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## "Steward Our Hearts"

Psalm 139:16 (NIV) "Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

1. Like a person who has already read the book, God knows what each day of your life will hold because he wrote the book.

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV) "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

2. **We were made for these days**, and we have a part to play: to make the most of what God has entrusted to us which is what it means to be a **steward**

Philippians 2:14 (NIV) "Do everything without grumbling or arguing [...]"

- a. The only \_\_\_\_\_ that makes sense for a steward...
  - i. **Perspective:** This is not mine, but I'll make the most of it.
  - ii. **Attitude:** Thank you! A heart of continued gratitude.
3. **Goal:** To learn how to be thankful when life is good and when life hurts.
4. **How to Be Thankful When Life is Good: Kill 3x Lies.**
  - a. **Lie #1: "I earned this."**

Romans 6:23a (ESV) "For the wages of sin is death [...]"

- i. I've earned death. That's what I deserve... so life is better than I deserve.
- ii. Even the ability to make wealth is attributed as a gift from God

Deuteronomy 8:18 (NIV) "But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today."

Deuteronomy 31:20 (ESV) "For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to give to their fathers, and they have eaten and are full and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them, and despise me and break my covenant."

- b. **Lie #2: "This is mine."**
  - i. Where we were stewarding a home and land, you and I steward for God everything that we own and have... it is not ours! Even our very breath.

Daniel 5:23b (ESV) "And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored."

- ii. When life is good we are tempted to forget that nothing is mine.

James 1:17 (NIV) "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

- iii. What are three things that you have or own that you value highly:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 14:33 (ESV) "So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple."

- iv. I quit my ownership over these things... **You can have it all!**

- c. **Lie #3 "I need more."**

- i. Black Friday doesn't even wait for Thanksgiving anymore.

1 Timothy 6:6-11 (NIV) "6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many

foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 11 But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.”

#### 5. How to Be Thankful When Life Hurts:

- a. What are three things that make it hard to be thankful this year?
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. \_\_\_\_\_

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV) “16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

- b. How can I be thankful despite sorrow?
  - i. God is not asking me to deny the sorrow.
  - ii. God is not asking me to thank Him *for* the circumstance.
- c. God is commanding me to align my perspective with His and give thanks for who He continues to be and what He does even in the darkest valley.

Psalms 23: 4 (NIV) “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

- d. What do you see there - in the darkest valley - to be thankful for?
  - i. You are with me, your rod - protection, your staff - guidance.
- e. Because all of God’s commands are for our good, thankfulness is not just right, it is also beneficial:
  - i. Neurologically being thankful releases dopamine and serotonin, and lessens the amount of cortisol in your body
  - ii. If you practice gratitude for 5 minutes, 3x day for 30 days, it will change your brain chemistry.
- f. Start with small things: Taste of coffee, the warmth of sunshine, the laughter of my kids.

Philippians 4:6 (ESV) “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace that surpasses understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

#### 6. Practice the Discipline of Gratitude

- a. Journaling - Gratitude. Start with a goal of 100 reasons and move towards 1,000.
- b. “I thank God for you [...]”
  - i. Paul thanked God for people and then told them.
    1. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_
    2. Now tell that person.
- c. What do you need to quit your ownership of? “Jesus, to you I surrender...”
- d. “More blessed to give than to receive”
  - a. Seeing someone lonely or hurting and invite them to be at your Thanksgiving.

#### Small Group Discussion Questions:

**Ice Breaker:** What is one piece of advice you would give to your younger self?

#### Questions:

1. What is a steward? Biblically, how does the mindset of being a steward lead to gratefulness?
2. Reread 1 Timothy 6:6-11. What does the Bible say here about contentment?
3. Re-read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. How does a believer do that when life is hard?
4. What are the ways that you practice gratitude?
5. How are you going to be intentional with Thanksgiving Day?
6. Tell someone else in your life group something about him or her that you thank God for.

To watch the Sermon Team on The Overtime Podcast, go to: <https://bit.ly/RLOvertime>



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