Week 1

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Devotional Book



**Devotions from FaithPoint Members**

**Jim Witty**

**Sowing Seeds of Faith**

**Luke 6:38**

**Give, and you will receive.  Your gift will return to you in full - pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into  your lap.  The amount you give will determine the amount you get back*. (NLT)***

In my early days of living the Christian life, my wife and I decided what we were going to give to the church.  It was a big amount to us, but we were faithful to give what we thought the Lord wanted us to give.  It impacted our lives in many ways including the clothes we would buy for ourselves and our children and all of the necessities and the not so necessary.  We didn’t have a big financial boon or have any miracle event happen that would seem like a reward for our efforts.  But, we weren’t starving and we paid all of our bills.  In those days there were no credit cards, but there were charge cards.  We had a charge card for Sears, Penneys and Daytons.  (Daytons used to be a great store.  It had everything and it was a little more upscale than Sears and Penneys.)  We had these cards so we could buy things that were a necessity (we thought), but we didn’t have the money at the time to buy them.  If there was a wedding and we all needed something to wear, we would charge them at one of the three stores.  Once in a while we would realize the charges were getting higher than we liked, so we would put the charge cards in a drawer at home and leave them there until we paid them off in full.  We weren’t really looking for any kind of blessing from the Lord for being faithful to give.  It just seemed like the right thing to do and we were excited to be doing what the Lord wanted.  It made us feel good to be doing what we thought was the right thing.

There were a few crises along the way, but the biggest crisis came when I bought a new home.  I should have made the purchase of the new home contingent upon the sale of the of the old house.  But, I was young and ignorant and ended up owning two houses at the same time.  After a few months of visiting my banker to discuss my dilemma and to work things out until my old house sold, the banker asked me why I didn’t ask the pastor if I could skip giving to the church until the house sold.  I told him my pastor didn’t have anything to do with how much I was giving to the church. My pastor was a great pastor and would have prayed with me and counseled me if I asked him, but I was so sure my situation would resolve itself that I hadn’t thought about going to my pastor.  It sure was confusing to me why I was going through what I was going through, but I trusted in the Lord’s promises until the old house sold.

After several years of giving the same amount to the church, I thought the Lord was encouraging me to increase my giving.  I wrestled with the thought of increasing my giving for a while and I brought it up to my wife.  We decided to give the new amount.  I was not necessarily a cheerful giver, but I was an obedient giver.  After a few months, I was offered a summer job that was exactly 100 times the amount I had increased my giving.  As a teacher, I always worked at many different jobs in the summer, none of which I liked.  But this job was a perfect job for me and I was able to do it for several years.  This event boosted my faith to believe that if you trust God He will provide more than you expect.

**Hebrews 11:6  And it is impossible to please God without faith.  Anyone who wants to come to Him must believe that God exists and that He rewards those who sincerely seek Him**.

You must step out in faith to please God. I am eighty two years old and I have learned that God is faithful.

**Faith Step:** Pray and ask God what you should give and trust He will supply all your needs.

**Dick and Cheryl Dietz**

**Sowing Seeds of Faith**

**Hebrews 11:1  Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**

The year 2020 will be remembered as the year of COVID, as the year our daughter Paula underwent brain surgery to remove a large cyst, as the year Dick's cancer treatments became our twice a month routine, and as the year our dear sister-in-law lost her two year battle with cancer. But most importantly 2020 will be remembered as the year our faith in God was renewed and made stronger!

With so many bad things going on in our lives how could our faith in God survive?

Our faith in God grew as we witnessed His work in our lives when our prayers were answered each time we received test results that showed Dick was cancer free after his on-going treatments. We witnessed God's work in our daughter’s life when God performed miracles that resulted in an appointment at Mayo clinic in just days instead of months and again when she received a random phone call from a friend of a friend who offered to fly her to her Rochester appointments so that she wouldn't have to be away from her family for a week.  We witnessed God's work in our sister-in-law Laura's battle with cancer.  Laura loved God and her faith was unshakeable. She was gifted with two more years of life to make memories with her family. As the cancer overtook her body she remained mostly pain free. Moments before her passing, Laura was still speaking and listening to her friends and family praying and singing to her.

Through all of this we found ourselves surrounded by the love and support of our FaithPoint family. Through prayer, fellowship, and acts of kindness we were lifted up. Our faith and trust in God has grown even stronger because we have witnessed how God used other people to demonstrate His promise to us of things hoped for and the assurance of things we have not yet seen.

**Faith Step:** Sometimes bad is good. Can you think of a time when God taught you something important or meaningful through a bad situation? Difficult times can be times when we truly get to know God and His faithfulness.

**Scripture Readings for Sowing the Seeds of Faith Week**

**Scriptures are taken from the New Living Translation**

**Monday, March 8**

**Luke 6:38**    Give and you will receive.  Your gift will return to you in full - pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap.  The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.

**Tuesday, March 9**

**Hebrews 11:6**   And it is impossible to please God without faith.  Anyone who wants to come to Him must believe that God exists and that He rewards those who sincerely seek Him.

**Wednesday, March 10**

**Matthew 17:20**  “You don’t have enough faith,” Jesus told them, “I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it would move.  Nothing would be impossible.”

**Thursday, March 11**

**Proverbs 11:24 - 25** Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything.  The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.

**Friday, March 12**

**2 Corinthians 9:6**   Remember this - a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop.  But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop.