Stewards by God's Design: The Three R's of the Christian Steward

Relationships – Responsibilities – Resources

The Resource of Treasure

Goal: That participants would understand and live out the fact that the money and possessions they have belong to God and because they do, they must be managed as He desires.

Introduction: Ask participants to share the best advice they have received about money.

In his book, *Redeeming Money*, Paul David Tripp lists the four foundations of a Gospel worldview. They are:

1. At the center of the universe is a God of incalculable glory.
2. We live in a world terribly broken by sin.
3. God offers us his heart and life-transforming grace.
4. We were created to live for something bigger than ourselves.

Why is a biblical worldview so important when considering money?

Truthstory.org defines worldview this way:

A worldview is a way you look at the world. It's the lens through which you interpret all your experiences and through which you make decisions. It's your colored glasses you wear, even if you don't know you're wearing them. More technically, according to David Noebel, author of *Understanding the Times* (Focus on the Family), a worldview is…"The framework from which we view reality and make sense of life and the world. "[It's] any ideology, philosophy, theology, movement or religion that provides an overarching approach to understanding God, the world and man's relations to God and the world."

That's a great definition. But sometimes it helps to sum up many words with a few. A simpler understanding comes from Chuck Colson who once said, a worldview is "the sum total of our beliefs about the world."

A worldview is at the core of our being. It impacts how we see everything. If Christ is at the center of our worldview we will see money for what it is—a tool that God gives us to take care of our own needs and to help our neighbor.

Another important question is, "Does faith have anything to do with how one stewards the money that God entrusts to his or her care?"

Answer: Of course it does. The faith that the Holy Spirit has worked in us impacts every area of our lives. We do not compartmentalize our lives into those areas that God has a role and those

areas where we want to keep God out. Because faith is important in every area of life, how one stewards money is a spiritual issue.

What does the Bible say about money and possessions?

1. Stewards by God's design understand that money is a trust form God.
    - Haggai 2:8 The silver and gold belong to God. He owns it all.
    - Leviticus 25:23 The land belongs to God. He owns it all.
    - Psalm 50:10-12 The animals belong to God. He owns them all.

Knowing that God owns the money and possessions we have means that we see things differently than most people. How is that so?

The money and possessions that are in our care do not belong to us. God owns it all. We are not owners (most people think they are) we are stewards (we manage what belongs to God). As stewards we seek God's direction for how He wants us to manage the money and possessions He entrusts to our care. Stewards by definition (a steward is one who manages what belongs to another) are not owners. We see the things in our possession as belonging to God and not to us—so we treat them that way.

2. Stewards by God's design use His money for His purposes.

    - 1 Timothy 5:8 God gives us money to provide for our families.
    - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 God gives us money to further the spread of the Gospel.
    - 1 John 3:17 God gives us money to help our neighbor.

3. Stewards by God's design are to be generous.

    - Psalm 112:5 It is good to be generous and to lend to others.
    - 2 Corinthians 9:11-12 Thankfulness to God is demonstrated by generosity.
    - 1 Timothy 6:18-19 We are told to be generous and willing to share.

4. Stewards by God's design follow His guidelines for giving.

    - Proverbs 3:9 We honor God when we give to Him first.
    - 2 Corinthians 8:12 We give according to what we have.
    - Luke 21:1-4 We give trusting God and His promises.
    - Deuteronomy 16:16-17 Everyone is to give—as God prospers them.
    - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 We are to give intentionally and regularly.
    - 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 We are to give freely and cheerfully.

5. Stewards by God's design have a heart that focuses on Jesus.

• Matthew 6:21	The treasure of our heart is Jesus.
• Hebrews 12:1-2	In every circumstance of life we look to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. We look to Him for our identity, purpose, and security.

Close the session by reading the left side of the student guide.

- Ask participants to react to Luther's statement that money and possessions are the world's biggest idol.

- Ask participants if they agree with Luther's assessment that the desire for riches sticks glued to all of us until the grave?

- How is money both a bane and a blessing?

- Finally, ask what we can do individually to resist the temptations Luther talks about.

Prayer: Gracious Lord, thank You for the gift of money and possessions. We are privileged and responsible to use them not only to meet our needs but also the needs of others. Guide us through Your Word to be faithful, wise, and fruitful stewards of all you have entrusted to our care. In Your Name we pray, Amen.

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