we encourage you to do so even more. For you remember what we taught you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. GOD'S WILL IS FOR YOU TO BE HOLY, so stay away from all sexual sin. Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor—not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know God and His ways. Never harm or cheat a fellow believer in this matter by violating his wife, for the Lord avenges all such sins, as we have solemnly warned you before. GOD HAS CALLED US TO LIVE HOLY LIVES, NOT IMPURE LIVES. Therefore, anyone who refuses to live by these rules is not disobeying human teaching but is rejecting God, who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

DEUTERONOMY 10:12–17 NKJV

And now, Israel, WHAT DOES THE LORD YOUR GOD REQUIRE OF YOU, but to FEAR THE LORD YOUR GOD, TO WALK IN ALL HIS WAYS AND TO LOVE HIM, TO SERVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good? ... Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer. For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome

DEUTERONOMY 10:20–21 NKJV

YOU SHALL FEAR THE LORD YOUR GOD; YOU SHALL SERVE HIM, AND TO HIM YOU SHALL HOLD FAST, AND TAKE OATHS IN HIS NAME. *He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen.*

..... 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-17 NKJV

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and HE DIED FOR ALL, THAT THOSE WHO LIVE SHOULD LIVE NO LONGER FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR HIM WHO DIED FOR THEM AND ROSE AGAIN. Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. THEREFORE, IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION; OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD, ALL THINGS HAVE BECOME NEW.

..... 2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-18 LEB

Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers, FOR WHAT PARTICIPATION IS THERE BETWEEN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND LAWLESSNESS? OR WHAT FELLOWSHIP DOES LIGHT HAVE WITH DARKNESS? AND WHAT AGREEMENT DOES CHRIST HAVE WITH BELIAR? Or what share does a believer have with an unbeliever? And what agreement does the temple of God have with idols? FOR WE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD, just as God said, "I WILL LIVE IN THEM AND WILL WALK ABOUT AMONG THEM, AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD AND THEY WILL BE MY PEOPLE." Therefore "COME OUT from their midst and BE SEPARATE," says the Lord, "and DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN, AND I WILL WELCOME YOU, AND I WILL BE A FATHER TO YOU, AND YOU WILL BE SONS AND DAUGHTERS TO ME," says the All-Powerful Lord.

..... 2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-18 MSG

Don't become partners with those who reject God. How can you make a partnership out of right and wrong? That's not partnership; that's war. Is light best friends with dark? Does Christ go strolling with the Devil? Do trust and mistrust hold hands? Who would think of setting up pagan idols in God's holy Temple? But that is exactly what we are, each of us a temple in whom God lives. God Himself put it this way: "I'll live in them, move into them; I'll be their God and they'll be My people. So leave the corruption and compromise; leave it for good," says God. "Don't link up with those who will pollute you. I WANT YOU ALL FOR MYSELF. I'll be a Father to you; you'll be sons and daughters to Me." The Word of the Master, God.

..... 1 PETER 2:1-12 NKJV

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ ... you are a chosen generation, a royal

priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

ROMANS 8:5–17 NKJV

*For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. **For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.** Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. **So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. BUT YOU ARE NOT IN THE FLESH BUT IN THE SPIRIT, IF INDEED THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLS IN YOU. NOW IF ANYONE DOES NOT HAVE THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, HE IS NOT HIS.** And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. **For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. FOR AS MANY AS ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THESE ARE SONS OF GOD.** For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but **YOU RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION BY WHOM WE CRY OUT, “ABBA, FATHER.”** The Spirit Himself **BEARS WITNESS** with our spirit that **WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD**, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

TITUS 3:3–7 LEB

*For we also were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, enslaved to various desires and pleasures, spending our lives in wickedness and envy, despicable, hating one another. **But when the kindness and love for mankind of God our Savior appeared, HE SAVED US, NOT BY DEEDS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT WE HAVE DONE, BUT BECAUSE OF HIS MERCY, THROUGH THE WASHING OF REGENERATION AND RENEWAL BY THE SPIRIT, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY HIS GRACE, WE MAY BECOME HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE.***

..... 1 CORINTHIANS 6:19–20 NLT

Don't you realize that YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, who lives in you and was given to you by God? YOU DO NOT BELONG TO YOURSELF, FOR GOD BOUGHT YOU WITH A HIGH PRICE. SO YOU MUST HONOR GOD WITH YOUR BODY.

..... 1 PETER 2:21–25 NKJV

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that WE, HAVING DIED TO SINS, MIGHT LIVE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Exhortation: Consecrated To Make His Mandate My Mission

We are Saved into Consecration unto Jesus Christ

Consecrate in Hebrew is *qādaš*, which means to set apart as holy unto God, sanctify, dedicate, be hallowed, keep sacred, and treat as sacred unto God for His purpose. Consecration does not save us, but we are saved into consecration unto Jesus Christ. Charles Spurgeon said, **"IT IS NOT SANCTIFICATION THAT SAVES, BUT SALVATION THAT SANCTIFIES. A man is not saved by his holiness, BUT HE BECOMES HOLY BECAUSE HE IS ALREADY SAVED."** Consecration does not begin with outward acts of reverence but with the Holy Spirit's inward work of regeneration in redeeming us and setting us apart as God's holy people sanctified for His purpose. We are born again as a new creation in Christ Jesus. **We are saved and consecrated spiritual beings living in God, walking in His light, and offering up praises to Him. CONSECRATION IS A MARK OF OUR COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, AND WE ARE ETERNALLY BOUND TO HIM.** As salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit, not human flesh, so is consecration. Titus 3:3–7 LEB clearly states,

For we also were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, enslaved to various desires and pleasures, spending our lives in wickedness and envy, despicable, hating one another. **But when the kindness and love for mankind of God our Savior appeared, HE SAVED US, not BY DEEDS OF**

RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT WE HAVE DONE, BUT BECAUSE OF HIS MERCY, THROUGH THE WASHING OF REGENERATION AND RENEWAL BY THE SPIRIT, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY HIS GRACE, we may become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Through the new birth in Jesus Christ, God takes away our old, sinful nature and makes us new, righteous, and holy in Him. We have the new consecrated nature of the kingdom of light in Christ Jesus, and we are devoted to living for Him. 2 Corinthians 5:15 NKJV says, **“HE DIED FOR ALL, THAT THOSE WHO LIVE SHOULD LIVE NO LONGER FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR HIM WHO DIED FOR THEM AND ROSE AGAIN.”**

- **“THEREFORE, IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION; OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD, ALL THINGS HAVE BECOME NEW.”** 2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV
- **“As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. BECAUSE OF THAT CROSS, MY INTEREST IN THIS WORLD HAS BEEN CRUCIFIED, AND THE WORLD’S INTEREST IN ME HAS ALSO DIED.** It doesn’t matter whether we have been circumcised or not. **What counts is whether WE HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A NEW CREATION.** May God’s peace and mercy be upon all who live by this principle; they are the new people of God.” Galatians 6:14–16 NLT

According to 1 Peter 2:1–12, as newborn babes in Christ, we no longer participate in the unconsecrated and unholy practices of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, or evil speaking. We abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul, and live with honorable conduct among the unbelievers in this fallen world, whereby God is glorified through our observable consecrated life in Christ. By choice, we obey willingly. We deny ourselves, crucify the flesh, give it no room, and pick up our cross to follow Jesus Christ our Lord. **As Christ’s followers, we do not sin against the blood that saves us and makes us righteous before God. Our identity as His holy and consecrated children must be evidenced by how we live, do, and act.**

Consecration is Entire, Never Partial

Consecration is for our entire being—spirit, soul, body—and all we possess. Salvation is always complete and whole, and so is consecration. As we

cannot be partially saved, we cannot be partially consecrated. We are either His children, royal priesthood, and special possession, or we are not. We belong to Him, and His Holy Spirit is the seal of our sonship in Him, bearing witness to our redeemed spirit that God is our Father and we, His children. Our born-again spirit naturally cries out to God in acknowledgment, “Abba, Father!” We are His; we are not our own nor of this world. **Because we are set apart as holy and sacred unto Him, we live in total abandonment and devotion to Him without reserve, restriction, or delay.** Everything we are and do is devoted to God, we are His because **WE UNDERSTAND WHO GOD IS AND WHO WE ARE IN HIM—His saved and consecrated special treasures.**

Brooke Foss Westcott, an English bishop, biblical scholar, and theologian, probably most known for co-editing the New Testament in the original Greek in 1881, said, **“THE MARK OF A SAINT IS NOT PERFECTION, BUT CONSECRATION. A SAINT IS NOT A PERSON WITHOUT FAULTS, BUT A MAN WHO HAS GIVEN HIMSELF WITHOUT RESERVE TO GOD.”** With such a consecration, God knows He can trust this one’s heart, motives, and allegiance to Him to love, obey, and serve Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV declares, **“FOR HE MADE HIM WHO KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN FOR US, THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM.”** This knowledge and understanding of the price Christ paid for our salvation and consecration should produce such a love, reverence, and worship of Him that we earnestly walk in holy devotion to Him as His special treasure. **HE IS OUR GOD; BESIDES HIM, THERE IS NO OTHER. THEREFORE, WE LIVE CONSECRATED LIVES.** We know, according to 2 Corinthians 6:14–18 LEB,

- We are children of light and have nothing to do with darkness because between them, there can be no partnership. V14
- We belong to Jesus Christ, who has nothing to do with the devil. Therefore, we are not to partake of anything in this world that originates from him, be it things, ways, patterns, or lifestyles. V15
- We are saved by faith in Christ Jesus and do not live as those not yet saved. V16
- We are the temples of the Living God, and He lives within us, walking among us as our God, and we are His people. V16
- We live not in the spirit, manner, and ways of those still in darkness but in the spirit, manner, and ways of our holy God. V17

Consecrated people are holy and uncommon people. **God has not**

promised His protection for those areas we hold back and do not consecrate to Him. These are areas vulnerable to satan's attack and intrusion. Judas never entirely consecrated himself to God. His heart loved money, and he gave in to the devil's ploy and became his instrument in selling Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. He was later regretful but unable to repent because satan had entered him and fully taken over him. Saul did not wholly consecrate himself to God, especially in the area of his pride. He became vulnerable to the attack of satan, who tempted him to rebel against God and elevate himself above God. He yielded to satan, stubbornly rejecting and rebelling against God. Ultimately, instead of loving, obeying, and honoring God, he built a monument in honor of himself.

The Blessings of Living Wholly Consecrated Unto God

There is no fitting way to live in God except in holy consecration. Without consecration, there is no relationship with God. Jesus lived in perfect consecration to His Father, loving, obeying, and serving Him. Christ did not consecrate Himself to God to become a son. **He is fully consecrated because He is God's only begotten Son. He was fully submissive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, living in complete obedience to all His Father's commands, fulfilling His will and accomplishing His work.**

There are blessings that come only through our holy consecration.

- **We have an uncommon and face-to-face intimacy with God.**
- **We live with an uncommon love, passion, and obedience to God.** We will say, as Jesus said, "Not my will but Your will be done."
- **We serve God with uncommon faith, which produces courage, boldness, and fearlessness.** We know God is who He says He is and will do what He says He will do.
- **We operate, move, and serve with an uncommon spirit like Joshua and Caleb,** who were fully submitted to and led by the Holy Spirit.
- **We are protected from yielding to the devil's temptation and falling into sins, especially secret sins.** Like Jesus, we will declare that the ruler of this world has no hold or influence over us.
- **We receive unlimited grace and much power to deny ourselves, crucify the flesh, and follow Christ as more than conquerors.**
- **We are fruitful and able to multiply in His kingdom, bearing uncommon and lasting fruit.**

The Prayer of One Who is Audaciously Consecrated to Love, Obey, and Serve God

Take time to prepare your heart, humbling yourself to pray this prayer to God:

“O God, I cry out for a heart that runs after You, a heart which is pure and perfect towards You in holy consecration. Let my heart not be spotted by the love for self and the world, nor tainted by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life defiling me and making me unfit to enter into a holy intimacy with You. O God, I pray for a heart that is ignited and perpetually consumed by the fire of Your Holy Spirit, that I will live as a blazing flame for You, and be holy as You are holy. Because You have caused me to understand that You redeemed me with the imperishable and costly price of Your blood that You shed for me as the sacrificial and crucified Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, I consecrate myself to You wholly, audaciously, holding nothing back. I do not need to be persuaded to be consecrated and holy, I long to be.

Consume my heart with the knowledge and power of this truth: because You live, I live! (John 14:19) Without You I am nothing, because it is in You that I live, move, and have my being. You are my Alpha and Omega. I cry out to have a heart that walks gently and carefully before You because I am profoundly concerned that my steps will be acceptable and pleasing to You and that You will find no cause to be disquieted. Help me to know that I am called into holy consecration as part of Your royal priesthood so that I can declare Your praises from a holy heart and pure lips, bringing glory to Your name. Let holy fear fill my being because my eyes have seen You, and I have experienced Your unfathomable love igniting my being with a holy zeal for You.

Lord, I pray that I am wholly consecrated to audaciously love, obey, and serve You. Throughout the rest of my days, I will burn with an unquenchable passion for You. I perpetually live in a complete surrender of heart and submission to You. I am passionate and quick to hear You and obey. I run to deny myself, pick up my cross, and follow You. I count this a privilege because You have spoken, and I need no other voice to convince me.

I commit unto death to love and obey You first and serve You to the utmost. Your will and work are my daily and necessary food by which I live. I have no other life but this.

The depth of my being is profoundly disturbed by a hunger for You because my goal is You, Jesus Christ, my Lord. I have no other desire but You and

that You be glorified. My satisfaction is in the fulfillment of Your will and the accomplishment of Your work.

I abhor all that You hate and will not tolerate these things in my life, not even a hint or shadow. My life is a life of prayer unto You and reveling in Your Word. My delight and call is in worshipping You. Moment by moment, my eyes seek to behold You. In the night, I do not retire until I am drowned in Your manifest presence, not in any other activity or engagement.

I am not confused and will not be caught up in worthless debates or disagreements on subjects that are not of priority to You. **I am focused on this by audacious faith, making Your every mandate my mission.** The hours and days You have given me, I will not waste on meaningless and useless activities that cater to the flesh but starve the spirit within me. **Lord, I choose to live a life that is true to You.**

Purge and purify me wholly from the inside out with Your holy fire, that I am completely Yours alone. **Apart from You, I have no other goals, aspirations, or pursuits. I live to love, obey, and serve You.** In Christ's precious name, I pray. Amen."

Prayer Focus

Take time to wait, seek, and pray until the Holy Spirit manifests Himself to you to:

- Search, reveal, deal, and convict.
- Speak, minister, cleanse and sanctify.
- Be restored as a consecrated and holy vessel in God's hands.

A. Turn Your Heart Towards God in Humility and Repentance.

1. Humbly seek the Lord that He will deeply search your heart.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the condition of your heart.
3. Ask the Holy Spirit for a contrite heart and a broken spirit to repent.
4. Acknowledge and repent from all sins, compromises, and defilement.
5. Acknowledge and repent of any area that lacks holy consecration to God.

B. Seek to Live In Absolute Consecration Unto God Like Jesus Christ Did.

1. Seek God wholeheartedly, making His mandate your mission.

2. Love and serve God with all your heart, soul, and strength.
3. Obey God in all His commands, fulfilling His will and finishing His work.

C. Pray to Understand You are Saved into Consecration unto Jesus Christ.

1. As you are saved into consecration unto Jesus Christ, live as His holy and spiritual child, being part of His royal priesthood and holy nation.
2. Live set apart as holy unto Him for His purpose.
 - a. As God is holy, be holy—without compromise, not touching, but being separated from the unclean.
 - b. Be Christlike in all you are and do, revealing Him to the world.
 - c. Declare His Word and praises, bringing the gospel to the world.
3. Live in total abandonment and devotion to God.
4. Live to love and serve God without reserve, restriction, or delay.

D. Pray to Live Uncommonly for God in Holy Consecration.

1. Live in an uncommon and face-to-face intimacy with God.
2. Live with an uncommon love, passion, and obedience to God.
3. Serve God with uncommon faith, courage, and boldness.
4. Move and serve with an uncommon spirit like Joshua and Caleb.
5. Be protected from yielding to the devil's temptation and falling into sins, especially secret sins.
6. Receive unlimited grace and much power to deny yourselves, crucify the flesh, and follow Christ as more than conquerors.
7. Be fruitful and able to multiply in His kingdom, bearing uncommon and lasting fruit.

Notes:

Tuesday, June 4: Obey Radically

PHILIPPIANS 2:5–11 ESV

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, **HE HUMBLED HIMSELF BY BECOMING OBEDIENT TO THE POINT OF DEATH, EVEN DEATH ON A CROSS.** Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

JOHN 5:19–20, 30 NLT

So Jesus explained, **“I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by Himself. HE DOES ONLY WHAT HE SEES THE FATHER DOING. WHATEVER THE FATHER DOES, THE SON ALSO DOES.** For the Father loves the Son and shows Him everything He is doing. In fact, the Father will show Him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished ... **I CAN DO NOTHING ON MY OWN. I judge as God tells Me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I CARRY OUT THE WILL OF THE ONE WHO SENT ME, NOT MY OWN WILL.”**

JOHN 14:15–24 NKJV

IF YOU LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. **BECAUSE I LIVE, YOU WILL LIVE ALSO.** At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. **HE WHO HAS MY COMMANDMENTS AND KEEPS THEM, IT IS HE WHO LOVES ME. AND HE WHO LOVES ME WILL BE LOVED BY MY FATHER, AND I WILL LOVE HIM AND MANIFEST MYSELF TO HIM.”** Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?” Jesus answered and said to him, **“IF ANYONE LOVES ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORD; AND MY FATHER WILL LOVE HIM, AND WE WILL COME TO HIM AND MAKE OUR HOME WITH HIM. HE WHO DOES NOT LOVE ME DOES NOT KEEP MY WORDS; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.”**

MATTHEW 22:35–40 NLT

One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap Him with this question: “Teacher,

which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” Jesus replied, “**You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’** The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”

..... DEUTERONOMY 28:1–2 NKJV

Now it shall come to pass, **IF YOU DILIGENTLY OBEY the voice of the Lord your God, to OBSERVE CAREFULLY ALL HIS COMMANDMENTS** which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. **AND ALL THESE BLESSINGS SHALL COME UPON YOU AND OVERTAKE YOU, BECAUSE YOU OBEY THE VOICE OF THE LORD YOUR GOD:**

..... ISAIAH 1:19–20 NIV

“**If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.**” For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

..... ISAIAH 48:17–19 NLT

This is what the LORD says— your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “**I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is good for you and leads you along the paths you should follow. OH, THAT YOU HAD LISTENED TO MY COMMANDS! THEN YOU WOULD HAVE HAD PEACE FLOWING LIKE A GENTLE RIVER AND RIGHTEOUSNESS ROLLING OVER YOU LIKE WAVES IN THE SEA.** Your descendants would have been like the sands along the seashore—too many to count! There would have been no need for your destruction, or for cutting off your family name.”

..... PSALM 119:1–8 NLT

Joyful are people of integrity, who follow the instructions of the LORD. JOYFUL ARE THOSE WHO OBEY HIS LAWS AND SEARCH FOR HIM WITH ALL THEIR HEARTS. They do not compromise with evil, and they walk only in His paths. **You have charged us to keep your commandments carefully.** Oh, that my actions would consistently reflect your decrees! Then I will not be ashamed when I compare my life with Your commands. **As I learn your righteous regulations, I will thank You by living as I should! I WILL OBEY YOUR DECREES.**

..... 1 SAMUEL 15:22–29 NKJV

So Samuel said: “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? **BEHOLD, TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE, AND TO HEED THAN THE FAT OF RAMS. FOR REBELLION IS AS THE SIN OF WITCHCRAFT,**

AND STUBBORNNESS IS AS INIQUITY AND IDOLATRY. BECAUSE YOU HAVE REJECTED THE WORD OF THE LORD, HE ALSO HAS REJECTED YOU FROM BEING KING.” Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD.” But Samuel said to Saul, **“I will not return with you, for YOU HAVE REJECTED THE WORD OF THE LORD, AND THE LORD HAS REJECTED YOU FROM BEING KING OVER ISRAEL.”** And as Samuel turned around to go away, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. So Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent.”

Exhortation: Obey Radically

Jesus Christ’s Radical Obedience to God, His Father

Jesus provides an example for His Church how we are to love God with all our heart, soul, and strength and to obey Him radically. The Bible speaks of Christ’s many confessions concerning His absolute love for His Father and His radical obedience to Him.

- **“MY FOOD IS TO DO THE WILL OF HIM WHO SENT ME and to accomplish His work.”** John 4:34 ESV (NLT – “My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent Me, and from finishing His work.”)
- **“But I DO AS THE FATHER HAS COMMANDED ME, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.”** John 14:31 ESV
- **“And He who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”** John 8:29 ESV
- **“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I DO NOT SEEK MY OWN WILL BUT THE WILL OF THE FATHER WHO SENT ME.”** John 5:30 NKJV
- **“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.”** John 6:38 ESV

Other books of the Bible also testify of Jesus’ radical obedience because of His love for His Father.

- **“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and**

BECAME OBEDIENT TO THE POINT OF DEATH, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:8 NKJV

- **“Although He was a son, HE LEARNED OBEDIENCE THROUGH WHAT HE SUFFERED.”** Hebrews 5:8 ESV
- **“Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done.”** Luke 22:42 ESV

RADICAL OBEDIENCE IS UNBRIDLED AND OVER-THE-TOP OBEDIENCE. It is out and far beyond the norm and overwhelmingly exceeds the expected, accepted, and established. **IT IS REVOLUTIONARY, UNCOMPROMISING, MILITANT, AND FANATICAL IN OBEYING AND PLEASING GOD.** To lukewarm and compromising Christians, God’s call to radical obedience seems unacceptable, unreasonable, legalistic, offensive, and lacking in compassion. As recorded in the Bible, many faithful servants of God lived in radical obedience to Him, and many others still do today. These servants in Scripture had chosen, and many today are still choosing to obey God at the cost of losing all, even their lives, rather than deny God or disobey Him. There are believers presently living in countries where faith in Christ is severely persecuted. Untold pain, violence, and unimaginable evils are being done to them, yet they choose to obey God. The 2024 Open Doors World Watch List states that 317 million Christians face very high or extreme levels of persecution. **One in seven Christians is currently going through intense and sometimes dangerously violent levels of persecution worldwide daily.**

IF THE CHURCH RESOLVES TO LOVE AND SERVE GOD UNWAVERINGLY, WE MUST BE WILLING TO OBEY HIM RADICALLY BY FAITH. Radical obedience is the only sure way to walk with God victoriously without our faith being shipwrecked under the pressures and pains of threats, dangers, and hateful animosity. Jesus taught us that the only way to be His disciples is to deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and follow Him. We are to radically love Him above all else, including our parents, spouse, children, and even our lives. **The Bible never teaches nor condones a lukewarm love, negotiated commitment, or compromised obedience. There are never any extenuating circumstances that make these acceptable in our relationship with God.** J. C. Ryle, a writer, pastor, and evangelical preacher, declared, **“OBEDIENCE IS THE ONLY REALITY. IT IS FAITH VISIBLE, FAITH ACTING, AND FAITH MANIFEST. IT IS THE TEST OF REAL DISCIPLESHIP AMONG THE LORD’S PEOPLE.”**

The First and Greatest Commandment is to Love and Obey God

Jesus commanded His disciples in John 14:15 NKJV, **“IF YOU LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.”** Love is the reason for and sustaining power of utter obedience to Jesus Christ. **WHEN WE EXPERIENCE AND KNOW HIS RADICAL LOVE, WE ARE FORGIVEN, HEALED, SAVED AND TRANSFORMED.** We no longer live for ourselves; we live for Him because **WE NOW KNOW HE IS WORTHY OF ALL OUR LOVE, WORSHIP, OBEDIENCE, AND SERVICE.** **The Holy Spirit imparts the Father’s love to us, enabling us to love and obey Him.** It becomes our delight and joy to please God and do His will.

Matthew 22:35–40 NLT, gives the account of Jesus declaring that the first and greatest commandment is to love God.

One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap Him with this question: “Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” Jesus replied, **“YOU MUST LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, ALL YOUR SOUL, AND ALL YOUR MIND.’ THIS IS THE FIRST AND GREATEST COMMANDMENT.** A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ **The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”**

A. W. Tozer wrote, **“Our Lord told His disciples that LOVE AND OBEDIENCE WERE ORGANICALLY UNITED. THE FINAL TEST OF LOVE IS OBEDIENCE.”**

Love for God is not just a positive emotion we feel, a convicting thought we have, or a good heart desire. **WHEN TRUE LOVE IS PRESENT, OBEDIENCE IS ALWAYS THE OUTCOME.** Any profession of love for God is a lie if it **does not bear the fruit of obedience.** Jesus taught His disciples concerning love, obedience, and intimacy with God in John 14:15–16, 21–24,

If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever ... “HE WHO HAS MY COMMANDMENTS AND KEEPS THEM, IT IS HE WHO LOVES ME. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?” Jesus answered and said to him, **“IF ANYONE LOVES ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORD; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. HE WHO DOES NOT LOVE ME DOES NOT KEEP MY WORDS; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.”**

- **Those who LOVE God will OBEY His commandments—V21**
- **Those who love and obey will have the HOLY SPIRIT ABIDING WITH THEM FOREVER—V16**
- **Those who love and obey God will have the MANIFESTATION OF GOD and INTIMACY WITH HIM—V21–23**

What a privilege, blessing, and honor it is to love God and obey Him radically. Obedience may come with a price, but we consider that price a privilege. We may experience hardships in radical obedience, yet we are filled with joy, and we are willing, for He is worthy of all our worship. F. F. Bruce, a Bible scholar and theologian who profoundly influenced the contemporary evangelical understanding of the Bible, said,

Where love is the compelling power, there is no sense of strain or conflict or bondage in doing what is right: **the man or woman who is compelled by Jesus' love and empowered by His Spirit DOES THE WILL OF GOD FROM THE HEART.**

Jerry Bridges, an evangelical Christian author, speaker, and staff member of The Navigators, stated,

There is no question that obedience to God's commands prompted by fear or merit-seeking is not true obedience. THE ONLY OBEDIENCE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD IS CONSTRAINED AND IMPELLED BY LOVE, BECAUSE "LOVE IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW" (Romans 13:10). God's law as revealed in His Word prescribes our duty, but love provides the correct motive for obedience. **WE OBEY GOD'S LAW, NOT TO BE LOVED, BUT BECAUSE WE ARE LOVED IN CHRIST.**

Audacious Faith, His Mandate My Mission—This is Radical Obedience

This year's theme is Audacious Faith, His Mandate My Mission, meaning by faith we live in absolute obedience to God's commands. IT IS RADICAL BECAUSE IT IS ABSOLUTE. It is not directed nor confined by any earthly determination but rather transcends all because the source of that obedience is the love of God. **WE LOVE HIM ABOVE ALL ELSE; THEREFORE, WE OBEY HIM FIRST.** We have no other higher aspiration, greater passion, or deeper commitment.

Obedience to God stands unrivaled and incontestable as our preeminent

goal, passion, and pursuit. There is no compromise, negotiation, or delay, nor is there any price too costly to pay, no risk too significant to take, and no sacrifice too audacious to offer in our obedience to Him. In fact, we count all things expendable or already expended to radically obey Jesus Christ. All things include the laying down of our lives to obey Him. **To the true followers of Jesus Christ, this is our immeasurable privilege, honor, and blessing, and the only acceptable way to live and serve Him, for He is worthy.** Murmurings and complaints have no part in radical obedience. We rejoice, praise, and give thanks to Him because He has chosen and counted us worthy to walk with Him in such audacious obedience.

The Church's primary goal must be living to love, obey, and serve Him. WHAT HE SAYS, WE WILL SAY. WHAT HE DOES, WE WILL DO. WHERE HE GOES, WE WILL FOLLOW. No matter what we encounter in our obedience, be it harsh, painful, or terrible times, we only have thanksgiving and worship in our hearts. In those times, we may hurt, weep, or be bewildered, but we do not waver in our faith. Like Paul, we will declare as he did in 2 Timothy 1:12, NLT **"That is why I am suffering here in prison. But I am not ashamed of it, for I know the One in whom I trust, and I am sure that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until the day of His return."**

Obedience is not natural to the flesh, and we cannot do it in our own strength. It begins with a choice of the heart where we purpose to put God first in how we live and all we do. It is not just a desire but a decision to submit to God by grace, followed by action in compliance with His will. **OBEEDIENCE REQUIRES THE ENABLEMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—HIS GRACE, HELP AND STRENGTH.** The Holy Spirit is our supernatural strength and amazing grace Who causes us to be able to do all things. This was how Jesus audaciously and absolutely obeyed His Father, even to His death on the cross. **THE MORE WE LIVE OUR LIFE IN PRAYER AND INTIMACY WITH GOD, THE MORE WE ARE ABLE TO OBEY HIM RADICALLY.** Has the Church become so feeble in love and obedience because of prayerlessness and the absence of intimacy with God that our conviction is shallow, our commitment fleeting, our courage fragile, our message hollow, and our obedience superficial?

Radical Obedience is Our Highest Calling

LOVING GOD FIRST AND RADICAL OBEEDIENCE IS OUR HIGHEST CALLING. This brings God the greatest pleasure in His people. **In His eyes, true success is obedience, not our great efforts, deeds, or achievements, but hearing His word and doing it.**

Complete obedience to God's commands is the sure, secured, and guaranteed way to live in the center of God's will because encapsulated in all His commands is His will. Obedience will lead and keep us in the center of His will, pleasure, and favor. King Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 LEB, **“Now that all has been heard, here is the final conclusion: FEAR GOD AND OBEY HIS COMMANDMENTS, FOR THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.** For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.” George Washington, America's first president, echoed this saying, “The whole duty of man is summed up in obedience to God's will.” **WE LIVE TO OBEY HIM BECAUSE THIS IS OUR HIGHEST CALLING.** John Stott, an English Anglican priest and theologian, noted as a leader of the worldwide evangelical movement, said, **“GREATNESS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS MEASURED IN TERMS OF OBEDIENCE.”**

Preaching, teaching, working miracles, doing good works, and many other good deeds are necessary ministries in the kingdom of God. Still, they are not the true evidences of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. **THE INFALLIBLE PROOF OF DISCIPLESHIP IS OBEDIENCE.** The Holy Spirit is seeking for those whose hearts are obedient to Him like David's. God testified of David in Acts 13:22 NKJV that He would remove Saul for his rebellion and raise David as the new king of Israel. God said, **“I have found David the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY OWN HEART, WHO WILL DO ALL MY WILL.”** Disobedience to God and His word is a rejection of God. Jesus considered those who prophesied and did miracles in His name but were not obedient to the Father's will as workers of lawlessness and having no part of the kingdom of heaven. In fact, He said He did not know them. He taught in Matthew 7:21–23 NKJV,

Not everyone who says to Me, **“Lord, Lord,” shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but HE WHO DOES THE WILL OF MY FATHER IN HEAVEN.** Many will say to Me in that day, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?” **And then I will declare to them, “I NEVER KNEW YOU; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS!”**

Our obedience is paramount in Christ's relationship with His Church. It is our birthright because we have been born again to love and obey Him. It is also the privilege and blessing belonging to sons and daughters of the Most High God, who are children of obedience.

HOW DO WE OBEY GOD RADICALLY?

❖ Obey Diligently and Implicitly

Deuteronomy 28:1–2 NKJV

Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. **AND ALL THESE BLESSINGS SHALL COME UPON YOU AND OVERTAKE YOU, BECAUSE YOU OBEY THE VOICE OF THE LORD YOUR GOD.**

To obey diligently, we need to be willing to submit ourselves to the will of God without negotiation or compromise. We set ourselves to wholeheartedly hear, follow, and thoroughly carry out God's instructions in detail without negligence or callousness. It requires discipline, perseverance, and unwavering commitment to the task assigned until completion.

Radical obedience also means implicit obedience, which is to obey without question, hesitation, deviation, or reservation. To obey implicitly is to obey unreservedly, absolutely, unconditionally, and without qualification, that is, to follow instructions or commands exactly as they are given without any deviation or resistance. Implicit obedience involves having complete trust in the God who directs us and being willing to submit to His authority.

God will always bless His people for their obedience just as He promised Israel that if they diligently obeyed His voice, He would set them high above all nations of the earth, and blessings would come upon them and overtake them.

❖ Learn Obedience in Our Suffering

Hebrews 5:7–10 NKJV

Who [Jesus], in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, **THOUGH HE WAS A SON, YET HE LEARNED OBEDIENCE BY THE THINGS WHICH HE SUFFERED.** And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek."

Jesus, as the Son of Man, was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Hebrews 5 speaks of how He offered up prayers and supplications

with vehement cries and tears to His Father, whom He trusted to save Him. Jesus was called and sent by His Father to be the Lamb sacrificed from the foundation of the world to provide forgiveness of sins and salvation to all humanity. Isaiah 53:3–5 ESV says,

He was despised and rejected by men, A MAN OF SORROWS AND ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF; and as One from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. **SURELY HE HAS BORNE OUR GRIEFS AND CARRIED OUR SORROWS;** yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. **But He was PIERCED for our transgressions; He was CRUSHED for our iniquities; UPON HIM WAS THE CHASTISEMENT THAT BROUGHT US PEACE, and with His wounds we are healed.**

Jesus went through untold suffering at the hands of those He had created. He knew no sin but was made a sin-bearer for all sinners. He took God's judgment of sins upon Himself so that those who believe in Him will be saved. Yet in His suffering, He learned to choose to obey His Father, saying, "Not My will but Your will be done." Sufferings did not stop Him from radically obeying His Father. He learned to trust His Father and persisted in doing the Father's will until it was accomplished.

We must have the same mind as Christ to be willing to learn to humble ourselves and embrace suffering because of obedience until what God wants is fully accomplished. Radical obedience does not give up even though we may be suffering, just as Philippians 2:5–8 NKJV says,

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

❖ Obey Before We Have Understanding

Romans 4:19–21 NKJV

And not being weak in faith, he [Abraham] did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. **He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully**

convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

Abraham, by faith, trusted and obeyed God beyond his natural understanding. When the natural seemed to give irrefutable evidence that it was impossible for Sarah and him to have even a son, let alone multitudes of descendants, Abraham believed God against the testimonies of the natural. When he believed and obeyed beyond his understanding, God did the supernatural and fulfilled His word to Abraham.

God's thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8–9). He will tell us His vision for us, but not necessarily His whole plan. He will instruct us on the next steps to take, but He does not lay out the entire process or journey for us. When we obey by faith before we understand, God will do the incredible and impossible according to His will, bringing glory to His name. Great moves of God are usually preceded by a simple act of obedience. Our obedience is measured by our response to God's voice. Obedience becomes the key that opens many locked doors, giving us access to God's supernatural works and wonders.

God Delights and Blesses Obedience, but He Hates and will Judge Disobedience

Almost every commandment of our Heavenly Father is accompanied by a promised blessing for our obedience. Obedience brings freedom, personal growth, protection from danger, and many other blessings, both spiritual and tangible. Our first act of obedience, choosing to believe in Jesus Christ, has given us eternal life and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

We do not obey God to gain blessings from Him; we obey because we love Him. When our ways please God because of obedience, the blessings of God will ensue. Disobedience blocks the blessings of God. Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve lost all the blessings of God's presence, glory, and life in the Garden of Eden. It was a consequence of their sin, not because God had stopped loving them. God never stopped loving them. Sin had stripped them and brought a curse on the earth. The greatest blessings of obedience are having fellowship with God, living in His manifest presence, and dwelling in His favor and pleasure. **Nothing can be compared with these blessings, and the Church should desire nothing above them.**

Prayer Focus

A. Prayerfully Examine Your Heart Concerning Obedience to God.

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal all areas that are out of alignment with God's will, ways, and word.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to break your heart over any disobedience, argument with, or rejection of God's will, ways, and word.
 - a. Compromise, procrastination, or justification of disobedience.
 - b. Hardening of heart, being stubborn, or wise in your own eyes.
 - c. Rejecting God's word by choosing your own counsel, reasoning, desires and ways.
 - d. Sinning against your conscience and the conviction of the Holy Spirit.
 - e. Losing worship, honor, and fear of God.
 - f. Failing to discern God's holiness and presence.
 - g. Grieving the Holy Spirit.
3. Humbly acknowledge, repent, and turn back to God with your whole heart.

B. Make Obedience to Jesus Your Highest Calling.

1. Choose to learn obedience through suffering as Jesus did.
2. Value obedience to God above all else – position, promotion, recognition, title, success, ministries, approval, comfort, or material gains.
3. Choose complete obedience above sacrifices, works, or self-effort.
4. Commit to obeying God's mandates at any cost, even before you understand.
5. Purpose to obey quickly, diligently, and implicitly, without compromise.
6. Commit to obey even when challenged with difficulties, opposition, or warfare.
7. Resolve to persevere in obedience without wavering until God's will is fulfilled and His work is accomplished.

C. Commit to Obey God's First and Second Commandments on Love.

1. Pray to love God with all of your heart, soul, and strength.
2. Pray to love your neighbor as yourself.

Wednesday, June 5: Serve Selflessly

JOHN 12:26 NKJV

If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and WHERE I AM, THERE MY SERVANT WILL BE ALSO. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

EPHESIANS 6:7–8 NIV

SERVE WHOLEHEARTEDLY, AS IF YOU WERE SERVING THE LORD, NOT PEOPLE, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

MATTHEW 20:28 NLT

For even the Son of Man came NOT TO BE SERVED BUT TO SERVE OTHERS and to give His life as a ransom for many.

ISAIAH 49:5–6 NKJV

And now the LORD says, WHO FORMED ME FROM THE WOMB TO BE HIS SERVANT ... I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.

ACTS 3:26 NKJV

To you first, GOD, HAVING RAISED UP HIS SERVANT JESUS, SENT HIM TO BLESS YOU, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.

ISAIAH 53:11 NKJV

He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His KNOWLEDGE MY RIGHTEOUS SERVANT SHALL JUSTIFY MANY, for He shall bear their iniquities.

PHILIPPIANS 2:5–8 NKJV

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, TAKING THE FORM OF A BONDSERVANT, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, HE HUMBLING HIMSELF AND BECAME OBEDIENT TO THE POINT OF DEATH, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS.

JOSHUA 22:5 NIV

But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: to LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD, to walk in obedience to Him, to keep His commands, to hold fast to Him and to SERVE HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL.

..... **DEUTERONOMY 10:12–13 NLT**

*And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you? He requires only that you fear the LORD your God, and live in a way that pleases Him, and **LOVE HIM AND SERVE HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND SOUL**. And you must always obey the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good.*

..... **DEUTERONOMY 11:13–14 NLT**

*If you carefully obey the commands I am giving you today, and if you **LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD and SERVE HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND SOUL**, then He will send the rains in their proper seasons—the early and late rains—so you can bring in your harvests of grain, new wine, and olive oil.*

Exhortation: Serve Selflessly

Jesus Christ, the Ultimate Servant of the Almighty God

We are not born again just as children of God, but also as servants of God and His bondslaves of love. Just as Jesus, the greatest servant of all, came to serve, we are born again in Him to also serve selflessly. Although Christ was God's only Son, He was also His Father's beloved Servant sent to carry out His Father's will on earth. The Bible says Christ was formed, chosen, and raised by His Father as His beloved, righteous, and obedient Servant in whom the Father delighted.

- **“And now the LORD says, WHO FORMED ME FROM THE WOMB TO BE HIS SERVANT ... I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.”**
Isaiah 49:5–6 NKJV
- **“BEHOLD! MY SERVANT WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles.”** Matthew 12:18 NKJV
- **“To you first, GOD, HAVING RAISED UP HIS SERVANT JESUS, SENT HIM TO BLESS YOU, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.”** Acts 3:26 NKJV
- **“Behold! MY SERVANT whom I uphold, MY ELECT ONE in Whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.”** Isaiah 42:1 NKJV
- **“He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His KNOWLEDGE MY RIGHTEOUS SERVANT SHALL JUSTIFY MANY, for He shall bear their iniquities.”** Isaiah 53:11 NKJV

- “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but **made Himself of no reputation, TAKING THE FORM OF A BONDSERVANT, and coming in the likeness of men.** And being found in appearance as a man, **HE HUMBLED HIMSELF AND BECAME OBEDIENT TO THE POINT OF DEATH, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS.**” Philippians 2:5–8 NKJV

Jesus served His Father perfectly through His absolute obedience, and He served humanity selflessly by offering Himself up as the Lamb sacrificed to bring them redemption. All believers are commanded to have the same mind as Christ, and we, too, as God’s bondservants, must humbly obey God in selfless service even to the laying down of our lives (Philippians 2:5–8). As Jesus was a light to the world, we are also His light to the world so the people may receive salvation.

In John 12:23–25 NLT, Jesus spoke of His Father’s assignment for Him as His beloved and righteous Servant:

Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into His glory. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity.

This is the essence of Christ’s servanthood: to lay down His life so that others may receive new life in Him. Jesus then declared to His disciples in verse 26, **“ANYONE WHO WANTS TO SERVE ME MUST FOLLOW ME, BECAUSE MY SERVANTS MUST BE WHERE I AM. AND THE FATHER WILL HONOR ANYONE WHO SERVES ME.”** The only way to serve Jesus Christ is to follow Him in His servanthood. We must be where He is to the point of laying down our lives; we must not love our life in this world but love Him. **Without servanthood, we lack the perfection of Christ in heaven.**

What Manner of a Bondservant was Jesus Christ to His Father?

Philippians 2:7 says that Jesus took on the form of a bondservant which is *doulos* in Greek, meaning a slave, bondman, man of servile condition; one who gives himself up to another’s will in service, or one who is devoted to another to the disregard of one’s own interests. This is Walter M. Dunnnett’s explanation of *doulos* in *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*:

In the New Testament, *doulos* is frequently used to designate a master's slave (one bound to him) but also a follower of Christ (a "bondslave" of Christ). **The term points to A RELATION OF ABSOLUTE DEPENDENCE, IN WHICH THE MASTER AND THE SERVANT STAND ON OPPOSITE SIDES THE FORMER HAVING A FULL CLAIM, THE LATTER HAVING A FULL COMMITMENT.** The servant can exercise no will or initiative on his or her own.

As Christ was a bondslave to God to do His will by abandoning His own, we are Christ's bondslaves to serve selflessly and sacrificially. In Matthew 20, Jesus called His disciples to Himself and explained who He was as God's Servant and that He came not to be served but to serve by giving His life a ransom for many. In verses 25–28 NKJV, He said,

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. **YET IT SHALL NOT BE SO AMONG YOU; BUT WHOEVER DESIRES TO BECOME GREAT AMONG YOU, LET HIM BE YOUR SERVANT. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY.**

Paul understood his calling to be Christ's bondservant of love. He said in 1 Corinthians 9:19 NKJV, "For though I am free from all men, **I HAVE MADE MYSELF A SERVANT (DUOLOS) TO ALL, THAT I MIGHT WIN THE MORE.**" In imitating Christ, he made himself a bondservant to serve others so he could win many to Christ.

We know what love is when Jesus laid down His life for us, so we should also lay down our lives for others (1 John 3:16). True love is expressed in selfless and sacrificial service, without which it is not love. **SERVANTHOOD IS BEING LIKE CHRIST TO OTHERS IN LOVE, ACTION, ATTITUDE, AND RESPONSE TO THEIR NEEDS BY THE MANIFOLD GRACE OF GOD.** It is not in our own strength or ability. The Holy Spirit graces us with His gifts, talents, and enablement to serve others uncommonly, exceptionally, and selflessly. When we use what God has given us to help, bless, enrich others, and meet their needs, we are being good stewards of the grace of God in various forms. **If we do not serve with love, we have failed to be good stewards of God's grace.** 1 Peter 4:7–11 NKJV strongly exhorts believers about this:

But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. **AND ABOVE ALL THINGS HAVE FERVENT LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. AS EACH ONE HAS RECEIVED A GIFT, MINISTER IT TO ONE ANOTHER, AS GOOD STEWARDS OF THE MANIFOLD GRACE OF GOD.** If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

All we have is freely given to us by God so that we can freely give to others. Serving as Christ had served is being a faithful steward of God's grace.

The entire Bible often refers to those called by God into His service as servants like priests (Isaiah 61:6), prophets (Amos 3:7), Job (Job 1:8), Abraham (Genesis 26:24), Jacob (Genesis 32:4), Moses (Exodus 14:31), Elijah (2 Kings 9:36), Ruth (Ruth 3:9), Hannah (1 Samuel 1:11), Samuel (1 Samuel 3:9), David (2 Samuel 3:18), Solomon (1 Kings 3:7), and John (Revelation 1:1). Others were called bondservants, *doulos*, like Paul (Romans 1:1), Epaphras (Colossians 4:12), James (James 1:1), Simon Peter (2 Peter 1:1), and Jude (Jude 1:1). *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* mentions that the words “servant,” “service,” and “serve,” in various forms, occur well over 1,100 times in the New International Version of the Bible.

Serve Selflessly Through the Love of Jesus Christ

As God commands us to love Him with all of our heart, soul, and strength, so we are to serve Him. Joshua 22:5 NIV instructs us,

But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: **to LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD, to walk in obedience to Him, to keep His commands, to hold fast to Him and to SERVE HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL.**

The most excellent service we can offer to God is to love and obey Him completely, making His mandate our mission. We serve Jesus by following Him in our service to others through His love.

In 1 Corinthians 13:3 NLT, Paul wrote, **“If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but IF I DIDN'T LOVE OTHERS, I WOULD HAVE GAINED NOTHING.”** The spirit of servanthood must manifest the characteristics of Jesus Christ, and the

essence of servanthood is His love. Paul continued in verses 4 through 7:

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

Therefore, bondservants of Christ will serve others with patience, kindness, humility, and respect, not demanding our own ways, keeping no records of wrong done to us but always forgiving. We will serve with commitment by not giving up but always with hope and endurance and by rejoicing in the truth. For this reason, we can serve our enemies by loving them, those who curse us by blessing them, those who hate us by doing good to them, and pray for those who spitefully use and persecute us. If anyone asks us to walk a mile with them, we will walk two miles. To the one who asks for our cloak, we will also give them our tunics. Should another slap us on one cheek, we will offer them the other. When we walk precisely like Christ, we are serving like Christ. We will serve wholeheartedly, as serving the Lord and not people (Ephesians 6:7).

How To Serve As Christ's Bondservants

❖ We Serve Jesus Christ Faithfully

1 Samuel 12:24 NIV

But be sure to fear the Lord and SERVE HIM FAITHFULLY with all your heart; consider what great things He has done for you.

Proverbs 3:3 NIV

Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

We must serve Jesus Christ with devoted commitment. We can expect to face challenges, oppositions, disappointments and even persecution in serving Him. Yet, we must serve Him with unflinching devotion as **HIS DEPENDABLE, TRUSTWORTHY AND FERVENT BONDSERVANTS OF LOVE. Being faithful in service means to steadfastly endure all things in the course of serving Him until we fulfill His will and accomplish His work.**

In Acts 5, Peter and some apostles were persecuted by religious leaders

for faithfully preaching Jesus Christ. They were arrested, put in jail, and strictly warned to cease preaching Jesus Christ. They continued to preach and were brought before the religious leaders again. In verse 28 NLT, the high priest confronted them, “We gave you strict orders never again to teach in this man’s name! Instead, **YOU HAVE FILLED ALL JERUSALEM WITH YOUR TEACHING ABOUT HIM**, and you want to make us responsible for His death!” To this accusation, Peter and the apostles declared, “**We must obey God rather than any human authority,**” and they preached and spoke the name of Jesus before them. The high council was incensed with hateful anger. They wanted to kill them, but upon the advice of Gamaliel, the Pharisee, they did not, but they flogged them, warned them never to preach Jesus again, and let them go. Acts 5:41–42 NLT testifies of the apostles’ joyful and faithful devotion to Jesus Christ:

The apostles left the high council rejoicing that God had counted them worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus. **And every day, in the Temple and from house to house, they continued to teach and preach this message: “Jesus is the Messiah.”**

This is serving God faithfully. Charles Spurgeon said, “**One of the greatest rewards that we receive for serving God is the permission to do still more for Him.**”

❖ We Serve with Integrity of Heart

Philippians 2:3–4 NIV

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

1 Chronicles 29:17 ESV

I know, my God, that You test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. In the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen your people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to you.

God loves and values integrity of heart. We are to serve both God and man with an upright and sincere heart, and also with pure intention and ways. Above all, integrity is staying true and faithful to God and that our inner motives for serving are faultless before God, true and pleasing to Him.

Joseph served both God and Potiphar with integrity. Potiphar appointed him to take charge of all his household because he was trustworthy. In Genesis 39, Potiphar's wife was evil and tried to seduce Joseph to sleep with her, but Joseph refused to compromise or break his integrity. He said to her in Genesis 39:8–9 NLT,

“Look,” he told her, “my master trusts me with everything in his entire household. No one here has more authority than I do. He has held back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. HOW COULD I DO SUCH A WICKED THING? IT WOULD BE A GREAT SIN AGAINST GOD.”

Integrity keeps God's confidence and trust and refuses to sin against Him. To serve as Jesus did, we must serve with integrity of heart. Psalm 41:12 ESV says, **“But You [God] have upheld me because of my integrity, and set me in Your presence forever.”**

❖ We Serve Selflessly

To serve selflessly, we have to deal with our fallen, fleshly, and carnal self, which is the consequence of the sin of the first Adam. All its inclinations, desires, thoughts, motives, and focus are centered on oneself and are in complete contradiction to the nature and ways of God. It makes oneself the center of existence where the focus is no longer the worship of God but the enshrinement of self. Galatians 5:16–17 ESV says,

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

All the inclinations of the flesh are not to serve but be served, not to give but to receive, and not to love but be loved. It is incapable of seeing beyond the flesh and is mindless when it comes to the concerns of God. When Peter, in the flesh, tried to prevent Jesus from being crucified, Jesus rebuked him in Matthew 16:23 NIV, saying, “Get behind me, satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; **YOU DO NOT HAVE IN MIND THE CONCERNS OF GOD, BUT MERELY HUMAN CONCERNS.**”

Jesus followed up with a command that self must be dealt with if anyone wants to follow Him. He said in verses 24–25, **“WHOEVER WANTS TO**

BE MY DISCIPLE MUST DENY THEMSELVES AND TAKE UP THEIR CROSS AND FOLLOW ME. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me will find it.” This was how Jesus lived, to be God’s Servant, perfectly fulfilling the Father’s will and accomplishing His work.

Just as Jesus did, we deny ourselves so that we can love freely and serve selflessly.

❖ **We Serve Sacrificially**

1 John 3:16 NIV

This is how we know what love is: JESUS CHRIST LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR US. AND WE OUGHT TO LAY DOWN OUR LIVES FOR OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

True service of love is not only selfless; it is also sacrificial. **To serve sacrificially is to take what we need to give freely and willingly to another to meet their needs.** We are willing to go hungry so someone else can be fed. We are willing to remain thirsty so someone else’s thirst can be quenched. Jesus served us sacrificially. He gave His life so that we can have eternal life. He shed His blood so that our sins can be forgiven. His body was whipped and broken so that ours can be healed. In the same manner, we are to serve sacrificially.

In 1 Kings 17, during a famine, God instructed Elijah to go to Zarephath, where He had instructed a widow to serve and feed him. He found her gathering sticks and asked her to bring him a little water to drink, which she did. Elijah then asked her to bring him bread to eat. The widow replied in 1 Kings 17:12 NLT,

I swear by the LORD your God that I don’t have a single piece of bread in the house. And I have only a handful of flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the bottom of the jug. I was just gathering a few sticks to cook this last meal, and then my son and I will die.

Elijah assured her not to be afraid to feed him that God would provide for her. She trusted God and served Elijah sacrificially by doing what he said. She fed Elijah first with the little she had left, which she needed as the last meal for her son and herself. God blessed her and multiplied the flour and oil until the famine ended.

We are unafraid to sacrifice because we trust God. Billy Graham once

said, “The highest form of worship is the worship of unselfish Christian service. The greatest form of praise is the sound of consecrated feet seeking out the lost and helpless.”

❖ We Serve Wholeheartedly

Ephesians 6:7–8 NIV

SERVE WHOLEHEARTEDLY, AS IF YOU WERE SERVING THE LORD, NOT PEOPLE, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

Joshua 22:5 NIV

But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: **to LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD**, to walk in obedience to Him, to keep His commands, to hold fast to Him and to **SERVE HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL**.

Deuteronomy 11:13–15 NLT

If you **CAREFULLY OBEY** the commands I am giving you today, and if you **LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD** and **SERVE HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND SOUL**, then He will send the rains in their proper seasons—the early and late rains—so you can bring in your harvests of grain, new wine, and olive oil. He will give you lush pastureland for your livestock, and you yourselves will have all you want to eat.

To serve wholeheartedly is to serve unreservedly, unequivocally, and unconditionally. Just as Jesus gave His all to serve, we give our all to serve.

❖ We Serve Exceptionally

Luke 6:27–36 NLT

But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. Give to anyone who asks; and when things are taken away from you, don't try to get them back. Do to others as you would like them to do to you. **If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should**

you get credit? Even sinners do that much! And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return. **Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for He is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked.** You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.

To serve exceptionally is to serve uncommonly, audaciously, and far above the norm and expected. Jesus taught in Luke 6 that if we love only those who love us, do good to those who do good to us, and lend money only to those who can pay, there is no credit to that because even the sinners do that. There is nothing exceptional in these. **To serve exceptionally is to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, pray for those who hurt us, and lend to those who cannot pay. It is to serve by putting the well-being and welfare of others above our own.**

When the children of Israel sinned against God grievously by building and worshiping the golden calf, the anger of the Lord was aroused against them. God told Moses in Exodus 32:9–10 NLT, **“I have seen how stubborn and rebellious these people are. Now leave Me alone so My fierce anger can blaze against them, and I will destroy them. Then I will make you, Moses, into a great nation.”** Moses pleaded earnestly with God to forgive His people. These were the same people who had caused him many heartaches with their selfishness, immaturity, and rebellion. They were also fickle, unstable, unfaithful, and ungrateful. They rejected Moses’ leadership and even threatened to stone him, yet Moses remained kind, caring, and loving towards them by putting their welfare above his own. He pleaded with God in verses 12–13:

Turn away from Your fierce anger. Change Your mind about this terrible disaster You have threatened against Your people! Remember Your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You bound Yourself with an oath to them, saying, “I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven.”

Ultimately, in desperation to save the Israelites, Moses cried to God (verses 31–32), “Oh, what a terrible sin these people have committed. They have made gods of gold for themselves. **BUT NOW, IF YOU WILL ONLY FORGIVE THEIR SIN—BUT IF NOT, ERASE MY NAME FROM THE RECORD YOU HAVE WRITTEN!**” **God heard Moses’ prayer and relented from punishing the**

people. This is exceptional service. True service always involves a sacrifice and demands no payback.

The final and ultimate reward of being a faithful bondservant of Jesus Christ is to hear His commendation, **“WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. ENTER INTO THE JOY OF YOUR LORD”** Matthew 25:23 NKJV.

Prayer Focus

A. Prayerfully Allow the Holy Spirit to Illuminate Your Heart Concerning Servanthood.

1. Are you like Jesus, who came to serve and not to be served?
2. Are there areas in your mind, heart, attitude, and motive that contradict Christ's example and command to serve?
3. Do you have the willingness, passion, and commitment to follow Christ in serving?

B. Make Loving and Serving God Your Passion, Priority, and Pursuit. (Joshua 22:5).

1. Love God with all of your heart, soul, and strength.
2. Walk in obedience to Him by keeping His commands with all of your heart, soul, and strength.
3. Hold fast to God and never deviate from His ways.
4. Serve Him with all of your heart, soul, and strength.
5. Serve others with all of your heart, soul, and strength.

C. Seek to Fully Understand and Embrace Christ's Example of Servanthood as Your Own.

1. Choose to serve and not be served.
2. Choose to be a bondservant and not to be first.
3. Choose to be a slave and not someone great.
4. Choose to express love in selfless and sacrificial service.
5. Choose to be like Christ to others in love, action, attitude, and response to their needs.

D. Seek to Love and Embrace Following Christ in His Servanthood.

1. Choose to be Christ's bonds slave (*duolos*) as He was to God, His Father.
 - a. Be willing to lay down your will and life to serve Christ and others.
 - b. Submit to Christ's total claim on you, and give Christ your total commitment as His bonds slave.
2. Be bound to Christ as He was bound to His Father to:
 - a. Do His will.
 - b. Accomplish His work.
 - c. Seek the lost and to love the lost.
3. Choose to commit to Christ's service without regard for your own welfare and interests.

E. Seek to Follow Jesus Christ in His Servanthood—Philippians 2:5–8.

1. Take on Christ's mind and attitude of humility.
 - a. Divest yourself of pride, rights, reputation, and entitlement—to be seen, heard, known, recognized and appreciated.
 - b. Humble yourself as Christ did under the mighty hand of God
 - c. Choose to obey God in selfless and sacrificial service to Him and others.
2. Count being Christ's servant (*duolos*) as a privilege, blessing, and honor.
3. Take on the spirit and heart of Christ's servanthood.
4. Choose to lay down your life so others may receive new life in Jesus Christ. John 12:23–25

F. Seek to Make Yourself a Servant to All to Win Others to Christ as Paul Did.

G. Commit to Serve to the Utmost as Christ.

1. Serve Jesus Christ faithfully.
2. Serve with integrity of heart.
3. Serve selflessly.
4. Serve sacrificially.
5. Serve wholeheartedly.
6. Serve exceptionally.

Thursday, June 6: Give Recklessly

JOHN 3:16–17 NLT

FOR THIS IS HOW GOD LOVED THE WORLD: HE GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY SON, SO THAT EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. God sent His Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through Him.

JOHN 15:13 NLT

THERE IS NO GREATER LOVE THAN TO LAY DOWN ONE'S LIFE FOR ONE'S FRIENDS.

ROMANS 5:6–11 NLT

*When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. **BUT GOD SHOWED HIS GREAT LOVE FOR US BY SENDING CHRIST TO DIE FOR US WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS.** And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, He will certainly save us from God's condemnation. **For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, WE WILL CERTAINLY BE SAVED THROUGH THE LIFE OF HIS SON.** So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.*

1 JOHN 3:16–24 NLT

WE KNOW WHAT REAL LOVE IS BECAUSE JESUS GAVE UP HIS LIFE FOR US. SO WE ALSO OUGHT TO GIVE UP OUR LIVES FOR OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS. *If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in that person? **Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.** Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God ... And this is His commandment: We must believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. Those who obey God's commandments remain in fellowship with Him, and He with them. And we know He lives in us because the Spirit He gave us lives in us.*

HEBREWS 10:12–14 NLT

BUT OUR HIGH PRIEST OFFERED HIMSELF TO GOD AS A SINGLE SACRIFICE FOR SINS, GOOD FOR ALL TIME. Then He sat down in the place of honor at God's right hand. There He waits until His enemies are humbled and made a footstool under His feet. **FOR BY THAT ONE OFFERING HE FOREVER MADE PERFECT THOSE WHO ARE BEING MADE HOLY.**

..... HEBREWS 10:19–22 NLT

And so, dear brothers and sisters, WE CAN BOLDLY ENTER HEAVEN'S MOST HOLY PLACE BECAUSE OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS. BY HIS DEATH, JESUS OPENED A NEW AND LIFE-GIVING WAY THROUGH THE CURTAIN INTO THE MOST HOLY PLACE. And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting Him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

..... 2 CORINTHIANS 9:6–7 NIV

Remember this: WHOEVER SOWS SPARINGLY WILL ALSO REAP SPARINGLY, AND WHOEVER SOWS GENEROUSLY WILL ALSO REAP GENEROUSLY. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER.

..... LUKE 12:33 NIV

Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

..... 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1–9 NLT

*Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in His kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. **They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. FOR I CAN TESTIFY THAT THEY GAVE NOT ONLY WHAT THEY COULD AFFORD, BUT FAR MORE. AND THEY DID IT OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL.** They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. **THEY EVEN DID MORE THAN WE HAD HOPED, FOR THEIR FIRST ACTION WAS TO GIVE THEMSELVES TO THE LORD AND TO US, JUST AS GOD WANTED THEM TO DO.** So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first place, to return to you and encourage you to finish this ministry of giving. Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I WANT YOU TO EXCEL ALSO IN THIS GRACIOUS ACT OF GIVING. I am not commanding you to do this. But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches. **YOU KNOW THE GENEROUS GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. THOUGH HE WAS RICH, YET FOR YOUR SAKES HE BECAME POOR, SO THAT BY HIS POVERTY HE COULD MAKE YOU RICH.***

..... PROVERBS 11:24–25 NIV

ONE PERSON GIVES FREELY, YET GAINS EVEN MORE; ANOTHER WITHHOLDS UNDULY, BUT COMES TO POVERTY. *A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.*

..... LUKE 6:38 NIV

Give, and it will be given to you. A GOOD MEASURE, PRESSED DOWN, SHAKEN TOGETHER AND RUNNING OVER, WILL BE Poured INTO YOUR LAP. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

..... HEBREWS 13:16 NIV

Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Exhortation: Give Recklessly

Perfect Love Gives Recklessly

The only basis for having audacious faith, making His mandate our mission, is having these things:

- **FIRST LOVE FOR GOD**—loving Him with all of our heart, soul, strength, and breath. There is none equal to Him in our life.
- **FULL SURRENDER TO GOD**—giving all that we are and have and even our lives to Him. His will becomes our will, and our only call in life is always to obey Him.

Then, we will give recklessly to God, holding nothing back with the understanding that He owns everything.

In 2 Corinthians 8:9 NLT, Paul wrote about Jesus' reckless giving of Himself. Christ made Himself poor to make us rich by blessing and prospering us with eternal life. The text says, "**YOU KNOW THE GENEROUS GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. THOUGH HE WAS RICH, YET FOR YOUR SAKES HE BECAME POOR, SO THAT BY HIS POVERTY HE COULD MAKE YOU RICH.**"

The most outstanding example throughout all eternity of giving out of love is in John 3:16–17 NLT which says,

For this is how God loved the world: HE GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY SON, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent His Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through Him.

Because of His audacious love for humanity that He created, God gave beyond measure His only Son as the sacrificial Lamb slain from the foundation of the world to save us. God gave His Son, and the Son gave His life and shed His blood to provide the way for us to be God's children. This is giving recklessly. Jesus Christ was, is, and forever will be God's priceless and audacious gift to the world. There will never be another gift comparable to Him. **WE MUST HAVE THE SAME MIND, ATTITUDE, AND PURPOSE IN LIFE AS CHRIST'S.** Philippians 2:5–11 MSG says,

Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of Himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of Himself that He had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. **When the time came, HE SET ASIDE THE PRIVILEGES OF DEITY AND TOOK ON THE STATUS OF A SLAVE, became human!** Having become human, He stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. **HE DIDN'T CLAIM SPECIAL PRIVILEGES. INSTEAD, HE LIVED A SELFLESS, OBEDIENT LIFE AND THEN DIED A SELFLESS, OBEDIENT DEATH—AND THE WORST KIND OF DEATH AT THAT—A CRUCIFIXION.** Because of that obedience, God lifted Him high and honored Him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth—even those long ago dead and buried—will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that He is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father.

CHRIST'S LOVE TRANSCENDED ALL WHEN HE SET ASIDE HIS DIVINE PREROGATIVES, LAYING DOWN HIS LIFE TO SAVE OTHERS. It was sacrificial and selfless and did not count any cost too high to love another. Christ gave recklessly because He loved us. **We must have the same mind and attitude as Christ's to love. AS HE LAID DOWN HIS LIFE TO MAKE US RICH, WE ARE TO LAY DOWN OURS THAT OTHERS MAY BE MADE SPIRITUALLY RICH AND LIVE.**

"I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to provide more than we can spare." —C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

The Bible Commands Us to Give Selflessly

The Scriptures provide precedence for giving recklessly, Jesus Christ being the perfect example. This giving involves a sense of abandonment

by going overboard, giving until it hurts, and giving beyond what we can account for because it is by faith. This kind of giving is not about being irresponsible; instead, it is giving as Christ gave and as graced by the Holy Spirit. Adventurous giving takes us beyond the possible and natural to where faith has to play a role. The cost is not calculated, as it does not always make sense.

Giving as Christ gave is an act of obedience by faith. The Bible instructs Christians to give generously and joyfully to those in need as an act of worship and obedience to God. This command is found throughout the Old and New Testaments and is often connected to the principle of sowing and reaping—the more we give, the more we will receive in return. Jesus says in Luke 6:38 NIV, “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” This verse teaches us that the more we give, the more we receive in return.

Generosity goes beyond donating money or material possessions. It involves giving our time, talents, and resources to help others, which displays our love and compassion to those in need. This reflects God’s generosity and compassion to the world around us.

Christians are responsible for managing our resources well, using what has been given to us wisely, making informed decisions about our finances and possessions, and being satisfied with what we have instead of always seeking more. In 2 Corinthians 9:7 NIV, Paul exhorts us; “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

Giving is a Command, Not a Feeling

GIVING IS AN ACT OF FAITH IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD. It does not depend on how we feel or think. When there was a famine in the land during Elijah’s time, God instructed Elijah to go to the village of Zarephath, where He had already commanded a widow to feed him. Elijah obeyed. When he met the widow gathering sticks, he asked her for water and food, knowing there was a famine in the land and she was a widow. She gave him water, but when he asked for food she swore by God that she did not have a single slice of bread left in the house. In 1 Kings 17:12 NLT, she continued, “I have only a handful of flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the bottom of the jug. I was just gathering a few sticks to cook this last meal, and then my son and I will die.”

Elijah, by faith, assured her not to be afraid but to trust God by making

him some bread first and then to use what was left to prepare a meal for her son and herself. He shared with her in 1 King 17:14 NLT, “For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There will always be flour and olive oil left in your containers until the time when the LORD sends rain and the crops grow again!” Verses 15–16 says, “So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her family continued to eat for many days. There was always enough flour and olive oil left in the containers, just as the LORD had promised through Elijah.” Just as Elijah obeyed God, so did the widow. By faith, she stepped forward, giving recklessly at God’s command beyond her feelings, thinking, and ability. She simply obeyed by giving first to Elijah the portion of the last meal she was going to prepare for her son and herself. It was obedience by faith. God never fails, and He did not forget her. He is always and absolutely committed, faithful, and trustworthy. He will do exactly as He has promised.

It is time to give by faith in such a manner, to the laying down of our lives, even more so because the times we live in are desperate. MANY NEED TO HEAR AND EXPERIENCE THE GOSPEL THROUGH OUR RECKLESS GIVING. Then, Jesus Christ’s love and saving grace will be manifested to them—by His Church laying down our lives to give to others so they can have eternal life.

Give to the Poor as unto Christ

Give to all who are poor. Give to the poor in spirit and those who are poor in substance, having little or no means to provide food, shelter, and care for themselves. We give ourselves in love to reach the lost, broken, wounded, destitute, lonely, thirsty, hungry, naked, and homeless. We give both to the family of God and those in the world. Jesus says in Matthew 25:31–46 NLT,

But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit upon His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered in His presence, and He will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep at His right hand and the goats at His left. “Then the King will say to those on His right, **‘Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. FOR I WAS HUNGRY, AND YOU FED ME. I WAS THIRSTY, AND YOU GAVE ME A DRINK. I WAS A STRANGER, AND YOU INVITED ME INTO YOUR HOME. I WAS NAKED, AND YOU GAVE ME CLOTHING. I WAS SICK, AND YOU CARED FOR ME. I WAS IN PRISON, AND YOU VISITED ME.’** Then these righteous

ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see You hungry and feed You? Or thirsty and give You something to drink? Or a stranger and show You hospitality? Or naked and give You clothing? When did we ever see You sick or in prison and visit You?’ And the King will say, **‘I TELL YOU THE TRUTH, WHEN YOU DID IT TO ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, YOU WERE DOING IT TO ME!’** Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, **‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons. For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed Me. I was thirsty, and you didn’t give Me a drink. I was a stranger, and you didn’t invite Me into your home. I was naked, and you didn’t give Me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn’t visit Me.’** Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help You?’ And He will answer, **‘I TELL YOU THE TRUTH, WHEN YOU REFUSED TO HELP THE LEAST OF THESE MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, YOU WERE REFUSING TO HELP ME.’ AND THEY WILL GO AWAY INTO ETERNAL PUNISHMENT, BUT THE RIGHTEOUS WILL GO INTO ETERNAL LIFE.”**

Give Cheerfully, Not Grudgingly

When we are free from self and the flesh, we can give cheerfully and not grudgingly. We must give by following Jesus’ example, giving with gladness, although not without sacrifice. We cheerfully sacrifice to give generously. The Macedonian church freely gave out of their poverty with joy and cheerfulness. They celebrated giving beyond their means. Out of their need and poverty, they gave audaciously with joy to the work of Paul. **In 2 Corinthians 8:1–9 NLT, Paul wrote,**

Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in His kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. **They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. FOR I CAN TESTIFY THAT THEY GAVE NOT ONLY WHAT THEY COULD AFFORD, BUT FAR MORE. AND THEY DID IT OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL.** They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. **THEY EVEN DID MORE THAN WE HAD HOPED, FOR THEIR FIRST ACTION WAS TO GIVE THEMSELVES TO THE LORD AND TO US, JUST AS GOD WANTED THEM TO DO.** So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first place, to

return to you and encourage you to finish this ministry of giving. Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I **WANT YOU TO EXCEL ALSO IN THIS GRACIOUS ACT OF GIVING.** I am not commanding you to do this. But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches. **YOU KNOW THE GENEROUS GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. THOUGH HE WAS RICH, YET FOR YOUR SAKES HE BECAME POOR, SO THAT BY HIS POVERTY HE COULD MAKE YOU RICH.**

Give as a Worship to God

2 Kings 17:36 NKJV

The Lord, who brought you up from the land of Egypt with great power and an outstretched arm, Him you shall fear, **HIM YOU SHALL WORSHIP, AND TO HIM YOU SHALL OFFER SACRIFICE.**

Mark 12:41–44 ESV

He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And He called His disciples to Him and said to them, **“Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. FOR THEY ALL CONTRIBUTED OUT OF THEIR ABUNDANCE, BUT SHE OUT OF HER POVERTY HAS PUT IN EVERYTHING SHE HAD, ALL SHE HAD TO LIVE ON.”**

Our focus of giving is worship unto God; for this reason, we are thankful for the opportunity to give. **WE GIVE AS WORSHIP TO GOD; THEREFORE, WHAT WE LAY DOWN IN WORSHIP MUST BE WORTHY OF GOD IN SPIRIT AND SUBSTANCE.** In Genesis 22:2 NKJV, God instructed Abraham, **“Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”** God asked for Isaac as a sacrifice, but Abraham offered up his son as worship unto God. On their journey to Mount Moriah to offer Isaac to God, Abraham said to his servants in Genesis 22:5 NKJV, **“Stay here with the donkey; THE LAD AND I WILL GO YONDER AND WORSHIP, and we will come back to you.”**

WE GIVE OUR BEST AND ALL BECAUSE IT IS WORSHIP UNTO GOD. God is pleased by our giving and glorified by it, and others’ needs are met.

In 1 Chronicles 21, an angel appeared to the prophet Gad, ordering him to tell David to build an altar for the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. When David spoke to Araunah to buy his threshing floor so he could build an altar to make a sacrifice to God, Araunah responded in verse 23 NIV: “Take it! Let my lord the king do whatever pleases him. Look, I will give the oxen for the burnt offerings, the threshing sledges for the wood, and the wheat for the grain offering. I will give all this.” David’s heart was set on bringing a sacrifice before God with a cost worthy of the Lord. He would not worship God without a cost. He replied to Araunah in verse 24 NIV, **“NO, I INSIST ON PAYING THE FULL PRICE. I WILL NOT TAKE FOR THE LORD WHAT IS YOURS, OR SACRIFICE A BURNT OFFERING THAT COSTS ME NOTHING.”** Giving to God was personal to David; therefore, it would involve a price he would willingly pay.

When we give to others all that God requires, it is an act of worship unto God. Therefore, we give with abandon, thankfully and freely.

Give Recklessly

The focus of our giving is God; we give because we love Him. We give both to the deserving and the undeserving, just as Jesus gave. We give as worship to God; therefore, what we lay down in worship must be worthy of God in spirit and substance. **THIS RECKLESS GIVING IS WITHOUT BOUNDARIES; IT IS UNINHIBITED, UNRESTRAINED, AND UNASHAMED. Why? Because it is worship unto God, and He is worthy of all our sacrifices of love. GIVING AS WORSHIP COMES WITH A COST.**

Rolland and Heidi Baker of Iris Ministry, missionaries reaching Mozambique for Jesus Christ, shared a testimony in their February 2001 newsletter. They, along with their church members, have consistently and recklessly given to others in need. This generosity was most evident during a great flood in Mozambique, which cut off many thousands of Iris church members from food supplies and medical help. At the same time, there was a terrible cholera outbreak at the Iris Center in Zimpeto. The disease was highly contagious, and within days, 70 children, pastors, and workers had to be taken to a special cholera hospital in town, which was a big tent set up to hold cholera-stricken patients. It was filled with “cholera tables,” bare wood beds with a hole in each, and buckets underneath for nonstop diarrhea and vomiting. Every patient was on an IV drip. Many had died in this emergency hospital. Because the disease was deadly and contagious the tent hospital was strictly quarantined.

Every day, health officials came to the Iris Center, desperately trying to

identify the source of the cholera and hoping to contain its spread. Soon, the city police were involved, intent on shutting down the entire Center and Ministry. For days, nothing seemed to help. The people in the Iris Center were washing and disinfecting everything. Their trucks were making hospital runs day and night. Even their own clinic was filled with children on IVs. The staff kept giving until they were completely exhausted.

Heidi was the only person allowed in the tent hospital. Daily, she spent hours with the sick, holding them, soaking them in prayer, and declaring that they would live and not die. The sick vomited on her and covered her with filth as they were growing weaker. Many were on the verge of death, with their eyes sunken and rolling back. **The doctors were shocked by Heidi's love for the sick while having no concern for herself. They were certain that she would die with many of the children.** The believers strongly interceded for the healing of the sick and an end to the spread of the cholera. God heard their prayers and brought an audacious miracle three days later. The Bakers wrote the following in their newsletter,

Three days ago our entire future in Mozambique was in question. No one had any more answers. Our weakness was complete. **Then, some of our children began coming home from the hospital, even as others were being taken there. AND THEN THERE WERE NO MORE NEW CASES. EXTRAORDINARY. AND THEN YESTERDAY EVERYONE WAS HOME! Just like that, the cholera is gone. And Heidi is fine.** The doctors and nurses at the hospital are in a state of shock and wonder. The Director of Health put a finger in Heidi's face: **"YOU! THIS IS GOD! THE ONLY REASON YOU GOT THROUGH THIS WAS GOD! YOU AND DOZENS OF THESE CHILDREN SHOULD BE DEAD!"** Eight of the medical staff there want to work with us now. "This is miraculous! You know God! We've never seen God do anything like this. **WE'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH LOVE!**"

They did not lose a single person who lived with them in Zimpeto. In three days, the Lord turned one of the worst crises into a great miracle, bringing peace and joy. Yet the concerns of the Bakers were also for the flooding up north and other thousands who were also hungry and sick. They wrote,

What about our thousands who are sick and haven't eaten in weeks? **We don't know what exactly Jesus is going to do through us yet, but our faith level has grown to new heights. MAY WE TRUST HIM ALWAYS, AND SEE HIM GLORIFIED WITH OUR OWN EYES AS WE WALK WITH HIM EVEN IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH. MAY YOU BE**

ENCOURAGED TOO, AND JOIN US IN SERVING THE KING!

Prayer Focus

A. Seek to Understand and Follow Christ's Perfect Love that Gives Recklessly.

1. **Strive to live in FIRST LOVE for God**—love Him with all your heart, soul, strength, and breath.
2. **Strive to FULLY SURRENDER to God**—all you are, have, and even your life.
3. **Strive to have the SAME MIND, ATTITUDE, AND PURPOSE in life as Christ's.**
4. **Strive to GIVE RECKLESSLY to God**—holding nothing back with the understanding that He owns everything.

B. Pray for Deliverance from All Strongholds and Obstructions to Giving.

1. **Pray for the Holy Spirit to expose and confront these areas:**
 - a. **Love of self**—selfishness, self-centeredness, self-indulgence, or concern for self as a priority.
 - b. **Love of the world**—loving the world more than God, be it gaining material things, coveting the things of the world, or preference for the worldly lifestyle, seeking the things of the world.
 - c. **Love of pleasure, ease, and comfort** far more than God and the things of His kingdom.
2. Humbly identify, acknowledge, and repent with contrition of heart and brokenness of spirit. Ask the Holy Spirit to:
 - a. Forgive, cleanse, and purge.
 - b. Break every stronghold and set free.
3. Earnestly seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit's fire to love and obey Him in giving recklessly.

C. Commit to Follow Jesus Christ in Giving Recklessly, Holding Nothing Back.

1. Obey Christ's command to give by faith and not according to your feelings, thinking, or natural calculation.

2. Commit to giving as Christ gives, even to the laying down of your life.
 - a. Give to the poor as unto Christ.
 - b. Give cheerfully, not grudgingly.
 - c. Give as a worship to God.
 - d. Give recklessly.

D. Give Recklessly to See Nations Come into the Kingdom of God.

1. Give without boundaries, inhibition, or restraint.
2. Give shamelessly and in abandonment to see nations hear the gospel, get saved, disciplined, and taught to obey God.
3. Give because you love nations as Christ does.

E. Intercede for FAOG-Specific Mission Needs:

1. Samoa FAOG—new building project for Church to be completed.
2. Raising and training of Gideonite Team to Kyushu.
3. A fresh missionary spirit, passion, and anointing to inundate FAOG.
4. Many to have faith to commit to short-term and long-term missions.

F. Intercede for All FAOG Missions Churches to:

- Bring God's love to the nations.
 - Be strengthened and filled with the Holy Spirit's power and courage.
 - See revival in all our mission churches.
1. **Brazil**—Ps. Celina, Bro. Alex, Bro. Agenor, Sis. Helena
 2. **India**—Ps. Prasantha + Sis. Roshika, Sonika Verma
 3. **Ireland**
 - **Dublin**—Ps. Jamie + Sis. Lud Corcoran
 - **Navan**—Ps. Sam + Sis. Sara Corcoran
 - **Dundalk**—Ps. Rebecca Moldovan
 4. **Japan**
 - **Hiroshima**— Ps. Lynne Higa, Bro. Gary + Sis. Linda Sasaki, Sis. Suzanne Pasatiempo
 - **Kamaishi**—Ps. Keizo + Sis. Mami Yoshioka

- **Okinawa**—Sis. Miyuki, Sis. Fujiko, Bro. Okusa, Sis. Shizuko, Sis. Keiko
 - **Osaka**—Ps. Atsuya + Sis. Takako Miyashita
 - **Yokohama**—Ps. Kyoko Koyama, Sis. Sayaka + Victor Groves
5. **Korea (North & South)**—wisdom for Ps. Ko and Ps. Ernie to raise mission teams
 6. **Marshall Islands**
 - **Delap**—Bro. Mike Larron
 - **Uliga**—Bro. Aichy Hanchor
 7. **Mexico**
 - **Huamantla**—Ps. Miriam, Ps. Quechol, Sis. Hudid, Sis. Mimi, Bro. Francisco + Sis. Fernanda
 - **Ixtenco**—Bro. Miguel, Sis. Fabia
 8. **Philippines**—Sis. Natalie Bernales, Sis. Lolet Gambe, Sis. Fe Ulgaran
 9. **Samoa**—Ps. Mila + Sis. Rosie Tongamoa, Bro. Sola + Sis. Peta, Bro. James
 10. **Timor Leste**—Ps. Atama + Sis. Melanie Vakalalabure
 11. **Uganda**—Ps. Elijah + Sis. Ruth Mabala, Ps. Moses, Ps. Paul, Ps. Jonathan
 12. **United Kingdom**—Ps. Timothy + Sis. Angela Dorjey
 13. **United States**
 - **Hamakua**—Ps. Jacob + Sis. Hoku Fesagaiga, Ps. Maize Luke
 - **Marshallese churches**—Pastors and leaders

Notes:

Friday, June 7: Anointed to Live Uncommonly

..... 1 CORINTHIANS 4:20 NKJV

FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT IN WORD BUT IN POWER.

..... EPHESIANS 3:20 NLT

Now all glory to God, who is able, THROUGH HIS MIGHTY POWER AT WORK WITHIN US, TO ACCOMPLISH INFINITELY MORE THAN WE MIGHT ASK OR THINK.

..... 2 CORINTHIANS 4:6–10 NIV

For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ. **BUT WE HAVE THIS TREASURE IN JARS OF CLAY TO SHOW THAT THIS ALL–SURPASSING POWER IS FROM GOD AND NOT FROM US.** We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

..... ZECHARIAH 4:6–7 NLT

Then He said to me, “This is what the LORD says to Zerubbabel: **IT IS NOT BY FORCE NOR BY STRENGTH, BUT BY MY SPIRIT, SAYS THE LORD OF HEAVEN’S ARMIES. NOTHING, NOT EVEN A MIGHTY MOUNTAIN, WILL STAND IN ZERUBBABEL’S WAY.**”

..... ACTS 1:8 NKJV

BUT YOU SHALL RECEIVE POWER WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS COME UPON YOU; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

..... ACTS 4:33 NKJV

And with GREAT POWER the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

..... ACTS 9:31 NKJV

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.**

..... ACTS 10:38 NLT

You know that **GOD ANOINTED JESUS OF NAZARETH WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WITH POWER.** Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were

oppressed by the devil, **FOR GOD WAS WITH HIM.**

LUKE 4:1–2 NLT

Then **JESUS, FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**, returned from the Jordan River. He was **LED BY THE SPIRIT** in the wilderness, where He was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry.

LUKE 4:14–21 NLT

Then Jesus returned to Galilee, **FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT'S POWER**. Reports about Him spread quickly through the whole region. He taught regularly in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When He came to the village of Nazareth, His boyhood home, He went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to Him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written: **“THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, FOR HE HAS ANOINTED ME to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the LORD’s favor has come.”** He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at Him intently. **Then He began to speak to them. “THE SCRIPTURE YOU’VE JUST HEARD HAS BEEN FULFILLED THIS VERY DAY!”**

ISAIAH 42:1 NLT

LOOK AT MY SERVANT, WHOM I STRENGTHEN. He is My Chosen One, who pleases Me. **I HAVE PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM.** He will bring justice to the nations.

Exhortation: Anointed to Live Uncommonly

The Church Must Discern the Times and Know What We Ought to Do

It is time for the Church to awake, arise, shake off the dust, put on strength, and live uncommonly unto Jesus Christ (Isaiah 52). God sets times and seasons in place according to His will. Paul strongly exhorts believers in Romans 13:11 TPT, **“To live like this is all the more urgent, for TIME IS RUNNING OUT and you know IT IS A STRATEGIC HOUR IN HUMAN HISTORY. IT IS TIME FOR US TO WAKE UP!”** It is time to purpose that doing God’s will is our food by which we live.

Revelation 3:16 ESV says, **“So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.”** Lukewarmness is abominable to God because it is a lack of consecration, devotion, and commitment to God. It is having two masters in our hearts because we are loving something

else more than God. **All followers of Jesus Christ must live to obey God's every mandate without hesitation.** The travesty is that not every church or person who calls themselves a Christian is a true follower of Jesus Christ. We can see by their fruit what kind of trees they are—whether good or bad or of Christ or the devil. Christ's *ekklesia*—His called-out ones—are true to Him and will follow hard after Him. The Church must awake, arise, and live in first love, be sold out for God, and be ready to be poured out as a drink offering in obedience to Him. It is time to be armed with understanding and discern the times we live in. **WE KNOW HOW WE OUGHT TO LIVE AND WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO.** Jesus corrected His disciples in John 4:34–35 NLT,

My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent Me, and from finishing His work. **You know the saying, “Four months between planting and harvest.” BUT I SAY, WAKE UP AND LOOK AROUND. THE FIELDS ARE ALREADY RIPE FOR HARVEST.**

The lukewarm, apathetic, and scoffers will not heed what the Scriptures say about discerning times and knowing what Christians ought to do. They say nothing has changed, and everything has remained the same since the world was first created. They feel secure in their self-deception, blindness and stubbornness with no intention or desire to change. They continuously choose to walk in their own ways and follow their own desires. They reject, ignore and some mock God's warning as 2 Peter 3:3–4 NLT states,

Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. They will say, “What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained the same since the world was first created.”

Jesus sharply rebuked those dull of hearing and hardened in hearts towards God's times and refusing to take heed, prepare, and change. In Luke 12:54–56 TPT, He tersely reproved the crowd that gathered around Him,

When you see a cloud forming in the west, don't you say, “A storm is brewing”? And then it arrives. And when you feel the south wind blowing, you say, “A heat wave is on the way.” And so it happens. **WHAT HYPOCRITES!** You are such experts at forecasting the weather, but **YOU ARE TOTALLY UNWILLING TO UNDERSTAND THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TIME YOU'RE LIVING IN.**

IT IS TIME TO LIVE UNCOMMONLY THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

It is Time for Audacious Faith and Uncommon Living

It is time for us to live by audacious faith, making God's mandate, our mission. It is time to love fearlessly, live uncommonly, pray audaciously, obey radically, serve selflessly, and give recklessly. There is no time to waste, lose, or mangle. Now is the time; today is the day we awake, arise, and obey God wholly. It is time to do these things:

- Hear what the Holy Spirit is saying about loving Him first and overcoming.
- Love God far above all people, all things, even our own lives.
- Live for God alone and obey Him without fear even unto death.
- Deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and wholly follow Jesus Christ.
- Live uncommonly as pilgrims in this world and not citizens.
- Lay up all treasures in heaven and none on earth by giving recklessly.
- Arise in the glory of God and boldly declare His praises in these darkest of hours.
- Prophecy to valleys of dry bones and see them come alive as God's mighty armies by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Advance against powers of darkness, free captives and see salvation come to nations.
- Experience the unrestrained outpouring of the Holy Spirit and worldwide revival.
- Relentlessly send out faithful laborers to preach the gospel, heal the sick, and make disciples of all nations.
- Live as Christ's spotless and blameless Bride prepared, ready, and eagerly awaiting His coming.

All the above are only possible through the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Hunger and Thirst for the Holy Spirit and Earnestly Seek Him in Prayer

We must seek the Holy Spirit in relentless prayer, never giving up until He comes and fills us to overflowing perpetually. This we do because we

need to come to the Holy Spirit to drink and receive from Him, for He is the life, power, and anointing of God. The Holy Spirit is the One we need in this life to live for God and serve Him till the end. Any other strengths, be it of people, talents, knowledge, wealth, or influence, will all abjectly fail to equip and empower me to live uncommonly for God. These are all finite and limited. We must not neglect to seek the Holy Spirit in prayer. There is no other like Him. Only He can do the impossible.

The Church must now turn to Him with all our hearts—seeking, loving, fellowshiping, receiving, and yielding to Him. Jesus prayed because He needed prayer. He needed prayer because He absolutely needed God and the Holy Spirit. **Everything Christ was and did as the Son of Man was through the power of the Holy Spirit.** In His humanity, Jesus could not do anything on His own, neither could He accomplish God's will and purpose. He needed the Holy Spirit unceasingly, and for this reason, He lived a life of prayer, earnestly seeking His Father. Through prayer, everything regarding Jesus—His life, faith, walk and ministry—was bound to His Father and the Holy Spirit. He began, continued and ended everything with prayer. **Jesus prayed the way He prayed because He loved His Father and NEEDED A RELATIONSHIP with Him and the Holy Spirit that WILL NOT COME ANY OTHER WAY EXCEPT THROUGH EARNEST PRAYER.** He consistently withdrew to a private place to pray through the night. **JESUS MADE ROOM TO ABIDE IN THE FATHER. HE MAXIMIZED HIS TIME TO LOVE, TO RELATE, TO YEARN, TO SIT, TO SATURATE, TO LEARN, AND TO BE IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS FATHER, AND BE FILLED WITH HIS SPIRIT:**

- “After He had sent the crowds away, **HE WENT UP ON THE MOUNTAIN BY HIMSELF TO PRAY**; and when it was evening, He was there alone.” Matthew 14:23 NASB
- “After bidding them farewell, **HE LEFT FOR THE MOUNTAIN TO PRAY.**” Mark 6:46 NASB 1995
- “It was at this time that **HE WENT OFF TO THE MOUNTAIN TO PRAY, AND HE SPENT THE WHOLE NIGHT IN PRAYER TO GOD.**” Luke 6:12 NASB
- “In the early morning, while it was still dark, **JESUS GOT UP, LEFT THE HOUSE AND WENT AWAY TO A SECLUDED PLACE, AND WAS PRAYING THERE.**” Mark 1:35 NASB 1995
- “But Jesus Himself would **OFTEN SLIP AWAY TO THE WILDERNESS AND PRAY.**” Luke 5:16 NASB

Jesus lived a life of prayer and seeking God always and relentlessly. Therefore, He was able to live uncommonly in obedience to God. Pray Like Jesus to Live Uncommonly as He Did Through the Holy Spirit's Anointing

There is none like the eternal Holy Spirit, who is God Almighty and Lord over all. He is God omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. It is evident that the early Church and the apostles were consistently praying and filled with the Holy Spirit. He was the One who empowered them to do all they did in obedience to God. These followers of Jesus Christ lived and walked in healing, deliverance, salvation of many, outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and transformation of communities. They were always praying and fully dependent on the Holy Spirit, making them fearless, undeterred by persecution, prevailing over demonic powers, and always giving thanks to God no matter what they had to endure. Those days of uncommon faith, miracles and advancement of God's kingdom are not over. They are also for the Church today, for the Holy Spirit is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

There are many other biblical examples of men and women of God living uncommonly in the power of the Holy Spirit and accomplishing great exploits for God's kingdom. They obeyed and served God boldly, radically, selflessly, and joyfully, bringing salvation and transformation to many. One of them was Paul, the apostle, who said that nothing can separate us from the love of God, be it persecution, suffering, loss, or even death.

IT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ANOINTING THAT TRANSFORMS ORDINARY MEN AND WOMEN INTO MIGHTY, EXTRAORDINARY, BOLD, MIRACLE-WORKING SOLDIERS OF JESUS CHRIST. There are many biblical examples of ordinary people who lived uncommonly through the power of the Holy Spirit in the most challenging times:

- Abraham became the father of nations because he believed God above his aged body.
- Joseph shone with brilliance from the pit to the palace because God was with him.
- Daniel was bold in his commitment to God at the risk of death, and he overcame.
- David became king over Israel according to God's word although Saul sought to kill him.
- Esther was willing to lay down her life for the Jews and became their deliverer from death.

- Paul, one of the worst persecutors of Jewish Christians, became one of Christ's greatest apostles and missionaries.

Therefore, we must seek the Holy Spirit to be filled with His grace, power, and anointing to live uncommonly. It is time, by faith, to express His power:

- Walk on water at Christ's invitation like Peter.
- Feed the 5,000 men, not counting women and children, with a child's meal of five loaves and two fish.
- Stand, withstand, and overcome spiritual attacks as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.
- Endure hardships without fainting and be faithful to the end.
- Face uncommon threats and sufferings and still accomplish the work of God.
- Walk through the valley of the shadow of death and fear no evil, for God is with us.
- Stand and challenge Pharaoh and the powers of Egypt to let God's people go and see its fulfillment, as Moses did.
- Walk into the fiery furnace believing God would rescue and yet not fear death because of devotion to God.
- Trust God to provide for all the needs of the whole nation of Israel as they traveled through the wilderness to the Promised Land.
- Not fear but stare down the giants in the Promised Land and see them as bread for food.
- Interpret dreams for Pharaoh when nobody could and be promoted from prison to the palace as Pharaoh's second in command.
- Receive the most powerful revelations from God when exiled to Patmos Island.

It is time for the Church to trust God and live uncommonly in obedience and service to Him through the Holy Spirit's anointing. We must believe in His power to see the following:

- The Church arise, true to Jesus Christ, filled with His zeal, and unafraid to live uncommonly unto Him.
- Strongholds over nations be broken, and nations be set free, and righteousness to reign.
- The mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon nations bringing revival—purging and healing the land.

- The gospel being preached in all nations as the Church sends out multitudes of laborers.
- Nations repent and turn to Jesus Christ and be saved.
- Jesus Christ being magnified in all nations.

We are anointed to live uncommonly for God!

Prayer Focus

A. Pray for the Church to Discern the Times and Know What We Ought to Do.

1. Cry out for the Church to awaken, arise, shake off the dust, put on strength, and live uncommonly unto Jesus Christ.
2. Cry out for the Church to purpose that doing God's will is our food by which we live.
3. Cry out for the Church to discern God's times and know how we ought to live and what we ought to do.
4. Cry out for the Church to hunger and thirst for the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

B. Pray for Your Heart to be Free from Sin or Offense Against the Holy Spirit By:

1. Failing to give the Holy Spirit His rightful place in your life.
2. Being presumptuous and not honoring the Holy Spirit and His anointing.
3. Having areas of stubbornness and rebellion against the Holy Spirit.
4. Defiling the temple of the Holy Spirit through conduct, speech, and lifestyle.
5. Grieving the Holy Spirit by ignoring and resisting Him.

C. Seek the Holy Spirit with All of Your Heart, Soul, and Strength.

1. Hunger and thirst after the Holy Spirit to be filled by Him daily.
2. Pray to know, love, and serve Him in intimacy.
3. Pray for the Holy Spirit's anointing to make God's mandate your mission.

D. Commit to Live Uncommonly Through the Power of the Holy Spirit.

1. Seek the Holy Spirit for audacious faith to live uncommonly in obeying Him and glorifying God.
2. Pray to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to:
 - a. Love fearlessly.
 - b. Live uncommonly.
 - c. Pray audaciously.
 - d. Obey radically.
 - e. Serve selflessly.
 - f. Give recklessly.

E. Pray for the Holy Spirit's Grace, Power, and Courage Upon All Christians Undergoing Persecution.

1. Pray they will stand firm and withstand all persecution.
2. Pray they will have the grace, power, and courage to be unwavering in their commitment to Jesus Christ.
3. Pray they will overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony as they love not their lives unto death.

F. Pray for the Holy Spirit to Bring Salvation and Revival Worldwide.

Notes:

PRAY FOR OUR PASTORS & CHURCH PLANTS

SENIOR PASTOR & FAMILY

Klayton + Sharon Ko

Christalyn + Emmanuel Orupabo, **Joshua** + Kimberly Ko, **Jason Ko**

STAFF PASTORS & SPOUSES

Bill Bannister

Francine + JR **Cabbab**

Horace + Talei **Chee-Manuia**

Ernie + Siew Peng **Chow**

Sam + Lorna **Cockett**

Mel + Jennifer **Corpuz**

Jacob + Hoku **Fesagaiga**

Frederick + Sandra **Harris**

Joshua + Kimberly **Ko**

Trenton + Courtney **Oshiro**

Chizuko + Tyrone **Peeples**

Shyju + Reena **Sathyanesan**

Raymond + Eva **So**

Scott + Debbie **Sonoda**

Andrew + Karen **Yasuhara**

CHURCH PLANTS & MISSIONARIES

BRAZIL

First Assembly of God Brazil

Ps. Celina Takahashi, Bro. Alex, Bro. Agenor,
Sis. Helena

INDIA

National Overseer

Ps. Prasantha + Sis. Roshika

First Gomti Nagar Fellowship AOG

Sis. Sonika Verma

IRELAND

Lighthouse Community Church

Dublin: Ps. Jamie + Sis. Lud Corcoran

Navan: Ps. Sam + Sis. Sara Corcoran

Dundalk: Ps. Rebecca Moldovan

JAPAN

Aloha Assembly Kirigaoka Christ Church

Ps. Kyoko Koyama,

Sis. Sayaka + Bro. Victor Groves

Amazing Grace Center Kamaishi

Ps. Keizo + Sis. Mami Yoshioka

Hiroshima Gideonite Team

Ps. Lynne Higa, Bro. Gary + Sis. Linda Sasaki,

Sis. Suzanne Pasatiempo

Okinawa City Church

Sis. Miyuki, Sis. Fujiko, Bro. Okusa, Sis. Shizuko,

Sis. Keiko

Osaka Bible Church

Ps. Atsuya + Ps. Takako Miyashita

MARSHALL ISLANDS

First Assembly of God Marshall Islands

Delap—Bro. Mike Larron

Uliga—Bro. Aichy Hanchor

MEXICO

First Assembly of God Huamantla

Ps. Miriam, Ps. Quechol, Sis. Hudid, Sis. Mimi,
Bro. Francisco + Sis. Fernanda

First Assembly of God Ixtenco

Bro. Miguel, Sis. Fabia

PHILIPPINES

First Assembly of God Bohol

Sis. Natalie Bernales, Sis. Lolet Gambe,
Sis. Fe Ulgaran

SAMOA

First Assembly of God Faleua

Ps. Mila + Sis. Rosie Tongamoa,

Bro. Sola + Sis. Peta, Bro. James

TIMOR LESTE

East Timor Assembly

Ps. Atama + Sis. Melanie Vakalalabure

UGANDA

Mbale City Church

Ps. Elijah + Sis. Ruth Mabala, Ps. Moses,

Ps. Paul, Ps. Jonathan

UNITED KINGDOM

London Family Center

Ps. Timothy + Sis. Angela Dorjey

UNITED STATES

First Assembly of God Hamakua

Ps. Jacob + Sis. Hoku Fesagaiga, Ps. Maize Luke

Marshallse Churches

Pastors and leaders

