



Small Group Discussion Guide

February 5, 2017

Sermon Title:
"Managing Life"

Sermon Text: Matthew 25:14-30

Scripture Reading: John 10:1-10

Leader: *Please allow a moment for introductions/visiting, and then have someone offer a brief prayer for God to meet with your group.*

Getting Started: How well do you do managing and keeping up with your responsibilities? Where do you succeed? Where do you struggle? Share a story or two that highlight your answers. Are there reasons some areas of life are easier to manage than others?

Discussion:

1. What do you think of when you hear the word "stewardship?" Is your reaction positive or negative? Why has the word become so identified with money?
2. Discuss the following quote the pastor shared during his message. "Stewardship is the act of organizing [managing] your life so God can spend you." Does this definition challenge your approach toward stewardship and your life? If so, how?
3. Browse the following passages that use the specific Greek word translated stewardship. What is being managed? Luke 16:1-15 (v 3), 1 Corinthians 9:1-18 (v 17), Ephesians 1:3-14 (v 10); 3:1-13 (vs 2, 9), Colossians 1:24-2:5 (v 25), and 1 Timothy 1:3-11 (v 4).
4. Read through the Parable of the Talents, Matthew 25:14-30. What elements of management can you identify?
5. **We are given more than we need** (v 15). What has been the highest level of trust someone has placed in you? If one talent, or one bag of gold, represented 20 years wages, then great capacity was being entrusted to the servants. Do we really understand the abundance God gifts to us? Why do we have such a hard time seeing/believing it?
6. **God's gifts are to be actively managed** (vs 26-27). What are some of the gifts God gives to his people? How have you seen them multiplied? How have you seen them misused? What does "actively managed" mean for you?
7. **We are not the owner** (vs 14, 20). Where did the gifts originate and where were those gifts and the increases returned? How does this notion free you to live out and use God's gifts more fully? Does it cause you concern (as it did the servant who hid his master's gift)? (See also Psalm 89:8-13)

8. **Our reward is joy** (v 21). Did you notice the servants who were commended received the same reward? Does that seem fair, since the one who was given five had more responsibility than the one who was given two? What does this teach us?
9. Take a moment and consider what it means to be invited to share in The Master's joy. What does that stir within you?
10. The pastor used Joseph (Genesis 37-50) as an example. How does his life illustrate what it means to "manage life" and God's gifts? How did his stewardship produce joy in his life? His family's life? The life of others? For his God?
11. How well are you doing at managing God's gifts? Read John 10:10 again. How can managing, the Gospel, time, health, relationships, abilities, money, and Creation offer increased happiness and abundant joy?

Closing: Close by praying for each other. Go **SHARE JESUS . . . in Service!**