

Study Series: Joyful Surrender

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Lesson Title: “The Discipline of Possessions” (pp. 157-168)

Session 12

February 19, 2023

The main point of this lesson is: The discipline of possessions is essential for the believer’s life.

Focus on this goal: To help adults practice the discipline of possessions

Key Bible Passage: Philippians 4:11-13

Before the Session

1. Gather a few items you’ve seen children or teens misuse. (For example, sitting improperly in a chair, setting a drink on a Bible, etc.) Be prepared to demonstrate or describe the misuse. (Step 1)

2. Write on a large piece of paper, All that is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ belongs to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .” (Step 7)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Display an item you’ve seen misused. (I’ll use a chair as an example. But feel free to use anything and suit the comments to that item.) **Say:** *This is a chair, and the chair has one use: to sit in it like so.* [Sit calmly and properly in the chair.]

**Ask:** *Have you ever seen a child or teenager (or even an adult) misuse a chair, even though they know exactly how to use it?* Demonstrate how some may sit in it and lean back on two legs, rock back and forth, or even stand on it to reach something. **Say:** *I cringe when I see this; maybe you do, too. Today, let’s look at the very adult discipline of possessions. It’s not just a lesson for children!*

Step 2. Lost Things

**Direct attention** to the author’s explanation (p. 157) of how she values faucets and hot water more after she’s been to their Norwegian cottage for a while.

**Share** a time in your own life (such as a camping trip, living with relatives, etc.) in which you realized how much you took for granted at your home. **Say:** *We also reconsider an item’s value if it’s lost or unavailable to us in some way.*

**Read** the paragraph (p. 158) beginning with “I lost a year’s language work . . .” from Day One.

**Invite** a volunteer to read Philippians 4:12. **Point out** that we, like Paul, only learn to be content through each of these situations, even if they are painful at the time.

Step 3. Given by God; Received with Thanksgiving

**Enlist** a volunteer to read James 1:16-17.

**Read** the author’s words about the beauty of lights in the sky from the first paragraph of Day Two (pp. 158-159), **pointing out** the fact that those lights reveal the other good and perfect gifts.

**Enlist** a different volunteer to read Romans 8:32. **Point ou**t that God’s most glorious gift is Christ’s death for our salvation. **Say:** *The lights and the sacrifice of Jesus are two things that point to the giving nature of our heavenly Father.*

**Share** a time you experienced something you didn’t want (a health issue, death of a loved one, etc.) but that God revealed Himself to you through the experience. **Say:** *In times like this, we can see God’s wonderful gift-giving ability. It reminds us to thank Him for everything.*

Step 4. Material for Sacrifice

**Hold** your hands out in front of you, open, palms up. **Demonstrate** the eucharistic life, as explained by the author in Day Three (p. 160): God gives us blessings, we receive them, and lift them back up to Him as an offering.

**Invite** a few volunteers to share who have given something away for a charitable cause or to a person in need and found that the offering was a much better blessing than the item itself.

**Invite** a volunteer to read 1 Chronicles 29:14 and 2 Corinthians 9:7-8. **Stress** that we can give generously because God has generously given to us.

Step 5. Enjoy for a While, Part 1

**Read** the quote from Day Four (p. 162): “It is altogether fitting and proper that we should enjoy things made for us to enjoy. What is not at all fitting or proper is that we should set our hearts on them.” Joyfully **encourage** learners to enjoy the blessings God has given them for a time.

**Invite** a volunteer to read Matthew 6:19-21. Briefly **recount** the story of the rich young ruler (Matt. 19:16-22), **pointing out** that the man had been given an abundance of blessings, but was unwilling to let them go when the proper time came.

**Challenge** learners to consider their own possessions and how God might be calling them to bless others with those possessions.

Step 6. Enjoy for a While, Part 2

**Invite** a volunteer to read Philippians 3:8-10. **Say:** Some might ask if God would take their possessions away. What might Paul say to that concern, according to this passage?

**Read** the second paragraph of Day Five (p. 164), **pointing out** that those who have lost all and found Christ faithful have a deeper, richer faith.

**Use** the content from Day Five (p. 164) to discuss our willingness to tithe.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

**Display** the sign you made before class. **Invite** a few volunteers to fill in the blanks based on what you’ve studied today. Many might say, “All that is ours belongs to Christ.” **Affirm** that answer. **Stress,** however, another true answer is this: “All that is Christ’s belongs to us.”

**Use** the closing paragraph of Day Five (p. 165) to **drive home** the point that we have already gained every spiritual blessing in Christ; we can trust Him with all He’s given to us.

**Close in prayer.**

