

PENTECOSTAL LIFE

SMALL GROUP
Facilitator's Guide

SHIPS

**LEADERSHIP
FELLOWSHIP
WORSHIP
STEWARDSHIP**

- 24 Leadership: A Biblical Perspective
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- 32 Stewardship: The Path to True Riches

JULY 2019
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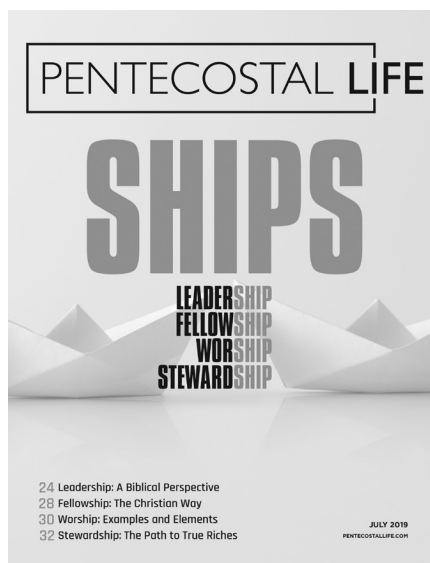
SMALL GROUP

Facilitator's Guide

Welcome to *Pentecostal Life's* small group study, *Ships*. Thank you for providing leadership for this four-session study. Your enthusiasm for the study will help to inspire and educate your group members to learn about four "ships"—leadership, fellowship, worship, and stewardship.

Ships —Small Group Overview

Authors: Jonathan Mohr, Janice Sjöstrand, Eugene Wilson, Greg Albritton



Session:	Session Name / <i>Pentecostal Life</i> article:
Session One	Leadership: A Biblical Perspective
Session Two	Fellowship: The Christian Way
Session Three	Worship: Examples and Elements
Session Four	Stewardship: The Path to True Riches

HOW TO REACH US

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OUR VISION

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To publish a Pentecostal magazine that strengthens the hands of Pentecostal pastors, encourages and challenges Pentecostal believers, and reaches beyond the doors of Pentecostal churches

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Small Group Facilitator's Guide

Launching the Study

This study focuses on four “ships”—leadership, fellowship, worship, and stewardship. It comes from the four ENGAGE articles in the July 2019 issue of the *Pentecostal Life*. Every member of your group will need a copy of the magazine. As a leader, you will need the magazine and the downloadables from pentecostallife.com.

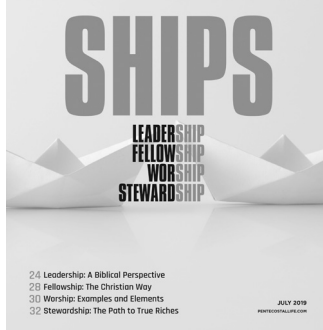
Before the Study

- Pray that you and the members of the group will be ready to receive what God wants to reveal to them through this study.
- Make sure your group size is small enough to encourage interaction by all participants; if it is too large, consider breaking up into several study groups.
- Set up a circular area where all participants have a seat that allows them to see each other.
- Place an extra chair in the circle to remind the group of the evangelistic nature of the study group. The group members can be encouraged to bring visitors and to pray for their salvation.
- As the facilitator, you should read the four ENGAGE articles to become familiar with the scope of the study.
- Each week, read the discussion questions and think through the answers you anticipate will be given. Prepare to lead the conversation and make notes on the direction you will take.
- Make certain each member of the study group purchases or has access to the July 2019 issue of the *Pentecostal Life* magazine. *Pentecostal Life* is available in single or bundle subscriptions at pentecostallife.com.
- Each week, instruct your study group members to read the appropriate ENGAGE article for the following week's discussion.
- Make a copy of the Study Guide for each student. They, as well as this Facilitator's Guide, are available as a download at pentecostallife.com in both Word document and PDF formats.

During the Study

- **Focus.** It is easy for small group discussions to veer away from the goal of the study. Gently encourage group members back to the question at hand if this happens.
- **Include.** Ask specific questions of those who are more hesitant to participate to encourage them to join the discussion.
- **Pray.** As appropriate, pray for the members of the group who are struggling.

SESSION ONE



Leadership: A Biblical Perspective

By Eugene Wilson

In recent years, much attention, especially among Christians, has been given to servant leadership, and understandably so. Jesus taught His disciples to serve,

to embrace being the least as opposed to being served by others.

Much of Jesus' teachings fit concisely with the servant leadership model of leadership. The phrase "servant leadership" was introduced in 1970 by Robert K. Greenleaf, in a paper titled "The Servant as Leader." Greenleaf described servant leadership as "servant first." He suggested that if a person's first desire is to lead and secondarily to serve, that person is likely to have alternative motives, such as wanting power or possessions. In contrast, a person who desires to serve first but then finds himself leading others will lead for the right reason.

Jesus wasn't alone in His calling of others to serve. The Bible has much to say about serving and servanthood. The word "servant" is mentioned no less than nine hundred times in the King James Version. In contrast, the word "leader" appears only six times. However, although the word "leader" is used sporadically, there is a considerable amount of attention given to leaders and leadership throughout the Bible.

There is more to a biblical perspective of leadership, however, than only servant leadership. A careful look at Scripture, coupled with a robust understanding of leadership models and theories, reveals that Jesus demonstrated other styles of leadership than just servant leadership. Jesus was at times an authoritarian,

as when He told Peter, "Satan, get thee behind me." At times He exhibited charismatic leadership traits, as in His ability to attract others to follow Him. And at times He displayed strong paternalistic leadership tendencies, as seen throughout much of His life and teachings.

Another style of leadership demonstrated by Jesus is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is very similar to servant leadership. Like servant leadership, transformational leadership emphasizes the "importance of appreciating and valuing people, listening, mentoring or teaching, and empowering followers," state authors Gregory Stone, Robert F. Russell, and Kathleen Patterson in "Transformational versus Servant Leadership." Transformational leaders help people grow, and in doing so act in ways as servant leaders.

With so many similarities, what is the telling difference between the two styles of leadership? The difference is that unlike servant leadership, in which the underlying motive is others, the driving motivation for transformational leadership is the purpose of the organization. Bernard M. Bass, in *Transformational Leadership*, states that transformational leaders strive to move followers to "go beyond their own self-interests," to give themselves to the greater good of an organization, group, or community.

Jesus repeatedly called for His disciples to move beyond self-interest and embrace the purpose and central values of the organization, or as in His case, the kingdom of God. It can be argued that this was His focus in John 13:1–17 when He washed the disciples' feet and exhorted them to embrace acts of service. His motive wasn't to develop leaders who merely went about

SESSION ONE (CONT.)

serving others; He was intent on developing leaders who were committed to the purpose and core values of the kingdom of God. The purpose of the Kingdom was to be central in their lives, not the pursuit of self, of power, or prestige. (See Matthew 6:10.) Nothing was to supersede the purpose of the Kingdom. His kingdom was to come, to take root in their lives, and to be central in all they said or did. His will was to be done.

One of the greatest challenges with the servant leadership concept is in who is serving whom. Consider Paul's writings in I Corinthians 3–4. The context reveals Paul's pastoral identity was under attack. Paul, however, was sure in his calling. Paul saw himself as a servant, not of the people, though, but of God. He was under His jurisdiction; he was under His direction. First Corinthians 4:3–5, read in context, reveals the essence of Paul's words: "I will not be judged by you. I don't work for you. I'm Christ's assistant. If you don't like my leadership or my message, you're the ones with the problem."

Similarly, in Galatians 1:10 (NKJV), Paul wrote, "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ." The verse reveals Paul's driving motivation: "I am a bondservant of Christ. My ear is tuned in to His voice. His will is my will."

Paul was not the only writer in the New Testament who stated they were servants of the Lord. Peter began his

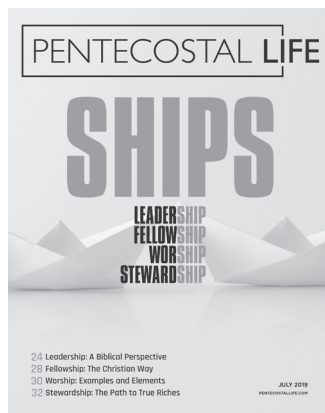
letter with, "Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:1, NASB). James began with, "James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (James 1:1, NASB). And Jude, the brother of James, opened his letter with the words, "Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ" (Jude 1:1, NASB).

The implication is obvious. Although we serve others, thereby displaying servant leadership characteristics, our serving others must never be our driving motivation. Instead, our underlying motivation is alignment with the will of God, adherence with the purpose and core values of His kingdom. We are to live what we pray; we want our lives to be aligned with His will. His kingdom is to be central in our lives—His agenda, not ours.

Henry and Richard Blackaby, in *Spiritual Leadership*, define spiritual leadership as leading people away from self-agenda toward God's agenda. This is the essence of transformational leadership when applied within the context of Scripture. We are to lead others away from self-interest and toward God's interest. Biblical leadership is not about meeting the wants of others; it is about the overarching purpose—the advancement of His kingdom in the hearts and lives of people. **PL**

EUGENE WILSON

Executive Pastor | The Pentecostals of Katy, Texas



SESSION ONE

Leadership: A Biblical Perspective

Objective

To create a more robust understanding of leadership than mere servant leadership

Opening

1. Lead the group in a discussion of great leaders they have known.
2. Explore why the members tagged these leaders as “great.”

Key Scriptures

Matthew 6:10; John 13:1–7; I Corinthians 3–4; Galatians 1:10; James 1:1; II Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1

“Biblical leadership is not about meeting the wants of others; it is about the overarching purpose—the advancement of His kingdom in the hearts and lives of people.”

SESSION ONE (CONT.)

Leadership: A Biblical Perspective

Discuss the following questions:

1. What is the central goal of leadership?
2. In what ways might Galatians 1:10 impact commonly held views with regards to servant leadership?
3. What is the significance of a bondservant in conjunction with transformational leadership?
4. What role does influence have in a leader's ability to leading others as opposed to command and control?

Assignment

Read "Fellowship: The Christian Way" before next session.

[illegible]



Fellowship: The Christian Way

Jonathan Mohr

For many Apostolics, the word *fellowship* conjures up images of sharing a meal with friends at a restaurant after church on Sunday.

For others, fellowship is

what happens in the appropriately named “fellowship hall” located somewhere on the church grounds. (It’s interesting how often some of us link food with fellowship.) But biblical fellowship is much more than a full belly with friends.

Fellowship certainly is a biblical idea. Acts 2:42 tells us that the first believers “continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Fellowship was a top priority, right along with apostolic doctrine and prayer.

Continue reading the New Testament, however, and we will realize that limiting our concept of fellowship to sharing a meal with other Christians is to miss out on one of the most incredible gifts God has given His church. Let’s briefly explore what practicing apostolic fellowship looks like for believers in the modern world.

It’s helpful to define words we seek to understand. According to the *Holman Bible Dictionary*, *fellowship* is “the bond of common purpose and devotion that binds Christians together and to Christ.” Multiple New Testament writers used the Greek word *koinonia* to describe Christian fellowship, including Luke in Acts 2:42. The *Holman Bible Dictionary* also notes that “the Greek stem *koin* has a base meaning of ‘common,’ out of which a number of shades of meaning emerge.”

Fellowship and Contribution

The apostle Paul revealed one way we can demonstrate Christian fellowship when he wrote, “For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem” (Romans 15:26). Paul chose the word *koinonia* to describe the offering that was being forwarded to Jerusalem, which the translators of the King James Version then rendered “contribution.”

Giving to meet the needs of others is a form of fellowship. When we financially support our local church or a missionary who is preaching the gospel on the other side of the globe, we demonstrate that we are in fellowship with the body of Christ. We are contributing our resources to a common purpose—the advancement of the Kingdom. (Conversely, if we withhold our offerings, can we truly say we are in fellowship with the body?)

Fellowship and Communion

Participating in the Lord’s Supper, is another way we demonstrate fellowship. In discussing the Lord’s Supper, Paul said, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (*koinonia*) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion (*koinonia*) of the body of Christ?” (I Corinthians 10:16).

Many Christian disciplines, including prayer, fasting, and the study of Scripture, can be practiced privately. But the New Testament does not record a single instance of anyone celebrating the Lord’s Supper alone. It always was done in a group setting because, like giving, it was intended to demonstrate that we are part of something bigger than ourselves—that we are in fellowship with Jesus Christ and His body.

SESSION TWO (CONT.)

Fellowship and Conflict

Fellowship with the body of Christ puts believers at odds with a sinful world. When opposition or persecution rise against the church, its teachings, and the Christian lifestyle, it is tempting to compromise our beliefs to fit in with the culture. None of us enjoy being ostracized or ridiculed. (The church in the western world has seen minimal physical persecution in recent centuries, although that is changing.)

This conflict between the church and the world sometimes results in suffering for the believer, but even this brings us into closer fellowship with God. The apostle Paul, who experienced extreme physical persecution on multiple occasions (see II Corinthians 11:23–33), expressed his desire to know Jesus Christ “and the fellowship (koinonia) of his sufferings” (Philippians 3:10). When we suffer for Christ and His gospel, we demonstrate that we are in fellowship with Him.

Fellowship, Community, and Cleansing

If you are persecuted for walking in the light of truth, rejoice! The apostle John wrote, “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship (koinonia) one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (I John 1:7). Walking in truth puts us in true fellowship with other believers and positions us to be cleansed of our sins.

Fellowship with those who have common values and purpose can catapult us to the next level of life and ministry. Consider the example of two famous British authors, C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. Both men were part of an informal club known as the “Inklings” that regularly met to discuss literature and encourage one another’s writing efforts. The results of those gatherings were some of the most widely praised works in English literature, including books that have heavily influenced modern Christian thought.

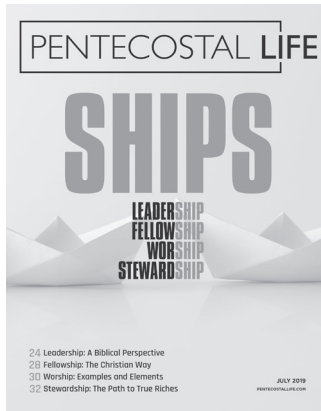
Encouraging one another to do good and remain faithful is the purpose of biblical fellowship. We are stronger together. Our offerings make a bigger impact when combined. Worship is more powerful when done in concert with others. We can endure suffering more readily when we do not suffer alone. And when we cannot seem to connect with Heaven on our own, our brothers and sisters in Christ can carry us to the throne of grace.

The first Christians “continued stedfastly in . . . fellowship” (Acts 2:42) because they knew they couldn’t stand against the powers of darkness unless they stood together. Neither can we.

Let’s continue in fellowship. **PL**

JONATHAN MOHR

Gracepoint Pentecostal Church | Granite City, IL | Pastor Terry Smith



SESSION TWO

Fellowship: The Christian Way

Objective

To show how Christian fellowship is demonstrated in a variety of ways and should be a regular part of every believer's life

Opening

1. At the start of the session, ask members of the group to list the fellowship events they have enjoyed with fellow believers the past week.
2. What made these events enjoyable?

Key Scriptures

Acts 2:42; Romans 15:26; I Corinthians 10:16;
II Corinthians 11:23–33; Philippians 3:10;
I John 1:7

**“Biblical fellowship is much more than
a full belly with friends.”**

SESSION TWO (CONT.)

Fellowship: The Christian Way

Discuss the following questions:

1. Why do you think fellowship was so important for the first believers?
2. Why is fellowship important for believers today?
3. In what ways can we practice Christian fellowship?
4. Does fellowship have to be consistent to be effective? Why or why not?
5. What is the link between giving and fellowship?
6. What is the connection between the Lord's Supper and fellowship?
7. How does suffering strengthen biblical fellowship?
8. How does walking in truth enhance fellowship? (1 John 1:7)
9. How can you help create opportunities for fellowship in your local assembly?

Assignment

Read "Worship: Examples and Elements" before next session.

[illegible]

SESSION THREE



Worship: Examples and Elements

Janice Sjöstrand

God established the parameters of worship at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:2–5). Observance of these parameters is seen in the life of Mordecai when he refused

to bow to Haman (Esther 3:2) and in the lives of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when they refused to bow before Nebuchadnezzar's golden image (Daniel 3:16–18). Daniel was thrown into the lions' den for worshipping God (Daniel 6). Mordecai, the three Hebrews, and Daniel chose to worship God, and God delivered them all.

New Testament believers stopped pagans who attempted to worship them. For example, Paul and Barnabas prevented the people of Lystra from doing homage to them after Paul healed a crippled man in Lystra (Acts 14:7–19). Peter refused to allow Cornelius to worship at his feet: "Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:26). In Revelation 19:10, John fell down to worship the man who told him what to write but was restrained: "See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God" (Revelation 19:10). Jesus Himself rebuked Satan when He said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Luke 4:8).

Elements of Worship

Respect. The Bible definition of worship in the Old Testament includes "bowing down" or "prostrating oneself" in "reverent humility" (Strong's Hebrew Lexicon). The same word for worshipping God is used for showing respect to others. In ancient times doing obeisance before someone else was common: Abraham before the children of Heth (Genesis 23:7); Jacob before Esau (Genesis 33:3); Joseph before his father (Genesis 48:12); Moses before his

father-in-law (Exodus 18:7); Ruth before Boaz (Ruth 2:10); David before Jonathan before he fled from Saul (I Samuel 20:41); and later, David before Saul in the Wilderness of Engedi (I Samuel 24:8).

There are examples of humility and respect in the New Testament as well. The centurion who came to Jesus on behalf of his ailing servant respected Jesus so much that he simply asked Him to speak rather than come to his house (Matthew 8:5, 8, 13). In another instance, a woman of Canaan prostrated herself before the Lord on behalf of her possessed daughter (Matthew 15:25–28). She maintained her humility and obeisance even when Jesus referred to her as a "dog." Jesus marveled at the faith of both these Gentiles and healed both servant and daughter without seeing either. Thus in the Old and New Testament, worship and respect go hand in hand.

Supplication. Moses supplicated before the Lord for the Israelites. David cried to the Lord when he was beset (Psalm 18). The father of the child who repeatedly cast himself in the fire sought the Lord with tears and cried, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24, NKJV). The apostle Paul admonished us to "be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6). Worship includes supplication.

Obedience. Abraham worshiped by obedience: "I and the lad will go yonder and worship" (Genesis 22:5). Abraham's willingness to obey God, even if it meant sacrificing Isaac, was an act of worship. God honored his obedience.

Job worshiped after losing his children, his servants, and his flocks: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord

SESSION THREE (CONT.)

hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” (Job 1:21). Even in mourning, Job still worshiped.

Samuel admonished Saul that obedience was “better than sacrifice” (1 Samuel 15:22). Jesus obeyed, even to the death of the cross. Even when tempted by Satan, He countered with the Word that governed His every action. His worship was complete through His absolute obedience.

Awe. Isaiah saw a vision of the Lord “high and lifted up” and was filled with reverent fear (Isaiah 6:1). When Peter let down his nets at Jesus’ command and hauled in an abundant catch, he knelt at Jesus’ feet in awe (Luke 5:8). Jesus’ disciples were awestruck when He calmed the storm, and they bowed down and worshiped Him (Matthew 14:33). On Patmos, John heard a voice and fell down in awe (Revelation 1:17). Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Romans 14:11). Awe and reverent fear are part of worship.

Gratitude. Eliezer worshiped in thanks when God led him to Rebekah (Genesis 24:26). The psalmist David declared thanksgiving to be an offering and sacrifice (Psalm 50:14; 107:22; 116:17). The Samaritan leper returned to Jesus to give thanks and glorify God (Luke 17: 15–19). Paul admonished us to give thanks in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Our gratitude is part of our worship.

Love. Micah 6:8 embodies the first and second greatest commandments identified by Jesus: to love God with all one’s heart and one’s neighbor as oneself. (See Matthew 22:36–40). John declared that we love God because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Our worship is in response to His love. Jesus identified forgiveness of sins with love: “To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” (Luke 7:47). Love is part of worship.

Spirit and Truth. Jesus summarized the whole of biblical worship in His conversation with the woman at the well (John 4:19–22). When she challenged where to worship, Jesus declared that worship would no longer occur in a location, but in the condition of the heart:

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23–24)

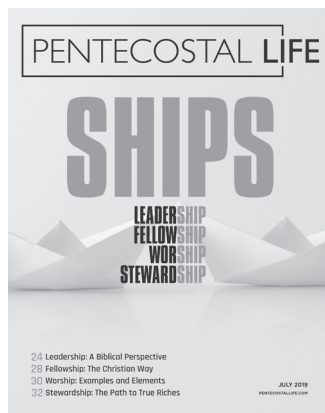
All the elements of worship can be practiced before idols, people, or even demons. Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world if He would just bow down and worship him. Therefore, truth in worship means knowing and understanding who God is and what He requires of man. God is looking for worshipers who love Him for who and what He is, not what we wish He were. In the end, He will receive the worship due Him:

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth . . . heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. (Revelation 5:12–13)

We have the opportunity to honor God daily with our supplication, respect, obedience, awe, gratitude, and love. When we do, we are participating with thousands of ten thousands who are worshiping in spirit and in truth. **PL**

JANICE SJÖSTRAND

Pastor’s wife | Christian Apostolic Church | Newark, Ohio



SESSION THREE

Worship: Examples and Elements

Objective

To understand various elements of worship

Opening

1. Ask members of the group about their personal worship and its elements.
2. What additional elements might the local church add?

Key Scriptures

Genesis 22:5; 23:7; 24:26; 33:3; 48:12; Exodus 18:78; 20:2–5; Ruth 2:10; I Samuel 15:22; 20:41; 24:8; Esther 3:2; Job 1:21; Psalm 18; 50:14; 107:22; 116:17; Isaiah 6:1; Daniel 3:16–18; 6; Micah 6:8; Matthew 8:5, 8, 13; 14:33; 15:25–28; 22:36–40; Mark 9:24; Luke 4:8; 5:8; 7:47; 17:15–19; John 4:19–24; Acts 10:26; 14:7–19; Romans 14:11; Philippians 4:6; I Thessalonians 5:18; I John 4:19; Revelation 1:17; 5:12–13; 19:10

**“In the Old and New Testaments,
worship and respect go hand in hand.”**

SESSION THREE (CONT.)

Worship: Examples and Elements

Discuss the following questions:

1. List the elements of worship as listed in the article.
2. How do worship and respect go hand in hand?
3. Why is worship never complete without obedience?
4. Give a biblical example of worship coupled with awe.
5. How does gratitude become an expression of one's worship?

Assignment

Read “Stewardship: The Path to True Riches” before the next session.

[illegible]

SESSION FOUR

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Stewardship: The Path to True Riches

By Greg Albritton

“Stewardship is taking care of what God has given to us. God gave me my acre, and my part is taking care of it. That’s why I mowed it today.” That great impromptu

response came from my cousin Scarlet when I mentioned the subject of stewardship.

Stewardship is defined as “the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care.”

Biblical stewardship could be stated as “being faithful in matters entrusted to us by God, with the understanding that doing so opens the channels for His true riches to unfold in our lives.”

Parable of the Talents

We see this two-fold sentiment shared in the parable of the talents: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things” (Matthew 25:21). Though the value of the talents represented many years of wages to the servants, Jesus labeled them “small things.” What does that imply about the value of the many things that Jesus would later place in their care?

The servant here was faithful in what was allotted to him. His faithfulness in a few things led to the opportunity for greater things. His handling of what had been entrusted to him in the “now” directly affected what would unfold in his future.

Jesus again emphasized both of these points in Luke, stating, “One who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and one who is dishonest in little, is dishonest

also in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?” (Luke 16:10–11, ESV). The implication is strong: if one is faithful and handles worldly wealth wisely and unselfishly, then that person will be entrusted with true riches.

Jesus chose not to further define what He meant by “true riches,” but I decided years ago that whatever all that entails, I wanted them! As apostolic Christians, we do not simply want more for the sake of more, but we are to desire His blessings, His favor, His promises, and His provision.

No matter your lot, stay faithful. Keep loving. Keep serving. Keep ministering to others. Keep giving. Yes, love, serve, minister, and give even when it hurts! Stay unselfish. Focus on others. Don’t hide or bury what He has given to you. Keep investing His kingdom interests in others. Your heavenly Father keeps good records! Your Kingdom investment may not come back to you the next day, and it may not come back to you as money in your bank account. But it will always come back to you. Stay faithful! Faithfulness in handling what God has given us opens up the channels of true riches: His blessings, His favor, His provision, His comfort, and His direction.

In the parable of the talents, there is no indication that the servants were able to choose the amounts their master gave to them. Instead, he had observed their lives and abilities and apportioned the talents out accordingly. However, they were all responsible for their response. What would they do with the portion they had been given?

SESSION FOUR (CONT.)

As stated in *Strong's Concordance*, "A talent was not a coin but rather a weight." Though opinions vary, the consensus is that a talent weighed around sixty to eighty pounds. This matter of being entrusted with the master's goods wasn't a light thing. In contrast, it was a weighty matter and a tremendous responsibility. How the servants responded would greatly affect their future.

Joseph

We also see these principles displayed in the life of Joseph. Joseph was a young man of innocence and integrity. He was fully committed to his God and had a servant's heart. He had no idea that his brothers would betray, kidnap, and sell him as a slave.

Joseph spent years in Potiphar's house. When blessings were being counted, I doubt that Joseph would have considered his situation to be a blessing. However, it was his lot, his portion. It was what the Master allowed to unfold in his life. What did Joseph do? He stayed faithful!

We love it when the five talents are entrusted to us. Or even the two or one. But how about when it's two mites, and even that seems cursed? Stay faithful!

God was with Joseph. And though God didn't deliver him from Potiphar's house, He did bless him. Joseph became leader of the household, second in command only to Potiphar.

Joseph was then dealt another blow, receiving false accusations against his character, and was removed from Potiphar's house and thrown into prison.

The "talents" he had been given to "steward" now seemed nonexistent. What did Joseph do? He

remained faithful! And God was with him. Though he wasn't immediately delivered, he again found favor. The warden entrusted to Joseph the oversight of the prisoners and of the prison operations. Joseph became the leader, second-in-command only to the warden.

Finally, circumstances led Joseph to stand before Pharaoh. God's wisdom, character, and anointing in his life were all on display. By God's direction, Joseph had all the right answers. Pharaoh elevated him to be over his own house, over his people, and over all the land of Egypt, second-in-command only to Pharaoh himself. In a moment, Joseph became one of the most influential and powerful leaders of the then known world.

All of that second-man training now made sense! Even when he couldn't see it, God was working. Even when he couldn't feel it, God was working.

Joseph had been faithful over the small things; God made him ruler over many things. His faithfulness ultimately saved his family and helped to preserve God's plan for His people. Joseph remained faithful in that which was dealt to him and it unlocked the channels of God's true riches in his life.

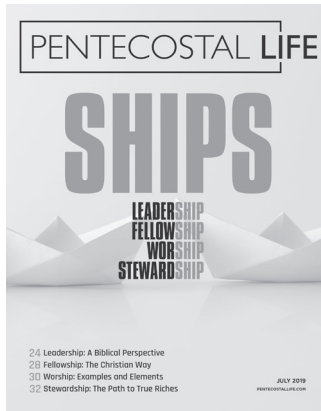
How about us? We don't get to choose our portion, but we do get to choose our response. Stay faithful in the small things. Stay faithful in what God has entrusted into your care. Keep investing His kingdom interests in others.

Stay faithful—for that is your path to receiving God's true riches in your life! **PL**

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SESSION FOUR

Stewardship: The Path to True Riches

Objective

To better understand how our faithfulness in handling that entrusted to us leads to our experiencing God's abundance and true riches in our lives

Opening

1. Invite the members of the group to talk about their definition of stewardship, before going over the information in the lesson.

Key Scriptures

Matthew 25:21; Luke 16:10–11

**“Stay faithful—for that is your path to
receiving God’s true riches
in your life!”**

SESSION FOUR (CONT.)

Stewardship: The Path to True Riches

Discuss the following questions:

1. What is the basic definition of stewardship?
2. How would you define biblical stewardship?
3. What are some times in your life when you took care of God's business and He took care of yours?
4. What do you think Jesus meant when He discussed being faithful in unrighteous mammon (worldly wealth)?
5. What do you believe is entailed in the term "true riches"?
6. Can you look back on a time when you, like Joseph, didn't understand why something happened, but you stayed faithful, and then later you understood what God had been working on all along?

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