

**GATEWAY CHRISTIAN CENTRE
FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP BIBLE STUDY
APRIL/MAY 2025**

SESSION TWO: A HEALTHY PERSPECTIVE OF PROVISION

RECAP:

Financial health and blessings requires two legs:
-generosity
-biblical stewardship

A steward is someone who has been entrusted with protecting, maintaining, nurturing and/or growing things on behalf of another.

There are mindsets we need to absorb, and mindsets that we need to replace, so that we can become good stewards.

Mindset One: The Ownership Issue

1 Cor 6:19-20. *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; **20** you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.*

MINDSET TWO: A HEALTHY PERSPECTIVE OF PROVISION

The two ditches to a healthy perspective:

_____ Mindset

_____ (Unbiblical Prosperity) Mindset

THE POVERTY MIND SET

Mark 10:17-22

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 18 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honour your father and mother.’ 20 “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.” 21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” 22 At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

"If silver and gold are things evil in themselves, then those who keep away from them deserve to be praised. But if they are good creatures of God, which we can use both for the needs of our neighbour and for the glory of God, is not a person silly, yes, even unthankful to God, if he refrains from them as if they were evil?" Martin Luther
Encounters with Luther: New Direction for Critical Studies

Was Jesus' instructions to the rich young ruler, instructions for all of us?

Matt 5:3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"

1 Tim 6:10 "For the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows".

1 Tim 6:17. Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

1. The command to the rich was not to become _____,
2. They were to put their trust in God who _____

So, how do you know if you have a poverty mindset?

- The spirit of poverty wants you to think that all stuff comes from the devil.
 - The spirit of poverty wants you to feel ashamed of your stuff.
 - The spirit of poverty want you to feel the need to justify your purchases.
 - The spirit of poverty tries to make you feel guilty about God's blessings.
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THE MATERIALISM MINDSET

Materialism takes a good thing that God gives and makes it an _____ thing.

'I have made many millions, but they have not brought me happiness'

John D Rockefeller - oil tycoon, one of the richest people in history

'I am the most miserable man on earth'

John Jacob Astor - America's first multimillionaire

"I was happier when I was doing a mechanics job"

Henry Ford - founder of Ford Motor Co.

Mark 4:19. but the worries of this life, **the deceitfulness of wealth** and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

What do riches lie about?

- That significance and security come from having money and nice things.
- If you had a little more, you'd finally be happy
- More money would solve your problems
- Your hard work, cleverness and initiative are solely responsible for your success.

1 John 2:16. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.

THE SPIRIT OF MAMMON

Matt 6:24 NKJV. "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Mammon - '*mammonas*'

Not '*ploutos*' - riches

THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD MINDSET: 'Living On Mission'

Stewardship says:

- I put God first in everything because He loves me and redeemed me.
 - I gratefully receive everything God puts in my hand.
 - I hold his blessings with an open hand, prepared to give or distribute them as He directs, never forgetting that they are His, and I am His.
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The Provision Gospel:

2 Cor 9:8. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.'

David Livingstone, missionary to Africa, once wrote:

"I place no value on anything I have or may possess, except in relation to the kingdom of God. If anything will advance the interests of the kingdom, it shall be given away or kept, only as by giving or keep it, I shall most promote the glory of Him to whom I owe all my hopes in time or eternity."

That is stewardship.

DISCUSSION:

1. When you think about Christians who are poor, what is your first (and possibly second) assumption:

- Their poverty is because they are lazy and don't work hard, or have come upon a misfortune
- It is a result of something that God has caused or imposed upon them
- It is an enviable virtue they have chosen
- They are a victim of circumstance (upbringing, community, etc.)

2. What do you think when you hear wealthy men talk about the problems associated with great wealth? How does this relate to the 'deceitfulness of riches' in Mk 4:19

3. Which of the two 'ditch' mindsets would be a greater threat for you (or perhaps you recognise that you have fallen into)?

4a). If you answered the poverty mindset:

Consider the four messages that are symptoms of the spirit of poverty.

- the spirit of poverty tells us that stuff comes from the devil
- the spirit of poverty tells us to be ashamed of our stuff
- the spirit of poverty makes us feel the need to justify our purchases
- the spirit of poverty tries to make us feel guilty for God's blessings.

What are some examples from your own life where you are (or have been in the past) afflicted by one or of the symptoms?

4b). If you answered the materialism mindset:

1 John 2:15 revealed the 'lust of the flesh', lust of the eyes' and 'the pride of life' that the spirit of materialism attaches to.

How have you experienced these lies in the past?

5. In your own words, what does the 'Middle of the Road' Mindset look like?

HOMEWORK:

1. Are there any things in your life that you can identify have moved dangerously close to the line between enjoying them and loving them (past or present)? Take some time to think and pray about this.

2. We described the middle of the road mindset, as 'Living On Mission'. What does that mean to you?

Based on your answer to that questions, write out a personal mission statement, recognising you're role as steward. If you are married, include your spouse in this exercise.