

# SERMON SERIES

SEVEN DIMENSIONS OF A

# Spirit-Filled Disciple

# CONTENTS

START HERE.....	3
INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES .....	4
DIMENSION #1: BIBLE.....	9
DIMENSION #2: HOLY SPIRIT.....	14
DIMENSION #3: MISSION.....	19
DIMENSION #4: PRAYER.....	24
DIMENSION #5: WORSHIP.....	31
DIMENSION #6: SERVICE.....	36
DIMENSION #7: GENEROSITY.....	42

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# SEVEN DIMENSIONS

## Sermon Series



## START HERE

This sermon series will give you a launching point to preach or teach the *7 Dimensions of a Spirit-Filled Disciple*. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you use this resource:

1. Ask the Holy Spirit what He wants to say to His people. These sermon outlines are not intended to be prescriptive. Instead, adapt them to lead *your* congregation into a deeper dimension of discipleship.
2. Consider adding Scriptures to the references we've provided. Bible Engagement Project uses the *New Living Translation* (NLT), but feel free to preach or teach from whatever Bible translation your congregation prefers.
3. Think beyond the outline. Consider your unique ministry context and the needs of your congregation. Maybe you'll decide to build a completely new sermon from one of the points on the outline. Or maybe you'll be inspired to create a new series based on the additional information in one of the Value Added outline sections. Get creative!
4. To keep your congregation thinking about the Next Steps questions during the week, post them on social media, send them via email, or print and distribute them at the end of service.

Thank you for investing in the task of making disciples who make disciples. We pray that this sermon series will produce the fruit God intends. Please visit [www.ag.org/7dimensions](http://www.ag.org/7dimensions) for videos, leader notes, and more resources and ideas.



# SEVEN DIMENSIONS

## Sermon Series



## INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

# THE DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY

### INTRODUCTION

Jesus told His disciples to make disciples (Matthew 28:19–20). Accepting Christ as the Lord and leader of your life is only the beginning of your Christian journey. A new life requires a new journey. We call this journey *discipleship*. It's a process, not a destination.

The title *Christian* appears only three times in the New Testament, but the word *disciple* in its various forms is used nearly 300 times. Quite a contrast. Clearly, it's important for us to take a closer look at what it means to be a disciple.

Over the next few weeks, we'll start to understand the discipleship process and then put it into practice. The Assemblies of God Christian Education and Discipleship department has identified seven dimensions of a Spirit-filled disciple, along with measurable outcomes for each dimension. These seven dimensions help us become more like Jesus. They help us answer the question, ***What is a disciple?***

Today, we're starting on a journey to **know**, **be**, and **do**. These three words can guide us toward deeper dimensions of discipleship.

### KNOW: WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

Scripture reveals various aspects of what it means to be a disciple, and three key ones are:

1. **Follower** (Matthew 4:19)
2. **Learner** (Matthew 11:29)
3. **Imitator** (Luke 6:40)

A *disciple* is simply a learner, follower, and imitator of a teacher. As believers, we are Jesus' students in His school of discipleship. That means means we imitate Him, gradually becoming more like Him.

## BE: HOW DO WE IMITATE JESUS?

Three symbols can guide us as we explore what Jesus modeled.

1. **A Yoke of Submission** (Matthew 11:29)
2. **A Cup of Suffering** (Mark 10:38-40 )
3. **A Towel of Servanthood** (John 13:3-4, 14-15)

Once we understand what it means to imitate Jesus, it's time to talk about strategy. How do we actually get there? What practices will help us become more like Jesus? This is where we dive into the seven dimensions of a Spirit-filled disciple.

## DO: WHAT ARE THE SEVEN DIMENSIONS?

There are seven spiritual dimensions that will help you develop as a disciple of Jesus. Each dimension has specific outcomes.

### 1. Bible

- Disciples love and understand the big story of God's Word. They can interpret and apply God's Word well.
- Spiritual instruction comes from personal Bible study and hearing God's Word through the teaching ministry of the church.
- Psalms 19:7-14 and 119 describe the benefits of God's Word.

### 2. Holy Spirit

- Disciples experience the indwelling of the Holy Spirit after being born again and receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. They can experience the empowering, leading, and purifying work of the Holy Spirit.
- The work of the Holy Spirit is mentioned 261 times in the New Testament. It is an indispensable element in every Christian's life.
- Jesus promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His followers in Acts 1:4-8.

- John 16:7–11 describes part of the Holy Spirit's activity in the world. He convicts of **sin** because people do not believe in Jesus. The Spirit convicts of **righteousness** because Jesus has made righteousness available. And the Spirit convicts of **judgment** because, just as Satan has already been judged, the rest of the world will be judged as well.

### 3. Mission

- Disciples are on mission. They share the gospel and disciple new believers.
- Just as God has pursued us with His grace and love, it is our privilege to share about His grace and love with the people around us. There is no greater experience in life than to tell others about Jesus and what He's done for us.
- Acts 1:8 tells us that the Holy Spirit is available to empower believers to be Jesus' witnesses.

### 4. Prayer

- Disciples communicate with God. They regularly listen to and speak with God, growing deeper in intimacy and intercession. They pray to see God's will and His glory.
- Matthew 6:5–13 offers some of Jesus' guidance on how His followers should pray.

### 5. Worship

- Disciples delight in God and offer everything to Him in both public and private worship.
- Acts 2:44–47 depicts the first believers gathering regularly to worship. In Ephesians 5:18–20, Paul also instructed Christians to embrace a Spirit-filled life that included worship through singing and giving thanks together.

### 6. Service

- Disciples offer their lives and energies to God in humility and gratitude for His grace. Every believer is called to serve God by serving people both inside and outside the church.
- First Peter 4:10 explains that every believer has God-given gifts that are to be used to serve others.

### 7. Generosity

- Disciples respond to God's lavish grace by dedicating all their resources to God. They respond to the Holy Spirit's leading in giving and stewardship.
- A person's resources include time, talent, and treasure, and all should be readily available for God's purposes.

- The Bible describes three important forms of giving that disciples should participate in. **Tithes** are a tenth of a person's income given back to God. **Offerings** are gifts beyond the tithe, given out of praise and gratitude. **Alms** are gifts to the poor.
- Proverbs 3:9 offers guidance on honoring God through giving, and 1 Corinthians 16:1–4 gives an example of how one particular offering was received in the Early Church.

## CONCLUSION

A *disciple* is a follower, learner, and imitator of Jesus. As disciples, we are on a lifelong journey to grow in at least seven dimensions:

- 1. Bible**  
*Grow in our knowledge of God's Word.*
- 2. Holy Spirit**  
*Walk in the leading of the Holy Spirit.*
- 3. Mission**  
*Live on mission every day, not just Sunday.*
- 4. Prayer**  
*Listen and talk to God.*
- 5. Worship**  
*Express public and private adoration and honor of God through acts and lifestyle.*
- 6. Service**  
*Use our gifts to expand God's kingdom.*
- 7. Generosity**  
*Generously invest our time, treasure, and talents.*

## NEXT STEPS

Think about these questions during the week as you reflect on the seven dimensions of a Spirit-filled disciple.

- Identify ways you are following Jesus as His disciple. No matter how long you've been following Jesus, how are you continuing to learn and grow?
- Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (great) to 4 (not so great) for each of the seven dimensions. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you grow in the dimensions that need to improve. Prayerfully write out a plan to improve in one of the dimensions.

# VALUE ADDED

## HOW DOES A DISCIPLE THINK?

Jesus identified many important attitudes His disciples should display toward God, others, self, and life itself. Here are eight aspects of what it means to think and act like a disciple:

1. **Self-denial** (Luke 9:23)
2. **Supreme love for Jesus** (Luke 14:26)
3. **Carrying your cross** (Luke 14:27)
4. **Freedom from materialism** (Luke 14:33)
5. **Commitment to the truth** (John 8:31–32)
6. **Unconditional love for others** (John 13:34–35)
7. **Bearing fruit** (John 15:8)
8. **Obedience to Jesus' commands** (John 15:10)

As we grow as disciples of Jesus, our thoughts, actions, and life should conform to His image (Romans 12:1–2).





# SEVEN DIMENSIONS

## Sermon Series



## DIMENSION #1—BIBLE

### INTRODUCTION

The Bible is the best-selling book in all of history. But it is much more than that. The Bible contains the big story of God's redemptive work in the world. Disciples should love and understand God's big story and be able to interpret and apply God's Word well.

In their book, *The Faith: Given Once, For All*, Chuck Colson and Harold Fickett note that there are more ancient manuscripts containing portions of the Bible than any other book—24,947 manuscripts for the New Testament and 14,000 manuscripts for the Old Testament. (Homer's *Iliad* comes in second place with only 600 manuscripts).

Although the Bible consists of 66 books written over approximately 1,500 years by around 40 people in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) on three continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe), the story of Scripture includes amazing harmony. That's because the entire Bible was inspired, or breathed out, by God. It contains His words, written down for us.

### MOST PEOPLE DON'T ENGAGE WITH THE BIBLE.

Here are three reasons many people don't read the Bible:

#### 1. They don't understand the purpose of the Bible.

- Paul explains its purpose in his second letter to Timothy, which we'll take a closer look at in a few moments.

## 2. They are intimidated by the Bible.

- Some people think the Bible:
  - » is overpowering.
  - » is larger than life.
  - » has too many pages.
  - » is too difficult to follow.
  - » is full of names that are too hard to pronounce.
- As you keep reading the Bible, you'll need to expose these obstacles in your own mind and heart and then remove them one by one. Then aim to grow in your knowledge of Scripture, your understanding of Scripture, and your commitment to live out Scripture.

## 3. They don't understand the Bible.

- Many people would rather avoid subjects they don't understand rather than asking questions and running the risk of looking foolish.
- In Hosea 4:6 records a time that God's people were being destroyed because they were ignorant about Him, they refused to know Him, and they had forgotten about Him. Reading the Bible is one of the best ways to fix this problem.

## DEVELOP GOOD HABITS FOR ENGAGING WITH THE BIBLE.

When you engage with the Bible, you'll grow in the knowledge of who God is, and you'll start to understand His purposes for your life. One of the goals of consistent Bible engagement is learning to recognize and understand God's big story in order to know Him better.

In his second letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul listed some of the benefits of engaging with the Bible. Second Timothy 3:16–17 says that Scripture is good for:

- Teaching us what is true
- Making us realize what's wrong in our lives
- Correcting us when we're wrong
- Teaching us to do what's right
- Preparing and equipping us for whatever God tells us to do

Here are three healthy ways you can engage with the Bible:

**1. Let the Bible speak for itself.**

- As disciples who are on a journey to learn about the Bible and become more like Jesus, it's important for us to study the Scriptures carefully. That's the best way to discover the original meaning that the authors intended.
- The theological term for interpreting the Bible is *exegesis*, which includes the goal of letting the Bible speak its true message for itself.

**2. Don't force the passage of Scripture to say what you want it to say.**

- To engage with the Bible fairly and faithfully, we can't ignore the meaning of Scripture simply because it conflicts with our opinions or preferences. We also can't take one section out of context to change its meaning.
- The theological term for misinterpreting Scripture, including making it say what we want, is called *eisegesis*.

**3. Discover the contemporary relevance of the text.**

- When we engage with the Bible, it's important that we never change the meaning of Scripture, trying to make it say something today that contradicts its original meaning.
- But it is good to discover how the Bible can be applied in our present time. In other words, we should ask ourselves, "How is this passage relevant today?" This takes more work than simply reading a passage. But if you invest the time and effort to find the answers, you'll never see the Bible the same way again.
- The Center for Holy Lands Studies has noted that the writers of the Bible assumed that readers like you and me would know four things:
  - » Culture: the stated values of the day
  - » History: the political climate of the day
  - » Land: the geography of the locations mentioned during the time the passage was written
  - » Spirituality: the spiritual climate of the day
- Some of these details will be more challenging than others to discover, but they will help you understand the Bible more deeply than you can imagine.

## LIVE OUT WHAT YOU READ IN THE BIBLE.

Here are five steps to help us be consistent in Bible study:

### 1. Pick a translation you can understand.

- Remember, most reputable English versions of the Bible are translations from the original text. Translating always requires interpretation.
- Some Bible translations are more formal (like the ESV). Others are more functional (like the NLT). And others land in the middle (like the NIV).
- When you're picking an English translation, think about where you are on your spiritual journey, how familiar you are with the Bible, and whether you're a skilled reader.
- Comparing multiple English translations will often help you better understand a Scripture's meaning.

### 2. As you study the Bible, ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what you're reading.

- The Holy Spirit inspired the original authors of the Bible, and He can also help you to understand and apply the Bible today.

### 3. To better engage with the Bible, avoid skipping around to different chapters and verses.

- Bible engagement is more effective when you follow a systematic reading plan. Also, only reading the Bible in small pieces prevents you from recognizing broader themes and repeated ideas that are often only noticed as you read larger portions of an author's work.

### 4. Consider journaling as you read.

- Consider using the S.O.A.P. method in your daily Bible study.
  - » **Scripture:** Which verse spoke to you?
  - » **Observation:** Why or how did the verse speak to you?
  - » **Application:** What action step can you take?
  - » **Prayer:** Write a prayer based on the Scripture you just studied.
- Then use these journaling questions to continue reflecting on the Scripture.
  - » What adjustments should you make to bring your life into alignment with the passage?
  - » Was there anything in the passage that you didn't understand?
  - » What was the original context that caused the author to write the passage in this way?

## 5. Remember that consistency is key when engaging with the Bible.

- For the greater spiritual benefit, engage with the Bible at least four days a week.
- Taking the time to develop good Bible study habits puts you on solid ground for spiritual growth and development.
- For accountability and support, discuss your Bible study patterns and reading schedule with a trusted Christian friend or spiritual leader.

## CONCLUSION

The Bible is the best-selling, most influential book in the world. But it's more than just a book. The pages of God's Word contain direction and guidance for every stage of life. When you engage with the Bible on a regular basis and allow it to do its work in you, it will change your life.

Will you join me and commit to engage more deeply with the Bible this week?

## NEXT STEPS

Try to implement these steps as you reflect on the spiritual dimension of Bible reading and study:

- Select a Bible reading plan and begin your journey. Remember, consistency is key. If you get behind, don't pressure yourself to catch up. Instead, just pick up where you left off.
- Commit to faithfully reading the Bible four days a week for the next 90 days. After 90 days, consider increasing your commitment to five or six days a week.
- Commit to read the Gospel of Mark. Each day, read Mark until you learn something new—whether it's one verse or an entire chapter. Write down what you learned in your journal. The next day, start reading where you left off, repeating the pattern until you finish the Gospel of Mark.

## VALUE ADDED

### MORE TIPS FOR HELPING PEOPLE ENGAGE WITH THE BIBLE

1. Consider using a print Bible for your daily reading. This will reduce distractions caused by phone notifications.
2. Before you purchase a Bible, go to [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) or use the Bible app to compare a certain passage in several different translations. Note the similarities and differences. Choose the translation that suits you best.
3. Select a manageable reading plan so you can remain consistent in reading four days a week.
4. Pick a few familiar passages of Scripture and practice the S.O.A.P. method of journaling. Here are a couple extra questions to add to your process of reflection:
  - How did this passage deepen your love for God?
  - How can you live out that love for God in your interactions with friends, family members, or strangers?



# SEVEN DIMENSIONS

## Sermon Series



## DIMENSION #2—HOLY SPIRIT

### INTRODUCTION

What a person believes about the Holy Spirit is often shaped by their experiences—whether first- or second-hand, positive or negative. Sometimes, hearing about another person’s experiences can cause us to come to wrong conclusions about the Holy Spirit.

What we believe about the Holy Spirit can also be shaped by spiritual abuse carried out by people who claimed to be Spirit-filled. Even someone misrepresenting the gifts of the Holy Spirit could cause some to disregard the Holy Spirit completely.

It’s important that believers do not ignore or undervalue the person of the Holy Spirit. He is not an attitude, atmosphere, or environment. Instead, He leads, speaks, and teaches. He is articulate, experiences grief, and advocates for us.

The Holy Spirit is mentioned almost three-hundred times in the New Testament alone. Once a disciple has experienced new birth, they are filled with the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Growing disciples should also be baptized in the Holy Spirit and experience the Spirit’s empowerment, direction, and cleansing. The disciple should consistently seek to better know, listen to, and obey this third Person of the Trinity.

It’s important to remember that your salvation comes through Jesus. Your relationship with Him determines your eternal destiny, but it also opens the door for the disciple to receive so much more from Spirit of God. When it comes to fruitfulness and power as you walk with Jesus here on earth, the Holy Spirit makes all the difference.

## WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

### 1. The Holy Spirit is God (Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:22).

- The three Persons of the Trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—differ in function, but not in essence, position, or power.
- The Holy Spirit possesses the same divine qualities of omniscience (having all knowledge), omnipresence (being present everywhere), and omnipotence (having all power).
- The Holy Spirit is co-existent, co-equal, and co-eternal with the Father and the Son.

### 2. The Holy Spirit is a person.

- The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force, spiritual power, or psychic phenomenon; He is a Person. When you communicate with a person, they listen to you and give advice when you need it. One of the goals of every disciple is to learn to listen to the Spirit's voice.
- In John 14 through 16, Jesus repeatedly described the Holy Spirit as *Paraclete*, a Greek word which has been translated as Advocate, Counselor, Helper, and Comforter. The Holy Spirit works on our behalf, gives helpful guidance, leads us toward the truth, and is there for us at all times. As a human, Jesus was limited by time and space during His earthly ministry. But He said the Holy Spirit wouldn't have such limitations. Instead, He is with us wherever we go and whatever we face.

## HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT HELP YOU?

### 1. The Holy Spirit helps you in prayer (Romans 8:26–27).

- When you realize that the Holy Spirit is a Person, it's easier to realize that prayer is personal. It's a conversation. As you pray, you will learn to recognize the voice of God.

### 2. The Holy Spirit helps you worship (John 4:23–24).

- Worship is spirit-to-Spirit communication. We aren't just singing or praying or raising our hands; we're engaging in spiritual fellowship with God. The Holy Spirit helps us connect.

### 3. The Holy Spirit helps you live in a way that pleases God (John 14:15–17).

- When you cultivate a relationship with the Holy Spirit, He will start talking to you about whatever is going on in your life. He will talk to you about the words you say, the things you listen to, the things you look at, and the way you treat people. When the Holy Spirit speaks, the disciple chooses to listen to Him, not ignore Him.



- The more we move away from an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit, the more we accept sin. Before long, our sinful habits seem normal. But God wants us to live a life of obedience to Him. And He has given us the Holy Spirit to help guide us toward obedience.

#### 4. The Holy Spirit helps you witness (John 16:8–11; Acts 1:8).

- The Holy Spirit is the One who shows people that they need to be forgiven in the first place. He also empowers and anoints believers to share the greatest message of all time with people who don't know Jesus yet.
- One purpose of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is to draw people to Jesus. If a gift of the Spirit is not being used to glorify Jesus and draw people to Him, that gift is being used in the wrong way. The closer our relationship with the Holy Spirit, the more we will be concerned with reaching people with God's love.

### HOW CAN YOU RECEIVE THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The word *receive* tells us that baptism in the Holy Spirit is a gift (Acts 2:38). The Baptism isn't a reward for hard work or sinless perfection. Instead, we receive Spirit baptism as a gift of God's grace. To receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit:

- Repent of any sin (Acts 2:38).
- Request the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).
- Ready yourself to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit that was promised to be available to all believers (Acts 2:39).

Once you've received, release your God-given spiritual gifts for the purpose of serving others (1 Peter 4:10).

### CONCLUSION

The Holy Spirit is our Helper, our Empowerer, our Guide, our Intercessor. When we are living in the Spirit's power, we are conquerors. We can handle anything, knowing "the one who is in [us] is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

## NEXT STEPS

Consider these questions as you reflect on the Spirit-empowered dimension of the Holy Spirit this week:

- Pursue a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit. If you've not yet been baptized in the Holy Spirit, then repent, request, and get ready to receive this gift. If you have been, ask God for whatever His Spirit has next for your walk as a disciple.
- Learn more about the Holy Spirit by reading the Book of Acts.

## VALUE ADDED

### THREE METAPHORS USED TO DESCRIBE THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the least understood person of the Trinity for many people. However, the Bible includes several God-given metaphors or symbols to help us understand the Holy Spirit's role. Throughout Scripture, God uses phenomena in the physical world to help us understand the supernatural realm. Below are three examples for you to consider.

1. **The Holy Spirit's work is symbolized by fire (Matthew 3:11; Acts 2:3-4).**
  - Fire is illuminating.
  - Fire is purifying.
2. **The Holy Spirit's work is symbolized by water (John 3:5; 7:37-39; Acts 2:17)**
  - Water is refreshing.
  - Water is life-giving.
3. **The Holy Spirit's work is symbolized by wind (Genesis 1:2; John 3:8; Acts 2:2)**
  - Wind is unseen.
  - Wind is unpredictable.

Each of these metaphors has another characteristic in common: **power**. Fire is powerful enough to consume entire cities or forests. Water is powerful enough to carve canyons in solid rock. Wind is powerful enough to clear swaths of land in minutes. And the Holy Spirit is powerful enough to completely transform a person from the inside out.



# SEVEN DIMENSIONS

## Sermon Series



## DIMENSION #3—MISSION

### INTRODUCTION

God has been pursuing us since before we even understood He existed. We need God's perspective on people so we can formulate a realistic plan to reach those around us. As Spirit-filled disciples, we should be on God's mission in all areas of life, sharing the gospel and discipling others.

### JESUS INITIATES RELATIONSHIP WITH US

Jesus prioritizes people (Luke 15:1-7). He told the story of a searching shepherd and a lost sheep to help His followers understand how much He loves even those who don't know Him. Jesus expects His followers to embrace this value and search out people who don't know Him.

Sometimes we don't realize how desperately lost the people around us really are. Did you know it's possible for a person to drown even when they're surrounded by other swimmers? If no one realizes that someone is drowning, they won't rescue them.

Jesus is aware of the needs of people. He doesn't want anyone to die in their sins, but He wants everyone to turn to Him for forgiveness (2 Peter 3:9). Since reaching out to people was important to Jesus, it should be important to His disciples, too. It is our responsibility to pursue lost people—to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

### THE CHURCH BEARS WITNESS OF JESUS

As long as there is one person in the world who doesn't know Jesus, our work is not finished. Jesus died for every single person. There is grace enough for all.

## 1. Jesus noticed and cared for people. His disciples should do the same.

- Just as the woman in Luke 15:8–10 kept persistently searching until she found the lost coin, we should actively seek out lost people.
- The Gospels record forty instances of Jesus healing people. Thirty-four of them did not find Jesus on their own. Either Jesus found them or someone else brought them to Him. Hurting people still need someone to bring them to Jesus.

## 2. Jesus' disciples should be salt-like (Matthew 5:13).

- Here's how you can be like salt:
  - » Show love. Let people see the love of Jesus in you.
  - » Ask questions. Use conversations to start new friendships.
  - » Listen. Allow the conversations to flow both directions.
  - » Turn the subject to Jesus as people begin to share their hearts with you.
- Jesus expects us to live on mission. As we interact with people, we should look for opportunities to point them to Jesus.

## OUR MISSION: MAKE DISCIPLES WHO MAKE DISCIPLES

The Great Commission goes beyond the decision to start following Jesus. Matthew 28:18–20 tells us that Jesus' mission includes going to all nations, making disciples, baptizing them, and teaching them to obey Him. When we don't act on the necessity of discipleship or the process of spiritual growth, we remain immature ourselves and are unable to effectively disciple others.

True discipleship includes both a vertical relationship with God and horizontal relationships with other people. This vertical and horizontal nature can be seen all the way back in Exodus 20 with the Ten Commandments. The first four commandments concerned the people's relationship with God and the last six were related to their relationships with others.

The same principles are true today. Discipleship combines an intentional, deliberate relationship with God and intentional, deliberate relationships with others. Every follower of Jesus is included in the Great Commission. And our mission is not complete until the person we have reached with the gospel can in turn offer the gospel to someone else—until we make disciples who make disciples.

## CONCLUSION

Every disciple should be ready to serve as a messenger of God's good news to those who need to hear it. As you grow as a disciple, you should experience:

- An urgency to share the gospel with others, and lead people to faith in Jesus.
- A desire to support local and global missionary activities.
- Increased engagement with others in your church.
- A desire to invite friends and family to become part of the Church community.
- A desire to love, disciple, and serve those in your circle of influence.
- A passion to advance the kingdom of God in your daily life—whether at home, at work, or at school.

## NEXT STEPS

Use these prayer points as you reflect on the spiritual dimension of mission this week:

- Pray for opportunities to share the gospel as people are convicted of their sin (John 16:8–9).
- Pray that people's eyes would be opened to truth about God (2 Corinthians 4:4).
- Pray for laborers in the spiritual harvest fields of the world (Matthew 9:37–38).
- Pray that people's hearts would be receptive to the gospel (Matthew 13:23).
- Pray that people would be unsatisfied with the world's version of peace and instead search for peace in Jesus (John 14:27).
- Pray that God would draw people to himself (John 6:44).

Activate your prayers by participating in God's missionary strategy. Here are a few ideas:

- Identify four people in your circle of influence who don't have an active relationship with Jesus.
- Intercede for these four people every day.
- Reach out to them through intentional acts of kindness.
- Share the gospel with them and invite them to begin following Jesus.
- Invite them to church or a small group to continue in their faith journey.

## VALUE ADDED

God's mission requires every disciple to make disciples who make disciples. In Luke 10:1–16, Jesus sent out seventy-two of His followers with instructions on how to be disciple-makers. His words teach us that becoming a disciple maker requires:

- deciding to obey Jesus.
- preparing to share the gospel.
- remaining accountable to fellow disciples.
- maintaining continual focus on the mission.

It's easy to allow ourselves to get too busy and forget our most important mission. But to grow as Spirit-filled disciples, it's imperative that we prioritize making disciples who make disciples.



# SEVEN DIMENSIONS

## Sermon Series



## DIMENSION #4—PRAYER

### INTRODUCTION

Prayer is one of the greatest mysteries in discipleship. Consider these questions:

- God is Creator, Sustainer and sovereign over the world, so why does He teach us to pray?
- God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere, so why does He want us to pray?
- God already knows our needs, so why should we bother asking?

Humans are privileged with the ability to experience fellowship with God (1 John 1:3). Prayer is both an avenue for fellowship with God. How wonderful that God provides a way for us to freely communicate with Him! Prayer is also a means of accessing spiritual authority in human affairs.

### PRAYING AS A DISCIPLE

Understanding prayer is the beginning point of learning how to communicate with God. Prayer is simply talking and listening to God. Over time, this leads to growing intimacy with Him. Here are some prayer truths to keep in mind as you continue growing as a Spirit-filled disciple:

1. Prayer is a privilege.
2. Prayer is a constant responsibility.
3. Prayer is essential in spiritual warfare.
4. Prayer is effective for spiritual work.
5. Prayer brings us into God's presence.

## WHY SHOULD WE PRAY?

There are many reasons disciples should pray, but let's focus on two of them:

### 1. Partnering with God

- The Church has been given spiritual authority through Jesus. He promised He would build the Church himself and no power can overcome it (Matthew 16:18).
- The kingdom of God is a kingdom of power (1 Corinthians 4:20). That power can be accessed through prayer as demonstrated in:
  - » healing (James 5:13–16)
  - » miracles (Acts 9:36–43)
  - » deliverance (Acts 12:1–17)
  - » signs and wonders (Acts 4:23–31)
  - » outpourings of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14; 2:4)

### 2. Pursuing God's Will

- Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). When we pray, we should petition God to bring about His will in people's lives and throughout the entire world.
- One of the highest goals of prayer is to bring about God's will in human affairs. The focus of prayer should be God's will, not your will or my will. God is not our servant. He's not obligated to do what we want. Instead, we are God's servants. We want His will to be accomplished. We should pray like Jesus did: "I want your will to be done, not mine" (Matthew 26:39).

## OBSTACLES TO PRAYER

One of the things to keep in mind as we grow in the dimension of prayer is that we may need to overcome some obstacles along the way. Here are just a few obstacles to watch out for:

1. Mental distractions
2. Physical fatigue
3. Loss of spiritual motivation



4. **Disappointment from unanswered prayers**
5. **Doubt about the power of prayer**
6. **Confusion about the purpose of prayer**
7. **Inconsistency in prayer**
8. **Overcrowded schedules**
9. **Spiritual drought**

To overcome these obstacles to prayer and follow Jesus' example in prayer, the solution is praying! Set aside a specific time and place to pray every single day. Maybe you pray at your kitchen table every morning, in a quiet corner of the parking lot during your lunch break, or on your back porch every evening at sunset. No matter where or when you pray, remaining faithful to your appointment with God will help you develop the habit of prayer. Soon, you'll see amazing results in your spiritual life.

## CONCLUSION

My job is to equip you to pray and encourage you to pray. Remember, if you walk with God, He will walk with you. Over time, prayer will help you:

- learn to hear and obey God's voice.
- discern God's guidance so you are not led by your emotions and feelings.
- partner with God in His mission.
- enjoy God's presence as your relationship with Him deepens.
- walk in God's forgiveness and mercy and extend them to other people.

## NEXT STEPS

Consider these questions as you reflect on the Spirit-empowered dimension of prayer this week:

1. How would you define *prayer*?
2. What are three ways prayer has benefited you?
3. What personal prayer goals will you set for this week?

# VALUE ADDED

## A PATTERN FOR PRAYER: F-A-C-T-S

Prayer doesn't come naturally to most people. But it's vital to our growth as Spirit-filled disciples. As we practice this dimension, we will continue to grow and mature as followers of Jesus. When we don't know what to pray or how to pray, the Holy Spirit can take our desires and turn them into prayers that align with God's will (Romans 8:26–27).

As you continue to grow in the dimension of prayer, remember these **F-A-C-T-S**:

### 1. Focus

- Prayer begins by focusing on God. Recognize His presence. Tune in and practice the presence of God. Focusing on God will help you ignore distractions.

### 2. Adoration

- Prayers saturated with praise invite the presence of God. Psalm 22:3 reminds us that God inhabits or is enthroned on the praises of His people.
- One of the best ways to pray worshipfully is to focus on one attribute of God—like faithfulness, love, holiness, grace, or sovereignty. How have you seen this characteristic of God at work in your life, your family, your church, or your community? Spend some time praising God for that facet of His character.

### 3. Confession

- The old adage is true: confession is good for the soul. It's biblical as well (1 John 1:9). In fact, confession is fundamental to healing and wholeness. Confessing simply means admitting our sin and asking for God's forgiveness, which He graciously gives.
- Not only should we ask God to forgive us, but we must also forgive others (Matthew 6:12; Ephesians 4:32). Refusing to forgive leads to built-up anger, resentment, and bitterness. It stunts a person's spiritual growth and hinders prayer. Most dangerous of all, it means our own sins will not be forgiven (Matthew 6:14–15).

### 4. Thanksgiving

- One element of prayer is making a mental or written list of the blessings God has given you. Thanksgiving is the cure for criticism, greed, envy, and especially anxiety (Philippians 4:6).

## 5. Supplication

- Supplication simply means asking God for the things you need. There is no need too big for God's power and no need too small for His fatherly care. Prayer brings deliverance from anxiety concerning the basic provisions of life (Matthew 6:25–33).
- When Jesus mentioned daily bread in His prayer in Matthew 6:11, the disciples would have likely been reminded of Israel in the wilderness receiving daily manna from God. Just as God provided for His people back then, He continues to meet the needs of His disciples. Asking God for what we need is an expression of trust that He will provide.

Scripture teaches us to pray:

- in faith (James 1:6–8)
- in Jesus' name (John 14:12–14)
- persistently (Luke 18:1–8)

## FIVE PRAYERS FROM SCRIPTURE

1. **Prayer of confession** (Psalm 51)
2. **Prayer of thanksgiving** (Psalm 100)
3. **Prayer of communion** (Psalm 139)
4. **Prayer of intercession** (John 17)
5. **Prayer of petition** (Colossians 1:9–14)

## PRAYERFUL ATTITUDES OF THE HEART

1. **Humility** (2 Chronicles 7:14)
2. **Devotion** (Jeremiah 29:13)
3. **Faith** (Matthew 21:22)
4. **Righteousness** (James 5:16)
5. **Obedience** (1 John 3:22)
6. **Submission** (1 John 5:14–15)



# SEVEN DIMENSIONS

## Sermon Series



## DIMENSION #5—WORSHIP

### INTRODUCTION

During His earthly ministry, Jesus explained that God was seeking people who would worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:23). As you and I grow as disciples, we will also grow in our desire to delight in God and offer our lives to Him in worship (Romans 12:1).

### WHAT IS WORSHIP?

The word *worship* can be traced back to the Old English word *worthship*. It describes the worthiness of someone who is receiving special honor. As God's creation, we recognize His worthship. We should honor Him as our Lord and Father. We can join the heavenly beings who are singing praises to God as He rules on His eternal throne (Revelation 4:9–11). Worship is our loving response to God's love for us.

### WHAT DOES WORSHIP LOOK LIKE?

Worship involves expressions of praise, thanksgiving, celebration, and adoration toward God in response to who He is and what He has done. Here are some of the ways worship is expressed in the Bible:

1. **Singing** (Psalm 9:11; 149:3; Ephesians 5:19)
2. **Making music** (Psalm 33:2; 149:3)
3. **Verbal praise** (Hebrews 13:15)

4. **Silence** (Habakkuk 2:20)
5. **Lifting hands** (Psalm 63:4; 1 Timothy 2:8)
6. **Clapping and shouting** (Psalms 47:1)
7. **Dancing** (Psalm 149:3; 150:4)
8. **Bowing** (Psalms 95:6; 138:2)
9. **Giving** (1 Chronicles 29:9; Proverbs 3:9; Philippians 4:18)
10. **Lying on the ground** (Joshua 5:14; 2 Chronicles 20:18)
11. **Thanksgiving** (Revelation 11:17)

## WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

In His conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4, Jesus talked about the difference between empty, ritualistic worship and true spiritual worship. Empty worship happens when we don't know much about God (John 4:22). But true worship comes from our genuine awe and love for God as we grow deeper in relationship with Him. As Jesus said, "God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

Worshipful obedience has always been the only reasonable response to God's mercy. When we worship God in spirit and truth, we walk in the light of His presence (Psalm 89:15). We experience spiritual victory (Acts 16:22–26). And we witness to the good news of Jesus (Acts 2:46–47).

## CONCLUSION

Your view of God determines how you worship God. If you misunderstand who God is, believing He is powerless or distant or limited in some way, you will wonder, *Why should I praise Him?* But if you grasp the truth that God is sovereign and holy and full of unfailing love, you won't be able to keep from praising Him.

Let's read Revelation 4. It's a powerful description of heavenly worship. As I read, let's all stand and worship God! *Read Revelation 4:1–11.*

This is the perfect moment to lay your crowns before God—whatever they may be. Bring your authentic worship to the One who knows you better and loves you more than you could ever imagine. Worship the one true God who is worthy of all our praise!

## NEXT STEPS

Consider these questions as you reflect on the Spirit-empowered dimension of worship this week:

- Which expressions for worship mean the most to you and why?
- How has worship impacted your life and your relationship with God?
- How can you implement worship into your daily routine this week?

## VALUE ADDED

### SEVEN HEBREW WORDS FOR PRAISE

1. **Hallel** appears ninety-nine times in the Old Testament and is the most translated word for “praise.” It was used when David appointed priests to celebrate and praise God before the ark of the covenant (1 Chronicles 16:4). The word *hallelujah* means “praise Yahweh.”
2. **Yadah** is translated “praise” ninety times in the Old Testament and means to lift or throw out the hands to express thanks and worship. Its first appearance in the Bible is when Leah gave birth to her son Judah (Genesis 29:35).
3. **Barak** means “to bless, kneel, salute, or declare the origin of power.” This kind of praise acknowledges the benefits God has given each of us (Psalm 103:1–5).
4. **Tehillah** appears fifty times in Scripture. It means “high praise, or to sing” and describes a spontaneous expression of the spirit in song or prayer (Psalm 145:21).
5. **Zamar** is used forty times in the Old Testament. It means “to touch the strings” and “to sing” (1 Chronicles 16:9).
6. **Todah** describes extending the hands and implies sacrificial praise. It often is translated “thanksgiving” (Psalms 50:23; 95:2).
7. **Shabach** means “to shout” or “address God in a loud tone.” This is not the same word used to describe the shout that brought down the walls of Jericho. Instead, it conveys the idea of a warrior who is focused on God instead of the enemy (Psalm 145:4).



# SEVEN DIMENSIONS

## Sermon Series



## DIMENSION #6—SERVICE

### INTRODUCTION

We are all ministers. A pastor's job is to equip believers to do the work of ministry. Therefore, all disciples should humbly serve God however we can. We should offer our lives as a thank-you to God.

Today, we're going to look at someone in the Bible who had a servant's heart. He wasn't always up front. He wasn't a keynote speaker or first-string soloist. He operated behind the scenes, faithfully carrying out the work of the ministry. *Serving*.

Even though Andrew was one of Jesus' disciples, he isn't mentioned often in the Bible. But the few passages that mention Andrew reveal that he had the right attitude for effective ministry.

### BRING PEOPLE TO JESUS

The most important way to serve someone is to introduce them to Jesus. The Gospel of John tells three stories about Andrew bringing people to Jesus.

- John 1:35–42 tells us that Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist. When he heard John identify Jesus as the “Lamb of God,” he began following Jesus instead. He told his brother Simon Peter that he had found the Messiah, brought Peter to Jesus, and Peter began following Jesus too.
- John 6:5–14 includes John's account of the feeding of the five thousand. This version of the story includes the detail that Andrew was the disciple who told Jesus about the boy who had five loaves and two fish.

- John 12:20–24 describes how some Greeks came to Jerusalem to worship during Passover. They wanted to meet with Jesus, and Andrew was one of the disciples who introduced the visitors to Jesus.

Andrew seemed to realize that his job was not to fix other people's problems on his own, but to bring them to Jesus. The apostle Paul understood this too. That's why he told the Corinthians, "When I first came to you . . . I didn't use lofty words and impressive wisdom . . . My message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. I did this so you would not trust in human wisdom but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:1, 4–5). No matter how smart or gifted or spiritual we may be, we can't minister to the deepest needs of a person's soul. Only Jesus can do that.

## SERVE BEHIND THE SCENES

Andrew had grown up with Peter. He must have known his brother was a born leader—likely a charismatic, impetuous man who was always stood out in a crowd. But Andrew didn't let insecurity or selfishness keep him from telling his brother about Jesus. It wasn't long before Peter was singled out as one of Jesus' closest disciples. By comparison, Andrew faded into the background, filling a much more humble role than his brother.

Some people are called to serve in visible leadership roles, but others are called to more behind-the-scenes ministry. They aren't concerned about receiving accolades or being seen. They simply want to do the work that has to be done. Their motives are pure. They are not serving for applause or recognition. They are serving because they love Jesus.

Being part of a church family means we give up our rights and pick up our ministry. In Matthew 20:25–28, Jesus explained His definition of servanthood. Here are three truths to notice:

- Jesus didn't rebuke the disciples for wanting to be great. Instead, He redefined greatness.
- In God's kingdom, greatness equals service.
- Jesus set the perfect example of selfless service.

## SMALL GIFTS MATTER

No gift is too small for Jesus to use. Andrew must have recognized some potential in the boy's two fish and five loaves, even though it should not have been enough to feed thousands of people. Your gift matters to God, even if it seems small to you. When we use our gifts for Him, we grow in our faith and the kingdom of God moves forward.

Sometimes we think, *I can't do anything important* so we never step out in obedience. Or maybe we say, "Let me know if there's anything I can do," and then we just sit back and end up doing nothing. But all it takes is one small step of obedience to begin serving God and His people in a meaningful way.



When the people of Israel returned from exile and it was time to rebuild the temple, the Lord told Zechariah, “Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin” (Zechariah 4:10). Later, Paul told the Corinthians, “Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless” (1 Corinthians 15:58). No matter how small your gifts might seem, it’s time to start using them.

Serving in God’s Kingdom is giving when you feel like keeping, praying for others when you need prayers, feeding others when your own soul is hungry, living truth before people even when you can’t see results, hurting with other people even when your own hurt can’t be spoken, keeping your word even when it is not convenient, being faithful when your flesh wants to run away.

## CONCLUSION

When you think about all we have received from Jesus, doesn’t it seem natural to respond by serving Him? Growing as His disciple must involve more than just coming to church once a week. Disciples look for opportunities to use their abilities and gifts for God’s kingdom.

Here are a few principles to keep in mind as you think about where you can start serving:

- Character is more important than gifts. Who we are is more important than what we do.
- Being godly is more important than being right.
- Love is more important than talent or skill.
- There is always room for one more person who is willing to serve God.

There are plenty of ways you can serve here at church or in our community. We need you to fill your role and take your place in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12–31). But you also need the Church, so you can grow as a disciple and live out your calling. We need each other.

## NEXT STEPS

Consider these questions as you reflect on the Spirit-empowered dimension of service this week:

- Where is God asking you to serve?<sup>1</sup>
- What are the steps to start serving in my church?
- What can I do to develop my skills and gifts so I can better serve God and His people?

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1. Consider purchasing the Acts Grow Track to help you guide believers in your church toward their area of service. It’s available for download at <https://digital.myhealthychurch.com/Digital-Items/Acts2/Acts-Grow-Track>.

## VALUE ADDED

Several New Testament passages describe the spiritual gifts that God gives His people so that they can serve His church. Though the lists are probably not exhaustive of all the gifts God can give, those listed can be divided into three categories:

### 1. Ministry Gifts (Ephesians 4:11)

- **Apostle.** This word means “one who is sent.” It refers to Jesus’ original twelve disciples and others who are named as apostles in the New Testament (for example, Barnabas and Paul in Acts 14:14).
- **Prophet.** The ministry of a prophet centers on communicating messages from God. Prophets help maintain spiritual balance in the church by speaking against false teachings. Prophecy can involve both encouragement and confrontation.
- **Evangelist.** The ministry of an evangelist is to share the gospel and lead people to begin following Jesus. The word *evangel* simply means “good news.” While every believer should be a witness for Jesus, not all operate in the ministry of gift of evangelism.
- **Pastor.** This word simply means “shepherd.” If a church is like a flock of sheep, the pastor is the one who feeds them the Word of God, protects them from false teachers, cares for their spiritual needs, and oversees their spiritual growth.
- **Teacher.** In Ephesians 4:11, *pastor* and *teacher* are listed as one gift. The two gifts work hand in hand. It’s impossible to truly pastor a group of people without teaching them about God’s Word. And it’s impossible to faithfully teach God’s Word without caring for the students and showing them how to live out what they’re learning.

### 2. Manifestation Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1–11)

- Paul lists nine manifestation gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:7–11. The word he uses for “gifts” means “manifestation, disclosure, display.” These are gifts that reveal information that could only have come from the Holy Spirit.
- These nine gifts include words of wisdom, words of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues.
- *Ministry* gifts empower people to fill certain ministry offices, but *manifestation* gifts are intended to meet spiritual needs as they arise. The Holy Spirit distributes manifestation gifts and “he alone decides which gift each person should have” (1 Corinthians 12:11).

### 3. Motivational Gifts (Romans 12:4–8; 1 Corinthians 12:27–31; 1 Peter 4:10–11)

- Paul and Peter list several additional spiritual gifts that motivate believers to live out their faith in certain ways. These motivational gifts have also been called personality gifts.
- **Service:** selflessly ministering to people and caring for their needs
- **Encouragement:** counsel and exhorting other believers
- **Giving:** showing financial generosity to support the church and humbly share with those in need
- **Leadership:** managing the ministries of the church and caring for God's people
- **Kindness:** joyfully expressing empathy and providing help for people in need
- **Helping others:** providing assistance to people in need, often serving behind the scenes
- **Administration:** organizing, coordinating, and motivating the work of the church
- **Hospitality:** displaying a welcoming attitude and joyfully providing for the needs of guests



# SEVEN DIMENSIONS

## Sermon Series



## DIMENSION #7—GENEROSITY

### INTRODUCTION

Scripture clearly shows that God is incredibly generous. As disciples, we should respond to God's generosity by generously sharing what we have. After all, everything we have is a gift from God. He has blessed us with finances and possessions, but also with time and experiences and abilities. Sharing those things with other people is a by-product of spiritual growth.

Disciples don't give just to earn a blessing. They give to obey God. They give because they trust Him to provide everything they need. They are careful stewards of their time, their treasure, and their talent. They give generously, serve generously, encourage generously, and love generously.

### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT GENEROSITY?

#### 1. Generosity is a heart issue (Matthew 6:19–21).

- Jesus said that wherever your treasure is, that's where the deepest desires of your heart will be. In other words, your credit card statement shows your heart. Your receipts show your heart. Your calendar shows your heart. Your priorities are reflected in the way you spend your money and your time.

#### 2. Generosity is a spiritual practice (2 Corinthians 8:1–7).

- Paul commends the churches of Macedonia for their generosity, regardless of their hardships. Their generosity is a testament to their spiritual health and God's grace at work. Here are some guidelines for practicing the spiritual discipline of giving:
  - » Learn to view money from God's perspective. Being wealthy doesn't automatically mean a person is wise (Proverbs 28:11). Ask God to give you His kind of wisdom as you decide how to steward His gifts (James 3:13–18).

- » Invest in people. Jesus set an example for us to follow by sacrificially loving lost people (Luke 19:10), His followers (John 15:12–13), and the Church (Ephesians 5:25–27).
- » Imitate God's generosity. God gives abundantly (Philippians 4:19) and has given sacrificially (John 3:16).

## HOW CAN WE DEVELOP GENEROSITY?

Generosity is birthed from gratitude. Once you begin to realize all God has done for you, it's natural to want to share those blessings. One of the first places to begin is giving from our resources.

### 1. Give tithes and offerings.

- The first kind of financial giving is called a *tithe*, which is a tenth of our income. Tithes help support the daily operations of the church. The purpose of tithing is to develop the mindset that God is first in your life.
- The second kind of financial giving is called an *offering*, which is a voluntary gift in addition to our tithe. Offerings sometimes have intended targets, like missions, a church building program, or community outreach.

### 2. Climb the giving ladder.

- **Potential givers** have not begun to financially support God's work yet, but they realize they have potential to grow spiritually and impact the Kingdom through giving.
- **Emerging givers** are ready to take the first steps toward honoring God through giving.
- **Consistent givers** are more intentional about giving and have made the decision to start giving regularly.
- **Tithe givers** have experienced the blessings that come with giving and are ready to commit to giving a tenth of their income.
- **Extravagant givers** respond to God's blessings by giving more than a tenth of their income to advance the Kingdom.

## DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR BIBLICAL GENEROSITY

1. **Determine to put God first in your giving (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).** The Macedonians didn't give as much as they were able. Instead, they gave far more. Their joy overflowed into generosity, and Paul makes it clear that "their first action was to give themselves to the Lord." This teaches us that generosity is not a financial problem, but a spiritual problem.

2. **Determine to give joyfully (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).** Disciples don't give because they feel like they have to. Instead, they give thoughtfully and enthusiastically!

## CONCLUSION

Jesus taught a lot about money. He realized that some people control their money while others are controlled by it. He taught His disciples to put God first and trust that He would take care of everything else (Matthew 6:33).

## NEXT STEPS

Consider these ideas as you reflect on the Spirit-empowered dimension of giving this week:

- If you have never developed the spiritual discipline of tithing, commit to tithe faithfully for ninety days. Then evaluate how God has blessed you during that time.
- If you already give a tenth of your income, commit to giving more. If you can't give more financially, consider giving time and energy. Decide to carry out random acts of kindness weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Make sure to journal about any miracles that occur.
- Build your faith muscles by doing a Bible study about generosity. Here are some suggestions:
  - » Read 1 Kings 17:8-16. What can you learn from this story about putting God first?
  - » Read Malachi 3:6-12. What two things did God promise the Israelites if they would obey His command to tithe? What principles might still apply today?
  - » Read Philippians 4:10-20. How do you think Paul was able to write such a grateful, positive letter to the Philippian church, even though he was in prison at the time? What did their generous giving mean to him?

## VALUE ADDED

Here are six biblical reasons to develop the spiritual dimension of generosity:

1. Generosity with the right motives pleases God most (2 Corinthians 9:7).
2. Generosity teaches you to put God first in your life (Matthew 6:19–34).
3. Generosity positions you for God's blessings (Proverbs 3:9–10; Malachi 3:10–11; Luke 6:38).
4. Generosity helps you trust God and guard against materialism (1 Timothy 6:17–19).
5. Generosity provides for God's people and the local church (1 Corinthians 16:1–2).
6. Generosity reminds you that God owns everything and you are His steward (Deuteronomy 8:11–18; Matthew 25:14–30).