

Pastor John Miller

01-18-2026, COTR Texarkana

Title: The Big 10

Purpose: Provoke people to experience and practice, “The Big 10”, the path to spiritual maturity.

Truth for Today: Spiritual maturity is the result of experiencing and practicing, “The Big 10”.

Topic: Maturity, Spiritual Growth

Text: Luke 3:8

Series title: Pastors Prescription for 2026

Series purpose: Provoke people to remember the past, teach them how to face the future and make Biblical choices for spiritual growth and significance in 2026.

The Big 10

I. Introduction (Ushers hand out Big 10 flyer)

A. [Proverbs 14:34 (NLT) **Godliness makes a nation great**, but sin is a disgrace to any people.] In many ways America is not great because she is not godly. As Christians we respond on 3 levels: (1) Set a godly example by the way we live, (2) Pray and do what we can for a spiritual awakening, (3) We let our voice be heard by voting for candidates who support Biblical values. If we don't vote for candidates who hold Biblical values, godless people vote their values and we and our children suffer.

1. There is an election March 3rd and this Wed. night @6:30, we're sponsoring our 2nd **non-partisan** candidate forum. We're expecting 25 candidates from AR. and TX. to help you be an informed voter who votes Biblical values. They'll be on stage and have info. tables in the lobby so you can meet them face to face.
2. Some people wonder why pastors and churches should have a voice in gov. That's the way America was founded. **Quotes:** (1) *No class of men contributed more ...to achieve our independence than did the ministers. . .By their prayers, patriotic sermons, and services they rendered the highest assistance to the civil government, the army, and the country.* B. F. Morris, HISTORIAN, 1864. (2) *The Constitutional Convention and the written Constitution were the children of the pulpit.* Alice Baldwin, HISTORIAN, 1918.² I'm trying to follow the footsteps of pastors who gave America freedom built on a Biblical foundation. **Book, Chr Hist**

B. Review, mini-New Year's Series: 'Pastors Prescription for 2026', the past, the future, and the process for spiritual growth and significance. **Today we'll talk about the "Big 10", a strategic process to produce spiritual maturity.**

C. Title: The Big 10

II. The Big 10 (pic and handout)

A. #1 Salvation, a spiritual rebirth Jesus called being born again. We are ‘saved’ from the judgement of our sin because Jesus’ death on the cross offers forgiveness for our sin. Salvation happens when we turn to God/ repent, believe in Jesus and follow Him.

1. How do I know if I'm truly saved? Truly saved people live changed lives. Saving faith/ belief in Jesus isn't passive knowledge but it produces a changed life. We try to live a godly life instead of a sinful, self-centered life. JB [Luke 3:8 (NLT)] **Prove by the way you live** that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.

James 2:26 (NLT)...**faith is dead** (*useless and ineffective/meaningless*) **without good works.**] Good works don't save us but are evidence of our salvation.

B. #2 Attend a weekly church service. Why is this important? [Hebrews 10:25 (NCV) **You should not stay away from the church meetings**, as some are doing, but you should **meet together** and encourage each other. Do this **even more** (NLT) especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.] An active church life keeps you in a healthy spiritual rhythm, allows opportunity to experience God's Presence in worship, affords opportunity to connect with other Christians and a place to serve the Lord.

C. #3 Baptism in water & baptism in the Holy Spirit

1. Water: An Ethiopian officer saved [Acts 8:36–38 (NCV)]... The officer said, "Look, **here is water. What is stopping me from being baptized?**" ³⁷... "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." ³⁸ Then... Philip baptized him.] You don't have to be baptized to be saved but saved people get baptized.
2. Spirit:[Acts 1:5–8 (NLT)] John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be **baptized with the Holy Spirit.**" ⁸ But you will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere...] For spiritual gifts and power. Class on the Holy Spirit, Prayer altar

D. #4 Daily prayer and Bible reading. This is the #1 way to maintain a vital, growing relationship with God. Pic Church App, Bible reading guide.

E. #5 Complete Equip and Foundation classes. Learning Biblical truth is a lifelong journey that builds a foundation of truth and helps us understand the ways of God.

F. #6 Connect with friends in a small group. [Acts 2:46 (NLT)] They worshiped together at the **Temple...met in homes...and shared their meals** with...joy and generosity...] Why is meeting regularly with a small group of Christians important? Because we need other believers and they need us to: Inspire us to stay faithful to Jesus, someone knows us well enough to help when something is wrong, encourage us when we're down, and laugh together. We're like a family who takes care of each other.

G. #7 Find a place to serve God. True followers of Jesus want to do something for Jesus. We use our time, talent and resources to advance the KOG. One day we'll stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and our works, what we did with what God gave us and called us to do, will be judged. I want to hear, 'well done'.

H. #8 Share our faith. We may be the only person that show someone the way to heaven.

I. #9 Financially support the church, tithing: Def. giving/ investing 10% of our income in the Lord's work. This isn't an ask for more \$, we're blessed! But we need to put God above money and possessions. What we do with money is a spiritual test. [Mt. 6:24 (NLT)] "No one can **serve two masters**. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be **devoted** to one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.**] I've practiced tithing 48 years and it's the best way I know to help me be more devoted to God than money and materialism. As a side benefit God promises to bless our finances when we help people in need and invest in his work.

J. #10 Go on a short-term mission trip to a primitive area. Pic India E.g. me Chiapas. I saw pure Christianity-- a love for God in material poverty that helped me be a more responsible Christian living in a nation of material prosperity.

III. Conclusion: Why is a commitment to 'The Big 10' so important?

A. [Ephesians 4:13 (NCV) We must become like a **mature** person, **growing until we become like Christ and have his perfection.**] Spiritual maturity is our goal. Practicing 'The Big 10' will get us there.

IV. Response: Salvation...Have you been born again and experienced a spiritual rebirth?

Salvation happens when we turn to God/ repent, believe in Jesus and follow Him. You can be saved now. God's love- Problem- Solution- Decision

V. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Dictionary of Biblical languages, Swanson
2. <https://wallbuilders.com/resource/history-of-the-black-robe-regiment/>

VI. Supplemental material

- A. The Black Robed Regiment was the name that the British placed on the courageous and patriotic American clergy during the Founding Era (a backhanded reference to the black robes they wore).¹ Significantly, the British blamed the Black Regiment for American Independence,² and rightfully so, for modern historians have documented that: There is not a right asserted in the Declaration of Independence which had not been discussed by the New England clergy before 1763.³
- B. John Adams rejoiced that "the pulpits have thundered"⁴ and specifically identified several ministers as being among the "characters the most conspicuous, the most ardent, and influential" in the "awakening and a revival of American principles and feelings" that led to American independence.⁵
- C. As a body of men, the clergy were pre-eminent in their attachment to liberty. The pulpits of the land rang with the notes of freedom.⁶ The American Quarterly Register [MAGAZINE], 1833
- D. If Christian ministers had not preached and prayed, there might have been no revolution as yet - or had it broken out, it might have been crushed.⁷ Bibliotheca Sacra [BRITISH PERIODICAL], 1856
- E. /The ministers of the Revolution were, like their Puritan predecessors, bold and fearless in the cause of their country. No class of men contributed more to carry forward the Revolution and to achieve our independence than did the ministers. . . . [B]y their prayers, patriotic sermons, and services [they] rendered the highest assistance to the civil government, the army, and the country.⁸ B. F. Morris, HISTORIAN, 1864
- F. The Constitutional Convention and the written Constitution were the children of the pulpit.⁹ Alice Baldwin, HISTORIAN, 1918.
- G. The misinterpreted meaning of separation of church and state is the root problem.
- H. Hebrews 6:1 (NLT) So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God.

THE BIG 10

THE PATH TO SPIRITUAL Maturity

- 1 SALVATION
- 2 ATTEND A WEEKEND SERVICE
- 3 BAPTISM (WATER & HOLY SPIRIT)
- 4 DAILY PRAYER & BIBLE READING
- 5 COMPLETE EQUIP & FOUNDATION CLASSES
- 6 CONNECT WITH FRIENDS IN A SMALL GROUP
- 7 FIND A PLACE TO SERVE GOD
- 8 SHARE YOUR FAITH
- 9 FINANCIALLY SUPPORT THE CHURCH (TITHE)