

CHAPTER SIX

"OUR PLAN"

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP AS A SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE



MESSAGE OUTLINE: WEEK SIX

WITHOUT A PLAN, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

_____, we are left at the mercy of our _____.

LUKE 12:16-21 (NASB)

“And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.”” But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

This is the place where you define your life as a steward! The rich man simply asked himself a question. It is THE question regarding stewardship: “What shall I do with what I have?”

FINANCIAL FREEDOM

Financial _____ positions us for financial _____!

We want for everyone to be _____ to _____ to God with God’s!

SEEING AS GOD SEES

What you _____ determines your _____ !

SET SOME SIMPLE GOALS:

During this study, there are three main factors we have learned that will set us firmly on the path to being financially positioned to respond.

- _____ less than you _____ .
- Be freed from _____ .
- Become a _____ .

We want you to see _____ as a _____ !

We are going to approach this discipline by doing something about it every day!

CONSISTENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

- Look at this every day!
- Plan what you will do!
- Pray for wisdom and discipline with His provision!
- Remain accountable for the progress you've made!

Stewardship is a _____ not a _____ !

MAKING IT STICK



The end of this book marks the beginning of your journey. For many, you will just now be making some headway and you should celebrate. Don't celebrate the end of the exercise; instead, celebrate a new way of thinking. Celebrate your new life as a steward of His provision! In this chapter, we are going to explore what it looks like to set yourself on the path toward becoming a great steward by committing to financial stewardship as a spiritual discipline!

Unlike prayer, reading the Bible and journaling, financial stewardship is not seen as a spiritual discipline. Unfortunately, as a result, many of us devote a large portion of our financial resources toward taking care of ourselves. As long as our personal kingdom does not crumble, we ignore the fact that there is chaos taking place down the street and around the globe. This reveals a darker part of us all and how important it is to view financial stewardship as a spiritual discipline. Until we learn to be stewards of God's provision we will always limit the potential of what God will do with our resources.

"Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart."

PSALM 37:4

It is easy to feel overwhelmed when you hear stories about oppression, war and poverty on the news or witness the brokenness of humanity in your own backyards. Our hearts break realizing the amount of work that needs to be done in this world. Without the Gospel, despair runs rampant. Yet, here in the Psalms is an invitation to enjoy the comfort and stability we find when we not only depend on God but

also delight in Him. When we delight in God, His desires become our desires. Our hearts break over the things that break His heart. We tend to be discontent over our wardrobes, cars or the sizes of our houses. Yet, when we become discontented over the things that break God's heart, we begin to leverage our resources toward them.

The call is not to feel badly or wish you could do more with your finances and resources. The charge is merely to do something and realize that God is calling you to be a great steward of what He has trusted you with. He has equipped you with gifts and passions that He wants you to use to make His name known. Put your heart and soul on the line. Becoming a great steward is a way of life, not a way out of your financial situation. God has given you everything that you need to do everything He wants you to do. It's time to get on board with what He wants from you and for you, especially regarding your finances. This means spending less than you make, avoiding consumer debt, becoming a tither and asking God one very important question: "Lord, in light of my growing concern and expanding heart, what would you have me do with what I have been given?"

YOU CAN HAVE AN IMPACT!

"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness."

2 PETER 1:3

One way to make your finances a spiritual discipline is to use your quiet time to make the connections between God's provision, His purpose for it and your walk with Him. Everything God gives you is not only what you need to live your physical life, but also what you need in your spiritual life. The sooner you begin to blur the lines

between your physical needs and your spiritual needs, the sooner you will realize your greatest potential—being Christ’s body as part of His church.

The Church that is built on Christ is the only organization on the face of the earth that has been entrusted with what every human heart longs for and, in fact, needs. We must not shirk our responsibility and make excuses for why we are not more effective. The power lies in our ability to follow Christ by stewarding our resources and demonstrating this by our love for one another. It requires trusting that God will be faithful to lead us and put us in places where we will be useful in fulfilling those purposes.

QUESTIONS: FOR REFLECTION

If what you see determines your direction, then it is critical that we begin to see our finances differently. They are no longer a burden or a way to feed our selfish desires and pursuits, but rather a tool that can be leveraged to impact the lives of those around us for Christ. Something as temporary as money all of a sudden has an eternal impact.

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”

1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19

Q: HOW CAN YOU MAKE YOUR FINANCES PART OF YOUR QUIET TIME, BEYOND SIMPLY MAKING YOUR NEEDS KNOWN TO GOD? HOW CAN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST INFLUENCE THE WAY YOU APPROACH YOUR FINANCES?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

STICKING TO IT



Now is the time to develop a sharp eye, intent on searching for the opportunities to utilize your gifts, time and resources to serve God. Continue to put your financial situation, whatever it may be, in God’s hands and allow Him to fulfill His purpose in your life. Remember, you are now going to be intentional in managing your finances in order to become a great steward.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS: YOUR PLAN

Re-trace the steps that you have taken over the course of this study and keep in mind what God has been doing in your heart as a result. The more that you put what you’ve learned into practice, the more it will become a spiritual discipline and have a positive impact on how you view your work, your personal life and your walk with God.

You will see everything as belonging to Him and, as a result, have more contentment, more control over your finances and more of an impact in your community. You will gain a sense of the purpose that God has for your life!

STEP 1: Don't stop tracking your spending! This is how you will be able to remind yourself that what you have is what you've been trusted with—telling your heart where to go and continuing to be a great steward. Find a method that works for you and stick with it.

STEP 2: Stay on top of your *Stewardship Plan*! As you move forward, your spending patterns may shift, especially as you eliminate your debt. Keep an eye on your target percentages so that your spending in each category does not increase beyond what you have planned for.

STEP 3: Plan to be generous! Keep seeking God concerning becoming a tither (giving 10%). This is an act of worship and a step of faith. Remember that God will respond when you choose to trust in Him.

STEP 4: Do not borrow and continue to tackle your debt head-on! As you move closer to the date that you will finally be debt-free, you may be tempted to start using your credit card to spend more than you have. Remember, through the power of the Gospel, you have radically amputated this behavior—we can't stress enough how easy it is to fall back into your old pattern of spending.

STEP 5: Keep your accountability partner involved! Be sure that you continue to meet with your accountability partner. This will provide an honest assessment of your progress as well as much needed encouragement.

STEP 6: Continue looking for opportunities to leverage what God has given you for His purposes! Use your *Stewardship Plan* to find ways that it can position you to respond to the needs you see around you. This is a crucial part of being a great steward and is too often overlooked in this modern age. As you do this, God will transform your heart to be more like His, making you into a person who can have a great impact on others.

“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.”

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

Above all else, don't lose hope! You are called to be a great steward and God has made a way for you to live up to this calling. You have already been given the power and self-discipline to do this! Step forward with faith and you will land on the path that God has set before you. He will guide you into true freedom as you become a great steward.

