



Week 1 – Understanding Stewardship
October 17, 2021

INTRODUCTION:

Hello my name is Stephen... Welcome guest/get connected – Guest Suite

ANNOUNCEMENT/ MESSAGE PUSH: Since launching a second location in the middle of a pandemic, God has been doing more through us than we ever imagined.

-together we've helped hundreds of people in the Belton area take steps closer to Jesus – and God's not done yet

I have a special announcement I'd like to share with you...

-QUE LIBERTY HILL VIDEO

-we are launching Vintage Church Liberty Hill THIS February!

-I'm asking you to do three things: (PRODUCTION NOTE: THESE NEXT THREE THINGS ARE THE ONLY GREEN WORDS THAT WILL ACTUALLY GO ON THE SCREEN DURING THESE ANNOUNCEMENTS)

1. **Pray** – Pray for the team. Pray for vintage church. Pray for the people of liberty Hill. Pray and Ask God to tell you what He may want you to give.
2. **Share** – tell everyone you know! Share anything we may put on social media, be a raving fan of what God is doing in central Texas.
3. **Give** – There's a pledge card in your seat...Return this card on November 7 in service on the date you select

By the way, we're going to be introducing Pastor Nathan and his family at midweek – come hear his heart

Production note: will need midweek slide for this^^^

God's not done yet so neither are we, let's keep reaching people and building family together.

I want to welcome you to our brand-new series called Robbing Peter: where together over the next four weeks we are going to have a candid conversation about God and Money!

Growing up I was told that you never talk about politics, religion, or money.

Speaking of money, I heard something funny recently: Dan was a single guy living at home with his sickly father and working in the family business. One day he found out he was going to be the sole heir of his father's fortune when he died. Dan decided he needed a wife to share his fortune with. One evening at an investment meeting he spotted the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. 'I may look ordinary,' but in just a few months, my father will die, and I'll inherit \$65 million.' Impressed, the woman got his business card. *Three days later she became his **stepmother**.*

That's funny! The truth is we need to talk about money because God has a lot to say about money, Jesus spoke about our relationship with money and possessions more than any other topic including faith, hope and love combined.

Church should be where we talk about it because the Bible teaches us that God wants you to be financially independent, free from the shackles of debt and fear.

How many of you, as a kid, hoped one day that you would be rich?

I did. How many can say; "Why did you want to be rich?" *If I'm rich, money will solve all of my problems...* If rich solves problems, Hollywood should be the happiest place on earth right?

1 Timothy 6:17 (NIV) – “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...”

Paul says, “Let me talk to all you rich people for a moment!” Who are they?

WHO’S RICH?

- Gallop Poll Survey asked people making **\$30k** a year what they needed to be rich; they answered **\$74k**.
- They asked people making **\$50k** a year what they needed to be rich; they answered **\$100k**.
- Higher-income earners said about **\$5,000,000**.
- John D Rockefeller (the worlds 1st billionaire) was asked: “**How much money would be enough?**” and he answered: “**Just a little bit more...**”

Rich is a moving target.

If I have 2 \$1 bills and throw them on the ground, no one will fight over them... Almost 3 billion (half the world), live on less than \$2 a day.

- If you earn **\$37k** a year, you are in the world’s top 4%.
- If you earn **\$45k** or more, you are in the top 1%.

Many of us are in this rat wheel of having enough. So to kick off our time together, lets just acknowledge that ½ the world lives on less than \$2/day and with that fact, in the USA, we are all rich.

We don’t feel rich or think we are... we struggle so much in this area... Did you know that **God knew that we would struggle in this area:** That’s why there’s over 800 scriptures in the Bible about money and possessions. Why Should we talk about Money, **Why does God care so much?**

Matthew 6:21 (NIV) – “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Proverbs 4:23 (NIV) – “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”

I want to transition now and talk about **Biblical Stewardship.**

The whole concept that I want to teach you throughout this series is the Biblical idea of Stewardship. I believe to understand and live as one of God's stewards is the most liberating lifestyle available. The Bible has a lot to say about stewardship:

Psalm 24:1 – "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein."

God is the owner and we are the stewards. Now, what is a steward? A steward is not an owner, but a manager over something owned by another. So a steward is a manager, a caretaker of someone else's stuff. **This is a MAJOR change in PERSPECTIVE.**

Perspective governs life in remarkable ways. Even those of us who have learned that God owns everything often act as though He really doesn't.

Let's turn to Matthew 25 and get into today's main passage. In this parable, Jesus tells a story about how to get in the correct lane financially – the lane that will not only help you win with money, but more importantly win at life. This parable can be used to describe your gifts, opportunities for serving, and your time...

Today, I want to give you **3 PRINCIPLES OF STEWARDSHIP.**

Let's start by reading **Matthew 25:14** – "For it (The Kingdom of Heaven) is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them..."

This is called the Parable of the Talents. A talent, is not what we think of today related to our gifts or abilities, but a talent in this culture is a coin that was worth about a \$1000. From this very first verse we see the very first principle of *stewardship*, which is...

1. God Owns Everything

If God really does own everything then it stands to reason that would mean that God has the right to whatever He wants whenever He wants with it, right

However, many of us make financial decisions as if we are the owners. When that is our perspective we ask "What do I want?"

But if we see God as the owner, we ask, "God, what would you have me do?" There is a huge difference.

Remember, **Every spending decision is a spiritual decision.** If God owns it all, then we are just managers of what He gives us. So every time we make a purchase, it is a spiritual decision.

Many of us aren't experiencing God's Blessing in our lives because we aren't completely surrendering our money & possessions to Him.

Let's continue reading in **Matthew 25:15-16** – "To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents."

2. God expects us to invest wisely and live generously.

God allows us to steward His resources for a purpose – so that we can invest them wisely and generously. That is what the owner in this parable did.

We need to learn that a steward is supposed to handle or manage somebody else's stuff with the goals of the other person, the owner, in mind. Let me give you a good quote on stewardship:

A steward protects and grows the owner's assets with fierce intensity.

ILLUSTRATION: A financial planner. A real estate agent. Their financial future is tied to how well they manage or steward the owners possessions.

- We need to understand God's goals and invest our time, talent and treasure towards His goals.

We need to be wise money managers, that is why as a church we offer **the WISER Discipleship Course** to help you in this area.

- God also wants us to invest in the spiritual. God wants to reach this world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Being a giver isn't as much something you do as it is who you are. Let me give you a very practical example, show me your checkbook or your bank statement and I will be able to tell a lot about you.

The story of our checkbook is the story of our lives. It tells what we value, it tells what we believe in, it tells who we care about. In fact, our checkbooks are a clear indicator of our priorities.

Let's also look at what the wisest (and richest man) says **Ecclesiastes 7:12** – Wisdom is a shelter as money is a shelter, but the advantage of knowledge is this: that wisdom preserves the life of its possessor.

We don't need more, we need to be better stewards of what we have.

And now let's look at the third principle.

Matthew 25:20-23 The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, "Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents." ²¹His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." ²²Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, "Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents." ²³His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master."

3. God holds us accountable.

The owner in this parable came back to see what his servants did with the resources that they were entrusted with and they were judged according to how they handled the talents. **One day you and I are going to be in the same place.**

You MUST understand how God rewards us. He doesn't reward our faithfulness but our fruitfulness.

LET ME EXPLAIN WHAT I MEAN. You can be faithful at doing the wrong things. The servant with the 1 talent was faithful but not fruitful, and it was a bad deal.

ILLUSTRATION:

Churches that are ineffective at reaching people. They are faithful to church attendance but not to the object of God's purpose, people.

God is going to personally ask us one day, He is going to take an account of all of our decisions, including our financial decisions. He is going to take an inventory of what we did with the resources He placed in our lives.

It is important that we recognize and not take lightly what God entrusts to us – whether it is influence, relationships, our family, our children, and our resources.

God has extended influence to our church quickly and we need to be careful to understand and embrace the responsibility that goes with that. We are to do the best with what God has entrusted to us. We will be held accountable for it.

Under the weight of life's uncertainties, it's easy to slowly become irrational about our possessions. It's easy to lose sight of who really owns them and live in fear.

We must never allow ourselves to be paralyzed by fear or we will not steward and invest properly and we will miss God's Will in our finances.

END OF MESSAGE PUSH: Wiser Discipleship Course (We're going to be teaching stewardship in this series and if you want to go deeper there's still time - register for Wiser today)

Let's pray.