

Steward Identity Devotional

Whatever It Takes



Steward Identity

A disciple manages God's gifts for God's purposes.

Through the following pages of this devotional, we invite you to join our church family in this season, taking time and space to meet with the Lord, asking 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).

Personal/Family Assessment

How are you **intentionally** stewarding (managing) the resources God has entrusted you with?

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 = _____ %**

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—wherever it takes you, whatever it costs you ... whatever it takes.

Whatever It Takes

“...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 to 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.

When that happens, we have to be careful of applying the “good enough” principle to our spiritual lives. That 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 Apostle Paul prayed often for the church to grow deeper in what they already knew and had already experienced. As we often say around the Summit, the gospel isn’t just the diving board into the pool of Christianity; the gospel is the very pool itself. Going deeper in the gospel doesn’t mean pursuing something new; it means saturating ourselves in the old truths—ones we’ve either stopped believing and aren’t applying to our lives. It means opening up our hands and saying, “God whatever it takes, whatever you want to do in me, I’m here for it. I’m letting go of my idols so I can hold tight to you.”

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

Have we opened our hands up to God to do whatever it takes for him to transform us?

Are we continually putting our “yes” on the table for God?

How is God calling us to apply his Word to our lives today?

Is God getting the first and best of our time, our treasure, and our talents?

As you use this devotional, we hope that this will be far 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.

Your Influence

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

—1 Peter 4:10–11

When we reflect on the gifts God has entrusted to us, we typically consider things like our communication abilities, intelligence, and creativity. All of that flows directly from this passage—and many others throughout the New Testament. But for a moment, let us consider another aspect of our lives that God entrusts to our stewardship—our physical location.

Rarely do we 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 that is filled with abundance. Historians tell us that we live in the most affluent nation the world has ever seen. That abundance comes with a responsibility: How are we stewarding this unique moment in history to influence the world with the gospel?

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 serve one another and to advance his kingdom. Jesus came to wash the feet of his followers, and he sends us out with the same spirit of service.

Take a moment now to pray that the Holy Spirit will begin to show you how he wants you to leverage the position of influence that he has given you.

Questions for Reflection:

Who has had the most impact on your life in the area of generosity? How did they impact the way you view generosity, either positively or negatively?

How are you influencing others in the area of generosity? Does your financial stewardship point others to Christ?

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 the maturity of our walk with 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 if 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.

Questions for Reflection:

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

**What are you having trouble giving to the kingdom of God?
Why?**

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

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. More dangerously, 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 comes to us from a position of abundance and richness. 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, 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 follow God in

generosity, we'll realize that what we give him always multiplies.

Questions for Reflection:

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 that 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 to remind us that God is the one that faithfully provides for the righteous person. The portrait of the righteous person here is beautiful. Not only has he continually experienced 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 on God?

Questions for Reflection:

When you think of someone you know who has left a legacy of generosity, who is that person?

What are you intentionally doing right now to ensure that the next generation is learning the value of generosity?

Reflect and Respond

The Apostle Paul encourages believers to establish a consistent pattern of giving (1 Cor 16:1–2). What does that look like in your life?

Does your current giving reflect a posture of open hands? Why or why not?

Who in your life can you talk through your journey of generosity with?

What does it look like for you to open your hands in generosity to God this year?

Pray: Ask the Lord how he is calling you to respond and ask him to help you take this next step of faith.

Stewardship Ministry Resources

Estate Planning Seminars

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!

