

# The Fellowship

## Devoted in Greek

4674 προσκατερέω (proskartereō): vb.; = Str 4342; TDNT 3.618—1. LN 68.68 persist, keep on with devotion (Ac 2:42, 46; 6:4; Ro 12:12; Col 4:2); 2. LN 34.2 associate closely, join, adhere to (Ac 1:14; 8:13); 3. LN 35.28 serve personally, be faithful (Mk 3:9; Ac 10:7; Ro 13:6), note: there may be overlap in verses and entries

Swanson, J. (1997). In Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament) (electronic ed.). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

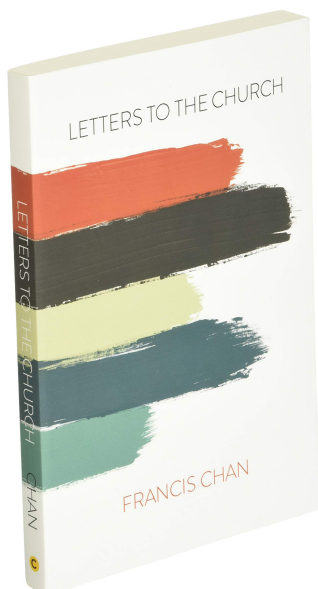
## Letters to the Church

Francis Chan

Do you want more from your church experience?  
Does the pure gospel put you in a place of awe?  
Are you ready to rethink church as you know it?

Sit with Pastor Francis Chan and be reminded that you are a part of something much bigger than yourself, something sacred. In his most powerful book yet,

Chan digs deep into biblical truth, reflects on his own failures and dreams, and shares stories of ordinary people God is using to change the world.



Chan says, “We’ve strayed so far from what God calls Church. We all know it. We know that what we’re experiencing is radically different from the Church in Scripture. For decades, church leaders like myself have lost sight of the inherent mystery of the Church. We have trained people sitting in the pews to become addicted to lesser things. It’s time for that to change.” When Jesus returns, will He find us caring for His Bride—even more than for our own lives? Letters to the Church reminds us of how powerful, how glorious the Church once was ... and calls us to once again be the Church God intended us to be.

***“In our impatient culture,  
we want to experience  
biblical awe without  
biblical devotion.”***

***-Francis Chan, “Letters to the Church”***

## What does it mean to be “devout?”

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To be devout simply means to be deeply dedicated to a belief or cause. Many people are obsessed with, follow closely, or are devout followers of sports teams, political figures, environmental causes, or other lifestyles and beliefs. While being devoted to certain causes may impact the world, what ultimately matters is if a person is devoted to Jesus.

The Bible teaches that we should be devout followers of the Lord Jesus. The chief commitment of our lives should be to God. Jesus said, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment” (Matthew 22:37–38). Since God the Father sent the Son and glorifies Him, a commitment to God requires a commitment to the Son (John 5:38; 8:54; 14:6). Those who do not follow Jesus wholeheartedly are devoting themselves to something else and are thereby rejecting God. We are warned in Matthew 6:24 that we cannot serve two masters. There are no half measures; either a person is devoted to God, or he is not.

In the dedication of the temple, King Solomon challenges the people of Israel to be devout and in so doing explains what devotion to God entails: “Let your heart therefore be wholly devoted to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and to keep His commandments” (1 Kings 8:61, NASB). The essence of devotion is obedience. Unfortunately, Solomon did not heed his own advice but later fell into idolatry: “When Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been” (1 Kings 11:4, NASB).

Every true Christian is devout; you cannot halfheartedly serve or live for Jesus. You also cannot serve God and live for something else. Jesus made it clear that anyone who follows Him must first count the cost and decide if he will follow Him completely: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it” (Luke 9:23–24). A true follower of Christ is devout because he or she commits every part of his or her life to loving and living for God. This is not done out of obligation or to earn salvation or God’s favor. Instead, we give everything to God because He gave everything to us (John 3:16; Acts 17:25).

Being devoted to a cause can be good or bad, depending on the object of the devotion. Some people are devoted to Buddhism, others to the Virgin Mary, and still others to the writings of L. Ron Hubbard. But not Buddha, Mary, or Hubbard can bring a person closer to God—devotion to them is misplaced. The Bible says that God’s people are, first and foremost, to have “sincere and pure devotion to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3). We are to be devoted to prayer (Colossians 4:2) and to fellow believers: “Be devoted to one another in love” (Romans 12:10). Those who love God are to hate evil (Psalm 97:10), so being devoted to God is to practice personal holiness. The early church is described as being devoted to four important things: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).

The religious leaders of Jesus’ day were devout and pious outwardly, but Jesus said they were just performing religiously for show (Matthew 23:5). Jesus knew their true hearts and intentions. He told them, “Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering” (Luke 11:52). Outward demonstrations of piety prompted by pride or selfishness, or adding rules to the Bible and claiming they are what God requires, are not a result of being devout to God. Rather, such things result from devotedness to self—devout self-righteousness. God wants devout followers—those who truly seek Him and follow Him—not religious followers who trust in their own strength, rules, or traditions in an attempt to earn God’s pleasure.

Likewise, we cannot claim to follow Christ yet live in a way that appeases the world in our doctrine or practice. In Revelation 3:15–16, the Lord says He will spit out the lukewarm—those who are neither hot nor cold. The Creator of the universe calls us to turn from our sinful ways and to follow Him: “If you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts” in rebellion (Hebrews 3:15). We are called to commit our lives wholeheartedly to the One who loves us and gave everything for us.