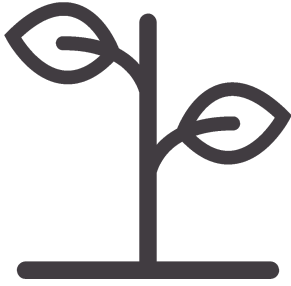




Stewardship Devotional

Lasting Legacy



A steward uses their time, talent, and treasure to know God and make him known.

Through the following pages of this devotional, we invite you to take time and space to meet with the Lord, remember his generosity toward you, and ask him to help you grow as a generous steward.

Jesus frequently taught on money, and he told his followers, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21; Luke 12:34). So we are embarking on this journey of growth in stewardship as a whole church, that we may take his teaching seriously.

As you work through this resource, we encourage you to share with other members of our church family how God is calling you to grow as a generous steward and to pray together as we all take our next steps of obedience.

We hope that as you work and pray through these passages, you’ll grow deeper in your love for Christ and your desire to put him first in everything, leaving a lasting legacy.



Stewardship Checkup

How do you regularly remember and believe the generosity of God toward you and your family?

How are you intentionally stewarding (managing) the resources God has entrusted you with? What role does prayer have in that process?

In evaluating your stewardship journey, the following three questions are intended to serve as a way for you to assess where you currently are, in preparation for considering how the Lord may be calling you to grow in the area of stewardship.

What is your current annual giving to the kingdom of God?

What is your family's annual income?

What percentage of your annual income are you currently giving to the kingdom of God? (annual giving/annual income) x 100 = _____ %

Is there anyone in your life (outside of your household) with whom you are actively sharing the specifics of your personal finances and your giving? Pray and *just ask* God who he might be inviting you to share this area of your stewardship discipleship journey with.



A Lasting Legacy

**“Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
- 1 Corinthians 10:31b (ESV)**

As followers of Christ, we believe in the importance of consistent spiritual disciplines. Spending time in prayer and God’s Word on a regular basis is vital for continued growth. But we also know what it’s like for a healthy rhythm to become a stagnant rut. Without intentionality, even the best rhythms can become mere routines. What was once fresh and revitalizing can become dull and automatic, and the beauty of the gospel can begin to appear dim as we dull to its radiance.

When that happens, we have to be careful of applying the “good enough” principle to our spiritual lives. This happens when we settle for what God has already shown us without asking him to *continue* to show us his ways. We are called to do everything to the glory of God, but it is far too easy to go through a day without really thinking about what that means.

The Bible voices prayer after prayer asking God to help us grow deeper in what we already know and have experienced. Daily, we have to remind ourselves of the gospel. God has given us everything we need in Christ. He took our place in death, and through his resurrection, we have abundant life. The gospel isn’t just the diving board into the pool of Christianity; it is the pool itself. Going deeper in the gospel doesn’t mean pursuing something new; it means saturating ourselves in the truth of Christ. It means living in such a radical way that you leave a lasting legacy, to the glory of God.

Growth in the gospel necessitates that we ask ourselves the same questions over and over again:

Today, am I believing that Jesus has done everything necessary for my salvation, and am I therefore acting out of that truth?

Today, am I willing to go wherever he tells me to go and do whatever he tells me to do?

Am I giving God the first and best of my time, talent, and treasure to know him and make him known?

As you use this devotional, we hope that this will be more than a routine exercise for you. We hope that through these passages, you’ll grow deeper in your love for Christ and your desire to put him first in all things.



God—Our Father and Provider

“And he said to them, ‘When you pray, say:

“Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread...””

- Luke 11:2–3

Our identities as stewards begin with how God feels about us. Before we consider what we give, we look to the God of the gospel and remember all he has given to us.

That’s how Jesus teaches us to pray. We start by addressing God as “Father.” Before the “what” of our prayer, we begin with the “who.” We come to our Father, who loves us. He couldn’t care more for us or be more generous to us if he tried. Before demands, we delight.

So it’s no surprise that Jesus tells us to look to our Father to provide for our everyday needs. We just ask him to “give us each day our daily bread.” We call on God to provide our basic sustenance. And God, our Father, delights to give us what we need because he loves us.

In fact, God has no limit to the lengths he will go to provide for his children, even when it costs his own life. Ultimately, God gave his Son, Jesus Christ, to be our daily bread—to provide for our every need in life and death. That’s why Jesus said, “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35), and why we eat the bread of the Lord’s Supper—to remember God’s provision for us in Jesus’ death and resurrection.

But the story doesn’t end there. God continues to provide for our physical needs. He gives “bread for food” to his family in lots of ways and often, he uses our generosity to do it (2 Corinthians 9:10–11). Sometimes, God provides for you through one of your Christian siblings. Other times, God provides for others through your generosity.

Someone else’s daily bread may be in your pantry. You may be God’s plan to provide for the people around you.

As we grow as stewards, we begin by remembering our Father, who loves us and has given us everything we need in his Son. Then, we ask, *How does God want to use me to provide for the needs of his family?*

Reflection Questions:

Is there any area of your life where you are not trusting God, your Father, to provide for your needs? Write a one-sentence gospel reminder to help you remember that God can be trusted.

What is one way God is calling you to give of yourself and your resources for the good of others?

Who is one person in your life who needs to be reminded of God's generosity in the gospel? When will you tell them?



Your Location

“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.”

- Acts 16:9–10

When we reflect on the gifts God has entrusted to us, we typically consider things like our communication abilities, intelligence, and creativity. But for a moment, let us consider another aspect of our lives that God entrusts to our stewardship—our physical location. In this passage, God changed Paul’s physical location in order that he might preach to people who had not heard about Jesus. Just like Paul, our physical location is strategic for gospel ministry and must be stewarded to make God known.

We may not often see our physical location as God’s gift to us. If we think about our location at all, we usually consider it unimportant, almost trivial. But consider that all of us live in a nation filled with financial abundance and spiritual poverty. Historians tell us that we live in the most affluent nation the world has ever seen. Those riches come with a responsibility. Also, the number of Christians in the United States is quickly declining, and basic awareness of the gospel is at an all-time low here.

Followers of Christ are called to live in ways that often make no sense to the surrounding world. Society celebrates leveraging our talent and resources for personal acclaim, but God calls us to leverage our gifts to do whatever it takes to reach all people.

Take a moment now to pray and ask God how you should steward your place and whatever abundance you have, in order to proclaim Christ in word and deed in RDU and around the world.

Reflection Questions:

Make a list of people God has placed in your life who have spiritual or physical needs. Is there anyone on your list who has a need you can meet? How will you seek to offer your abundance to them this week?

Does your financial stewardship make Christ known in word and deed? What is one step you can take today to leverage your finances for the gospel?

Spend a few minutes praying by just asking the Lord how he wants you to steward what he has entrusted you with (your time, talent, and treasure) to advance his kingdom. Write down what the Lord puts on your heart.



Your Lifestyle

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

- Matthew 6:19–21

The Bible is clear that how we relate to money is one of the key indicators of our maturity as a disciple of Christ. In fact, there are more than 2,000 verses in the Bible about money. In Jesus’ three-year ministry, he spoke more about money than about heaven and hell, faith, and prayer. Why? Not because Jesus cared more about money than faith (far from it), but because he knew that the love of money would be a chief competitor to our worship of God (cf. Matthew 6:24).

When we read Jesus’ words in Matthew 6, we are quick to agree with Jesus: *Yes, of course, we should all store up treasures in heaven!* But when we look at how we actually spend our money, it often tells a different story. Many of us fail to invest in the kingdom of God because we are waiting for our heart to lead us there. Jesus turns that idea upside down when he says that our hearts actually follow our treasure.

By building in God-honoring habits with our money, we can lead our hearts heavenward, toward Jesus. This is great news because for those of us who are Christians, ultimately, he’s where our hearts want to be anyway.

Reflection Questions:

**Where does your spending reflect that you are treasuring God's kingdom?
Where does it reflect that you are treasuring your own kingdom?**

What are you having trouble giving to God and his kingdom? Why?

Is there something you feel is preventing you from sacrificial generosity? What is God asking you to do about it?

Who can you invite to pray with you for God to help you obey him as he is calling you to give, in order to know him and make him known?



Your Generosity

“He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.”

- 2 Corinthians 9:10–11

Chances are, any time people ask you for something that is a limited resource, you get nervous. Perhaps you budget your money. You budget your time. At the very least, you are fully aware that there’s only so much of each! And it’s nice to know where it’s going. (It’s even nicer to know that there will be some left at the end of the day!)

Budgeting our time or money isn’t the problem here. It’s actually quite wise. But if we’re not careful, we’ll start to assume that God’s economy operates exactly like ours. What’s more dangerous, we’ll act as if God is just one more person after our limited resources. In an “economy of the limited,” every new opportunity for generosity is only seen as a threat.

But God doesn’t operate in our “economy of the limited.” God, our Father, comes to us from a position of abundance and richness that he desires to pour out on us. His resources are literally unlimited! So when he invites us into generosity, he doesn’t do so because he is short on cash. He invites us to become more like him, sharing in his lavish generosity and multiplying the “economy of the unlimited.”

If we think of our resources—and our God—as limited, then what we keep is all we’ll ever have. But when we trust God in generosity, we’ll realize that what we give him always multiplies.

Reflection Questions:

What giving experience has taught you the most about God?

How does your financial generosity compare to other financial investments you make on a recurring basis (cell phone, mortgage or rent, gym membership, etc.)? What does it say about the kingdom you're building?

Are you giving in a way that still challenges you, or has your giving become comfortable and routine?



Your Legacy

“I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread. He is ever lending generously, and his children become a blessing.”

- Psalm 37:25–26

For many of us, the reason we aren't more generous is that we're afraid. We're afraid that if we give away too much, we won't be able to take care of our family. So we take this good impulse and tend to convince ourselves that God will never call us to generosity which seems risky. But the moment we conclude that our generosity will always be safe is the moment we deny Jesus' radical call to discipleship.

The specific ways our generosity plays out will vary from person to person. But all believers are equally challenged to open their hands to God, allowing him to do whatever it takes to remove idols from their hands—and from their hearts. Sometimes, that means our giving will look downright foolish to the unbelieving world.

The psalmist's words here are a breath of fresh air, reminding us that God is the one who faithfully provides for the righteous person. His children always have their daily provision. They never beg for bread. God, our Father, desires to provide for all of our needs, which is why he offers his greatest provision by giving his Son as the Bread of Life (John 6:35).

Not only does the righteous one continually experience God's provision (v. 25), but he has also continually been generous. In other words, he wasn't just generous with his excess (when it was easy to give); he was generous with his life (no matter the circumstance).

Even more striking, though, is this passage's promise of legacy: A lifestyle of generosity gives blessing to the next generation. In fact, as the psalmist says here, it not only *gives* the next generation a blessing, but it *makes* the next generation a blessing (v. 26)!

What greater legacy could we imagine than one in which we live with open hands? What greater wealth could we pass on to our children than a life lived in complete dependence upon God?

Reflection Questions:

Who is one person you know who has left a legacy of generosity? What decisions did they make across the span of their life to be able to leave that legacy?

What are you intentionally doing right now to ensure that the next generation is learning the generosity of God and learning to be generous like him?

Who are you investing in, in order to help them grow in being a faithful steward?



Reflecting to Grow

Remember: Name as many ways as you can think of that God has been generous to you.

Respond: How are you responding to God's generosity by establishing a consistent pattern of giving? What new patterns of giving do you need to begin today?

Surrender: Does your current giving reflect a posture of open hands, offering all of your time, talent, and treasure to know God and make him known? Why or why not?

Relationships: Discipleship happens in relationship. Who in your life will you share your journey of generosity with? What is one thing God is showing you that you will share with them? How can they pray for you as you grow as a steward who leaves a lasting legacy? When will you talk to them?

Next Steps: What does it look like for you to open your hands in generosity to God this year? What is one step you can take this week to grow in trusting God and being generous in response?

Commit: Over the next year, how much do you believe God is calling you to give to his kingdom? Do you have any stored assets that he may be calling you to give? *Just ask* what he is calling you to do and write it down, so you can begin to take steps of obedience.

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Pray: Just ask God to help you remember and trust his generosity, and to give you strength to do what he is asking you to do to use your time, talent, and treasure to know him and make him known.

Stewardship Ministry Resources

summitchurch.com/stewardship

Financial Coaching

summitchurch.com/coach

Have a story to share?

We want to hear how the Lord has moved in your life through this series and devotional.

Send your story to stories@summitchurch.com!

