

FOCUSED WEEK 3 HANDOUT

GIVING - STEWARDSHIP

DESIRE to live as a steward of God's resources in all areas of life; to live out of the awareness that nothing I have is my own

DEFINITION Stewardship is the voluntary and generous offering of God's gifts of resources, time, talents and treasure for the benefit and love of God and others.

SCRIPTURE "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)

"You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth." (Deuteronomy 8:17-18)

"The earth is the LORD's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." (Psalm 24:1)

"Do not store up for yourselves treasure on earth.... But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven." (Matthew 6:19-20)

PRACTICE INCLUDES

- a systematic, intentionally generous lifestyle flowing from love of God and others
- living in a way that exemplifies that your life, your time, your money, your home, your family are not your own
- making offerings that go beyond the tithe
- thoughtfully investing resources and spiritual gifts to benefit the body of Christ
- generous sharing of the resources God has given you: physical, mental, natural, economic and spiritual

GOD-GIVEN FRUIT

- being liberated from greed, self-centeredness, money and other things so that the generous spirit of Jesus grows in you
 - embracing generous hospitality toward those in need
 - modeling God's goodness and generosity
 - awareness of your selfishness and lack of love for others
 - living from the conviction that nothing belongs to you; you didn't deserve it or earn it; it all came from God
 - investing in the kingdom of God, building up treasure in heaven
 - loving God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind, and loving your neighbor as yourself
 - stewarding the earth and all your resources; freedom from the toxic disease of affluenza

Stewards ask hard questions:

- What do we need to have to be content?
- Are we willing to share?
- Will we live on less so that others might have more?
- Can we enjoy the public beach rather than own a beach of our own?
- Will we take public transportation or invest in a hybrid vehicle rather than buy another internal combustion engine?
- Can we downsize rather than trade up?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How does the knowledge that all you have belongs to God affect your life?
2. When have you gone without so someone else could have? What was that like for you?
3. What are your current addictions? For example, shopping, technology, keeping up with the Joneses, watching TV? How do these addictions affect your use of your resources?
4. What would it mean to you to begin to downsize so you could give more to others?
5. What would it be like for you to consider helping brothers and sisters in your community with their financial needs?

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

1. Ask God to speak to you about being a steward of his gifts to you. Decide to give God a percentage of your income rather than a dollar amount. Then as your income rises and falls, give appropriately. Begin to increase this percentage as you earn more.
2. Take a look at the people who regularly are in and out of your life. Do you feel any sort of responsibility to know their needs? How does knowing a need affect you? How could you be the loving hands of God's provision to someone you know?
3. Think back over your life. When have you given something that brought you great joy? What did you give? Why did it touch you so deeply? How might you continue to give in the area that gives you joy?
4. How does the way you were brought up affect your stewardship? List the strengths or weaknesses that have been bequeathed to you. • Then consider the legacy you are passing on to others. What do you want people to say about your stewardship of your resources once you are gone?
5. Form an investment club that gives all of its profits to the cause of Christ. Enjoy discovering where you want to give. Invest in the kingdom of heaven.
6. Give a deserving person a "bonus."
7. Practice giving a tithe (typically 10 percent) of your God-given income back to God. • Increase the tithe to a larger percentage as your salary increases.
8. Set aside a "shepherd's purse." Collect all your quarters and put them in the purse. Then when you hear of a need, offer what is in your "shepherd's purse." Children can begin a "shepherd's purse" with nickels or even pennies.

RECEIVING – SELF CARE

SELF-CARE	
DESIRE	to value myself as my heavenly Father values me
DEFINITION	Self-care honors God through nurturing and protecting the body, mind and spirit with their limits and desires.
SCRIPTURE	<p>“I thank you, High God—you’re breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvelously made! I worship in adoration—what a creation!” (Psalm 139:14 <i>The Message</i>)</p> <p>“You realize, don’t you, that you are the temple of God, and God himself is present in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16 <i>The Message</i>)</p> <p>“ ‘So love the Lord God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy.’ And . . . ‘Love others as well as you love yourself.’ There is no other commandment that ranks with these.” (Mark 12:30-31 <i>The Message</i>)</p>
PRACTICE INCLUDES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ living in a way that honors your body as a living temple for God’s presence ◦ exercising and eating sensibly ◦ observing appropriate boundaries ◦ resting and keeping the sabbath ◦ giving and receiving love ◦ thanking God for the way he has designed you ◦ encouraging rather than neglecting yourself ◦ recognizing and practicing my spiritual gifts ◦ choosing healthy rather than unhealthy relationships
GOD-GIVEN FRUIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ valuing yourself as Jesus values you ◦ having a sane and proper view of yourself ◦ practicing self-awareness rather than self-absorption ◦ freedom from the “Messiah trap” and trying to save the world to the detriment of your health ◦ living within limits without burnout ◦ having a deep awareness of God’s love for you ◦ freedom from addictions that destroy your health and relationships ◦ being comfortable in your own skin

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. God created you "very good." Thank God for making you you. If you have a hard time thanking God for yourself, what does this reveal about how you value being made in his image?
2. Talk to God about what it is like to receive yourself as he receives you.
3. How have you neglected caring for your health, your body, your relationships? How might Jesus be inviting you more deeply into some area of self-care?
4. What is experiencing burnout like for you? What do you do to recover? How has it changed the way you live?
5. How might receiving yourself as a gift from God affect your life?
6. How do you protect yourself from receiving love from God and others?

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

1. Make a list of things you like about yourself. Thank God you for making you you.
2. Stand in front of a mirror and take a good look at your body. What does your body tell you about where you came from? What you have done in life? Your choices? • Tell God how you react to what you see. • What places of your past still need to be received and integrated into who you are?
3. Care for yourself by planning a day you would enjoy. Choose where you want to be and who you want to be with. Celebrate the gift of the day and yourself.
4. Where in your body life do you need a new beginning? What practices and patterns that tie into food, sex, rest, work or relationships would you like to change? • How can you cooperate with God in an effort to honor your body as his temple? Who can help you in this? • When you come down hard on yourself, remember that you can begin again. Confess your harsh self-treatment and ask God for grace to receive who you are. The Christian message is about new beginnings.

5. Sit quietly in a comfortable position. Breathe slowly and notice any tightness in your body. What is your body saying to you right now? Listen to it. Don't scold it. • How would Jesus want you to care for yourself right now?
6. Keep a record of how much you sleep. Are you respecting your God-given need for rest and recreation? • As a discipline, ask God how long he wants you to sleep. Is it more or less? • Readjust your sleeping or resting patterns for a week. What is it like for you?
7. Cultivate ways of nurturing and caring for your body: bubble baths, massages, exercise, soft sheets or pillows, buying some flowers or reading an engrossing book. Spend time with your hobbies and people who bring you life. Pick up an interest you left behind. It's okay to settle into down time. Watch your favorite TV program, rent a movie, cheer on Monday night football. If you like sports, join a league, gather some friends for ultimate Frisbee, go to a road rally or the driving range.
8. If you are recovering from a divorce, the death of a loved one or a deep grief, attend a support group or a divorce recovery workshop.
9. If you suffer from seasonal affect disorder (SAD), get a UV lamp or visit a tanning salon. You will feel the warmth nurture you.
10. Follow Pastor Joe to the ocean, feel the breeze, ear the sounds, eat well.

"Tis a gift to be simple. Tis a gift to be free. '-Shaker song

RESOURCES

[GIVING AND RECEIVING- Door of Hope - Sermon](#)

[Choosing Your Yes - Andy Stanley](#)

[GENEROUS GIVING](#)

RECEIVING GOD'S CARE AND LOVE