

TAKEAWAY:

Generosity begins when we stop seeing ourselves as owners and start seeing ourselves as stewards.

INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS:

What comes to your mind when you think about the words “ownership” and “possessions”?

UNDERSTANDING:

Have a group member read Psalm 24:1-2; 1 Chronicles 29:10-16

- How did this sermon help you better understand this passage of scripture? Is there anything that was mentioned during the sermon that stuck out to you?
- On a practical, day-to-day level, what does it actually feel like to think of your home, your savings, or your career as something entrusted to you rather than owned by you? What changes when you think that way?
- David (in 1 Chronicles) sounds amazed, not manipulated, when he gives. When was the last time generosity felt like amazement rather than obligation for you? What made the difference?
- Which area of your life is hardest to hold loosely: possessions, time, career, relationships? Why do you think that is?
- How does the concept of stewardship change the way you make financial decisions day to day, not just during a giving campaign like *Gather*?

APPLICATION:

- The sermon asks: "God, what have You entrusted to me, and how do You want me to use it for Your kingdom?" How would you begin to answer that question honestly?
- This week, do a simple stewardship inventory. List the major resources God has entrusted to you – income, skills, time, relationships, influence. Next to each one, write one honest answer to the question: "Am I managing this as a steward or treating it as an owner?" Bring your reflections to share with your group.

GO DEEPER:

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material.

You can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting and to deepen your study of our text from this week. Here are two "Going Deeper" discussion prompts

that build upon the above provided questions without repeating them:

The Ethics of Wealth and Generosity: Read 1 Tim 6:6-10, 17-19 (cf. Eccl 5:10; Pro 11:28; Matt 6:19-21; Luke 12:15; Phil 4:11-12; Heb 13:5).

- "True contentment doesn't come from having more; it comes from remembering we brought nothing into this world and can carry nothing out, which frees us to be satisfied with food and clothing."
- How does Paul's definition of "great gain" (godliness combined with contentment) challenge our culture's definition of a successful life?
- Verse 7 reminds us that we brought nothing into this world and can take nothing out. How should keeping this eternal perspective practically impact our daily financial decisions and anxieties?
- What is the subtle difference between possessing wealth and "desiring to be rich" (v. 9), and why does Paul warn that this specific desire leads to a snare and ruin?
- In verse 17, Paul commands the wealthy not to be haughty or arrogant. Why does financial prosperity so often produce a sense of superiority or an illusion of independence from God?
- Paul instructs believers to be "generous and ready to share" (v. 18). What practical systems, budgets, or habits can a family put in place to ensure they are always prepared and "ready" to meet the needs of others?

Radical Generosity Versus the Comfort of Surplus Charity: Distinguish between giving out of excess (which maintains the status quo) and radical generosity (which requires a fundamental restructuring of lifestyle).

- How does the realization that wealth is entrusted for kingdom purposes alter the modern definition of a "basic necessity"?
- Known for his blistering critiques of wealth disparity in Constantinople, John Chrysostom weaponized the theology of divine ownership against the hoarding class. He challenged the wealthy elites of his day, asking: *"Tell me, then, whence art thou rich? From whom didst thou receive it, and from whom he who transmitted it to thee? ... The root and origin of it must have been injustice. Why? Because God in the beginning made not one man rich, and another poor... but He left the earth free to all alike"*. Chrysostom argued that because the earth is the Lord's, it is intended for the common sustenance of humanity. Therefore, extreme private accumulation is inherently suspect and indicative of systemic theft. Wealth is entrusted by God for rapid redistribution to the poor, not for dynastic preservation. In examining historical views (such as Chrysostom) that hoarding excess wealth is theft from the poor, how must modern believers evaluate their accumulation of assets?
- What emotional barriers prevent believers from experiencing the "amazement" of generosity that David modeled, reducing it to a sterile obligation?
- How can a family determine the "finish line" for their lifestyle, ensuring that subsequent income increases result in increased giving rather than increased spending?
- How does a steward balance the mandate to provide for their own family with the mandate to radically care for the marginalized?

QUOTES:

- **John Wesley:** "Gain all you can, without hurting either yourself or your neighbour... Save all you can, by cutting off every expense which serves only to indulge foolish desire... And then give all you can; or in other words, give all you have to God..."
- **Matthew Henry:** "What is done in works of piety and charity, should be done willingly, not by constraint; for God loves a cheerful giver... Those who would draw others to good, must lead the way themselves."

- **Dallas Willard:** "If God owns our hearts, He will most certainly have our 'wallets' as well. Any discussion of stewardship must therefore begin with a healthy understanding of Kingdom discipleship."
- **Tim Keller:** "A lack of generosity refuses to acknowledge that your assets are not really yours, but God's. ... If anything becomes more fundamental than God to your happiness, meaning in life, and identity, then it is an idol."

GROUP PRAYER: Pray that the Lord would convict our hearts to surrender our possessions and pride of having more so that we can freely surrender all to Him.