**Study Series: Spiritual Disciplines**

Author: Donald S. Whitney

**Lesson Title: “Stewardship…for the Purpose of Godliness” (pp. 141 - 151)**

February 21, 2021 Session 12

**The main point of this lesson is:** Godliness depends on one’s stewardship of time and financial resources.

Focus on this goal: To help adults envision the difference in their lives that could come from adopting or strengthening one time principle and one financial principle.

Key Bible Passages: 1 Corinthians 4:2; 9:6-14; Ephesians 5:15-17

To the Leader:

1. **Display** the spiritual disciplines poster created for Session 6, Step 1 (p. 78).

2. This is not an in-depth look at the stewardship of time and money, but more like a guided tour with just the briefest of highlights. **Don’t bog down** in one principle, but **guide the group** on this overview, keeping the session’s main point and goal in mind.

During the Session

**Step 1. Introduction / Discussion Starter**

**Request adults evaluate** what nanny-cams, audits, and employee reviews have in common (hold people accountable for what has been entrusted to them).

**Assert** God has entrusted resources to Christ’s followers and expects us to manage them well.

**Read** 1 Corinthians 4:2.

**Define** biblical stewardship as: Responsible management of God-given resources for God’s glory.

**Read** the main point of this lesson (p. 152).

**Step 2. Day One – The Disciplined Use of Time, Part 1**

**Consider** why stewardship of time is “at the heart of a disciplined spiritual life” (p. 142).

**Note** that God has created good works for believers to do (Eph. 2:10). In the Gospels we never see Jesus rushed or frantic, yet He completed the work God gave Him to do (John 17:4). We become more like Jesus when we manage time well.

**Invite a volunteer to read** Ephesians 5:15-17.

**Draw from this passage** descriptions of believers who live wisely.

**Ask:** Do you think our use of time is neutral? Explain your reasoning.

**Discuss** Day One, activity 1 (p. 142).

**Read** 1 Corinthians 4:2-4 and declare: God’s evaluation of how we manage time is what matters. Developing godly relationships and making a positive eternal impact is wise, disciplined stewardship of time. The goal isn’t for us to become busier, but to use time more effectively.

**Ask** how the truths that time is short, passing, and uncertain challenge adults to want to be more faithful in how they manage time.

**Ask:** What would our days look like if we lived out the reality that our times are in God’s hands?

**Invite responses** to the second question in Day One, activity 2 (p. 144).

**Step 3. Day Two – The Disciplined Use of Time, Part 2**

**Read and discuss** the bolded statements from Day Two (pp. 144-145).

**Discuss** Day Two, activity 1 (p. 145).

**Brainstorm** ways believers lose time.

**Ask:** What can we do if we have misused time?

**Ask a volunteer to read** Psalm 90:12.

**Draw attention** to Day Two, activity 2 (p. 146).

**Briefly lead** such a prayer for all participants.

**Step 4. Day Three – The Disciplined Use of Money, Part 1**

**Invite volunteers to state** why they agree or disagree that the attitude toward, and use of, money is one of the best indicators of spiritual maturity.

**Declare:** Since God is the ultimate Giver of good gifts, believers must steward money well so we can give for the sake of Christ and His kingdom. The first way we can do so is by recognizing whose money it is. Can we really say, “my money”? Why?

**Discuss** Day Three, activity 1 (p. 147).

**Declare:** We can choose to manage money or allow money to manage us. We can choose to use money to build our little kingdoms or God’s kingdom.

**Read** the Day Three margin/pull quote (p. 147).

**Invite a volunteer to read** Philippians 4:15-20.

**Analyze** what pleased Paul the most about the Philippians’ gift.

**Refer** to the story of the poor widow in Mark 12:41-44 and **evaluate** what matters to God in our giving.

**Ask:**

1. Do you think we’re always supposed to give away everything we have? Explain.
2. How can we regularly reflect faith in God’s provision with our giving?

**Step 5. Day Four – The Disciplined Use of Money, Part 2**

**Invite responses** to Day Four, activity 1 (p. 148).

**Ask:**

1. Why might many people say the Macedonians’ type of giving just didn’t make sense?
2. What empowered them to give so sacrificially?

**Assert** that generous and sacrificial giving makes perfect sense to people who focus on the grace God has given them.

**Invite a volunteer to read** 2 Corinthians 8:8-14.

**Ask:** What principles about excelling in the spiritual discipline of generous giving can we gain from these verses?

**Discuss** Day Four, activity 2 (p. 149).

**Note** 2 Corinthians 9:7 doesn’t mean God doesn’t love us when we’re not cheerful about giving; God is pleased when we give generously because we’re reflecting His Son and giving Him glory.

**After examining** these truths from 2 Corinthians 8–9, **note** that giving reflects spiritual trustworthiness and read Luke 16:11.

**Step 6. Day Five – The Disciplined Use of Money, Part 3**

**Note** several New Testament passages, including 2 Corinthians 8, indicate giving is an appropriate response to real needs.

**Ask:** What if we’re not sure the need is real; how can we be found faithful as a manager of God’s money?

**Discuss** Day Five, activity 1 (p. 151).

**Encourage adults to recall** from 2 Corinthians 9:6-14 (Day Four, activity 2, p. 149) some blessings of generous giving.

**Invite volunteers to share** how they have experienced the truth that “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

**Step 7. Live Out the Lesson**

**Read** again 1 Corinthians 4:2.

**Encourage adults** to envision the difference in their lives that could come from adopting or strengthening some of the principles of stewardship examined in this study.

**Challenge them** this week to lay physical representations of their time and money (day-planner, wallet, mobile device) before God and commit, “My time and money are in Your hands.”

**Close in prayer.**