

Week Two – *The Steward Concept*

Luke 16:1-15

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. What was your first experience of being put in charge of anything? What qualified you for that assignment?
2. Do you like to be responsible for outcomes or would you prefer for someone else to be in charge? Why or why not?
3. A steward is defined as “one who oversees property or matters of importance that are not his own.” What qualities in a person make him trustworthy as a steward?
4. We generally think about stewardship as a financial matter. Is it also helpful to think of yourself as a steward of your time, your influence, your skills, etc.? In what way are parents also stewards of their children?
5. Read Luke 16:1-15. What’s the danger of trusting someone to be your steward?
6. As a steward, do you feel more or less responsible than when you manage your own affairs?
7. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for your eyes to be opened to your responsibilities as a steward of those things God wants you to manage.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. Read Luke 16:1-15. Do you think God has a preference for a person’s monetary status - rich over poor or poor over rich? How is the rich man portrayed in this story?
9. The steward was stealing from his master. What’s the difference between punishment and consequence? Which did he suffer for his action?
10. Does God punish us for our sins? Why or why not?
11. Read Hebrews 12:7-11. What is the difference between the discipline of a godly parent and punishment? If Jesus paid the complete price for our sin, why do we incur discipline?
12. What did the unfaithful steward do to protect himself from the consequence of his own action? What does it mean when people say, “Two wrongs don’t make a right”?

13. What's the best way to handle a wrong you have committed against another person? How should you handle the wrong(s) you commit against God?
14. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for God to restore all the damage you've done by intentionally and unintentionally hurting others.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. Look again at Luke 16:1-15. The steward in Jesus' story figured out a way to cheat his master and provide for himself one last time before being fired. What does that tell you about human nature, even after being caught the first time?
16. How did the master respond? Is that typical?
17. Why do you suppose the master in Jesus' story is so gracious?
18. How could the master possibly praise the dishonesty of the steward who was cheating him and stealing from him?
19. Compare Luke 16:8 to Matthew 10:16. Is everything the world does viewed as bad by God? Explain. Are Christians too naïve?
20. I often say the world has studied God-designed human behavior and used its findings to make money or demonstrate power. Do you think God's design can also be learned by observation or only by the study of the Bible? Explain. Are there limits to the world's perception of truth?
21. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray not to be so naïve and to keep your eyes open to better understand the ways of the world so you can better share Christ.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

22. Read Matthew 6:24. Explain the oft-quoted verse, "No one can serve two masters?" What did Jesus mean? Does it apply only to money? Explain.
23. Notice the principle of faithfulness in small things leading to faithfulness in more significant things in Luke 16:10-11. (Read the whole narrative in Luke 16:1-15 to refresh your memory.) What's the most important take-away in that passage?
24. Why is it important to teach children godly values when they are young? Are "please", "thank you", "don't steal a piece of candy", "never tell a lie" and "be nice to your dog," all that important? Really? Explain the proverb, "As the twig is bent so grows the tree."

25. Read Luke 16:14. Why did the Pharisees scoff at Jesus? Have you heard the Shakespeare phrase, "Methinks, the lady doth protest too much?" What's the poet's intended meaning? How does that apply in this case?
26. What did Jesus mean when He said in verse 15, "you who justify yourselves in the sight of men." Although we are freed from the law of perfection by grace, the law of God still serves a useful purpose and should still be taught. Why?
27. Jesus said, "That which is highly praised by men is detestable to God." Can you cite any examples?
28. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be more faithful in the little things in life so that the big things will take care of themselves.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

29. How would you describe a steward in modern-day terms?
30. In what way are you a steward for God?
31. In what areas of your life are you not as wise as you could be, either for your benefit, the benefit of others or as a witness for God's goodness?
32. Is it enough to know the Bible or do you also have to know your culture in order to connect the two? Explain your point of view. Read 1 Timothy 2:3-4. What's the difference between knowing the truth and the art of "bringing people to the knowledge of the truth?"
33. Read Luke 15:9. Explain what Jesus meant by the thought of using material possessions to make friends in this life so they might welcome you in heaven? How does that work?
34. Describe three important lessons from this story and the explanation of Jesus.
35. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray every day this week that God would provide opportunities for you to share your faith by word and example. Ask Him to help you make wise use of your material possessions for spiritual outcomes.