

“The Walk”

Week 4: Stewardship



In week #1, we learned to **worship & praise** God; as individuals and as a community.

In week #2, we studied **listening and paying attention** to God's Word; individually and in group study.

In week #3, we were asked to **serve** with your church family and practice random acts of kindness.

- Since the last session, how did you share the love of Christ with others?
- Since the last session what acts of kindness did you extend to other?
- What, if any, frustrations did you experience as you practiced the discipline of service and sought to extend kindness?
- In what new ways did you serve Christ and others as a result of intentionally practicing this discipline?
- In what ways did serving others bring you joy?

****The topic for today is the spiritual discipline of giving; generosity towards God and others****

Opening Prayer

Holy and Generous God, we thank you for your abundant blessings and your amazing generosity toward us. We stand in awe of your gifts of overflowing grace, mercy, and love. Open our hearts that we may respond to your love with generosity towards others. In the name of your Son Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen

Video & Discussion: Consider these questions as you view the video

- In the video, Adam Hamilton describes the bible and his wallet being in conflict. How do you experience the same conflict in your own life?
- Do you agree that our tax returns or our checkbooks are a reflection of our priorities and values? Why or why not?
- What does extraordinary generosity mean to you? How does such generosity shape our outlook on life and our walk with Christ?
- What is the relationship between the way we give together as a church and the way we give as individuals?
- Adam Hamilton says that when we die, the only things we can take with us are what we have given away. How can you invest more in these eternal treasures?

Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV): Treasures in Heaven

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- Why does Jesus say “Do not” or “Stop” storing up treasures for ourselves on earth?
 - A desire for money and material possessions may overpower our desire for a relationship with God.
 - Jesus tells us to place our faith in God who is trustworthy, not in material possessions and money, which are easily lost.
- Have you had the experience of losing an earthly treasure to rust, breakage, theft or other damage?
- If so, how did you feel about this loss?
- What are the “treasures in heaven” that Jesus calls us to “store up” or “collect”?

Read again Matthew 6:21 (For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also).

- Where is your treasure?
- Where is your heart?

Acts 20:35: It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Money

Yes, just like prayer, worship, Scripture readings and serving, money is a spiritual activity. In the Gospels, we find that Jesus speaks about money and material possessions more than the others ***combined!***

Hedonism: The pursuit of pleasure above all else. The theology of joy and the good life. We talk about it, we dream about it, we search for it, and we even sing for it (along with Tony Bennett to rapper Kanye West). But Jesus tells us:

Matthew 6:24: “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

King Solomon was a man who admitted that he devoted his entire life to acquiring pleasure and escaping pain.

Ecclesiastes 4b, 8, 10: Pleasures Are Meaningless

I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well. I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. King Solomon had everything he could ever want and more, but he tells us that it was all pointless and meaningless.

So, what are the keys to the “good life”?

❖ **Gratitude:**

- Learn to want what you already have: Give thanks for what you already possess

❖ **Live purposefully:** what adds meaning to your life? What gives you a sense of purpose?

- Following Jesus
- Seeking to do His will through love (caring for others & trying to heal the world’s brokenness)

❖ **Generosity:** God made us for generosity toward God & others

- Church ministries: we give as a group in our ministries for the specific works of the church and church family
- Individually: We give our tithes & offerings to have a collective impact on the world around us.

Did you know? Beulah gives 11% of all of our tithes & donations to organizations in need locally and throughout the world!

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. Winston Churchill.

Luke 6:38: Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”



Pray 5 times a day

Read 5 Bible verses a day

Do 5 Acts of Kindness this Week

Do 5 acts of extraordinary generosity

Pray together (church)

Group Bible Study

Serve with your church family

Give corporately (tithes & offerings)

Like our prior chapters of doing things x5, lets practice 5 acts of generosity. It could be a higher than normal tip, an anonymous gift, a donation to a cause, etc.

****Possess your possessions rather than your possessions possessing you! ****

CLOSING PRAYER: Thank You God for everything I have. I recognize that all of life is a gift from you. Please help me to become more generous, more willing to share with others. Help me to live beneath my means so that I might have enough margin to give. Help me to be generous toward you and others, remembering your unending generosity toward me. Amen

Lord Jesus, teach me to be generous;
teach me to serve you as you deserve,
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labor and not to seek reward,

except that of knowing that I do your will. Amen. St. Ignatius Loyola