

Week 1: The Question of Ownership

- Ownership vs. Stewardship
 - “Stewardship is managing God’s treasures in God’s way, for God’s purposes, and always for God’s glory. We begin life with our hands wide open and nothing in them. As we mature, by the grace of God, He allows certain things to be placed into our possession, none of them under our ownership. Remember, He owns everything in heaven and earth. It’s all His.”
Chuck Swindoll
 - “When the Possessor of heaven and earth brought you into being, and placed you in this world, he placed you here not as a proprietor, but a steward.” John Wesley
- Scriptures on God’s Ownership
 - Psalm 24:1 The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof,^[a]
the world and those who dwell therein,
 - Haggai 2:8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the Lord of hosts.
 - Job 41:11: “Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine.”
 - Deuteronomy 8:18 You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.
 - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
 - I Corinthians 4:2 “Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.”
 - Matthew 25:14-30 – Parable of the Talents

- EXERCISE:

- “What’s the difference between owning and managing?”

- “Discuss a specific way that viewing ourselves as managers will affect how you spend/use money?” (Discuss this in your small group)

- “What are some specific assets (time, money, possession, talent, etc) that you treat like they belong to you, rather than like they belong to God and He’s entrusted you to manage them?” (Discuss this in your small group)

- Understanding the Owner and How He Views His Stewards
 - Matthew 25:14-30
 - Stewardship Assigned
 - 1 Talent = 20 years wages : Point? God give us ALL big gifts to steward.
 - Evaluate the gift primarily based on where it came from. If God defines our gifts as significant and worth guarding well, we should, too.
 - Stewardship Executed
 - No ordinary generosity should beget no ordinary stewardship. Do you believe that Jesus has shown you extraordinary generosity? You should. And if you do, you should be motivated to steward the generous gifts he's given well.
 - Stewardship can't be passive. Excellence is not steady state. Having achieved _____, what's your next move?
 - We know the first two servants were right to take risks for God with the entrusted gifts he gave them. No investment comes without risk, and yet they are vigorously commended for their investments, despite the risks.
 - If you're not moving toward growth, you can be assured you're in disobedience.
 - Stewardship Rewarded
 - Master was gone long enough to fully expect there to have been results, assuming faithful work.
 - In this life or the next, we will be rewarded for active, faithful stewardship by being given more to steward (more work is the reward of faithful work, and that should excite you, because you should feel God's pleasure when you work hard and see results). Work is only painful because of sin...but in eternity, work will not be painful, it will be redeemed like everything else, and will be totally joy-filled.
 - The lazy steward's actions reveal his perspective of the Master: that he thought the Master's intention in giving the gift was to snap over any error in management, rather than to generously reward work well done. His actions impugned the character of the Master...laziness in stewardship paints a false picture of our Master, and reflects incorrectly on His Character.
- Small Group Discussion
 - What stands out to you about this story?
 - Do you see yourself the way God indicates He sees you...as someone to whom he's entrusted a Major investment?
 - What's an area where you've "settled" in, and need to be pushed into the pursuit of excellence/growth as a reflection of your understanding of the Master's Character?
 - What part of how this depicts God is most confusing or perplexing to you?
- Assignments:
 - Read Chapters 1-2 of The Treasure Principle
 - Look over the last 30-60 days of purchases you've made and make note of any that you'd red-flag as potentially being a purchase you didn't consult the Owner on...bring those to class to discuss with your group buddies.
 - Take time to pray through other (non-financial) decisions you've made that reflect an "Owner" rather than a "Steward" mindset. Discuss these areas with your spouse or a friend.