

Jesus & Money: Stewardship

Luke 19:11-26

January 21, 2024



Begin with Prayer

In silence, invite the Holy Spirit to guide you. Then pray:

Empowering God, we pray that you will send your Holy Spirit

to move us to understanding; to help us to believe the gospel; to give us strength and wisdom to live by it. Amen. (Worship Sourcebook Q.3.5.8)

Reconnecting and Debriefing

Take a moment to check in with one another (2 minutes each).

1. *What was something that made you laugh this week?*
2. *What is the greatest task or possession that someone has entrusted you with? What did that responsibility feel like?*

Introduction

When we gather, our goal is to be a people apprenticed to the life of Jesus. As you begin this week, remind your group to not try to fix, problem-solve, or rescue; keep pointing one another to the truths of the gospel in our lives.

Listening to God's Word

In this series, "Jesus & Money," we engage in a deeply personal topic. Although it is a topic we tend to avoid discussing, the Bible has much to say about our relationship with money – roughly 40% of Jesus' parables were about money. While we may view our money as our own and harbor it for ourselves, Jesus flips the script by placing everything under God's ownership and entrusting us as his stewards.

This text will help us think through what we have been given to steward, how to steward that well, and what obstacles we might face along the way.

Small Group Discussion

Before reading this week's passage, we will begin by engaging in a practice together:

Practice – Taking Inventory

Stewardship is how we intentionally use something that has been given to us. As we talk about stewardship, our minds might default to thinking about money. While this is certainly a key aspect of what we are called to steward, it is one of many.

With a pen and paper or on your phone, take some time to take inventory of what you have been given to steward. Some helpful categories to think through are finances, possessions, talents, relationships, and time – *How do I spend most of my time? What does most of my money go towards? What talents has God gifted me with and what do I put them towards?*

It is impossible to list everything in each of these categories, but try to identify some of the most significant aspects of each category. The goal is not to make an exhaustive list, but to identify key things that God has given us so that we can be better stewards of them.

Read Luke 19:11-26. Then discuss together:

- ***What is your first thought when you read through this/these passage(s)?***
- *If you look at the previous section and the beginning of this one, what is the context of Jesus telling this parable? Why might that be important?*
- When the servants are approved or rebuked, it is because they did or did not fulfill their calling: “Put this money to work until I come back” (v.13). *What callings are apprentices of Jesus given? Specifically, what callings are apprentices given regarding how they interact with money?*
- The final servant failed to steward well because he was afraid. *What fears prevent you from being a faithful steward of what God has given you?*
- *What area of your life do you find the most natural to be a good steward of?*
- *What area of your life do you find the most difficult to be a good steward of, and perhaps you have yet to surrender to God? What is at stake if you do not fully surrender it?*

Often in Jesus’ teachings, he uses a “how much more” formula – he uses an example of something tangible and then compares it to God to show how much greater God is – for example, “If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” (Matt.7:11). Without explicitly stating that formula, this parable shows that if the noble man rewards his faithful servants, how much more will Jesus reward those who steward well what he gives them.

- *What rewards are there for apprentices who are faithful stewards of what God entrusts to them?*
- *As you look through your inventory list, what specific rewards might there be for good stewardship in your life?*
- ***How do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to respond to or act on what we have read and discussed?***

Conclusion

Return to your inventory list. Now that you have reflected on it personally and through discussion, surrender your list fully to God, embracing your role as a steward of what he has given you. Conclude by writing at the bottom of your list and/or praying:

“Father, thank you for all you have graciously given to me. I give you ownership and authority of everything listed above. I will steward these gifts as directed by you.”

Caring for One Another

- *Suggest a prayer request that is related to the topic we’ve discussed.*
- ***Do you or your family have a need that the Life Group can help meet?***

Using **the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)** as a guide, based on what you’ve shared together, spend time listening to God and praying for one another.