

## LEADER GUIDE

### LESSON 4: GETTING YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER

A LEGACY OF SPIRITUAL FULFILLMENT AWAITS THOSE WHO WOULD STEWARD RIGHTEOUSLY.



#### LEADER NOTE:

In the context of a course on finances, it's easy to default to a monetary definition of "legacy." But throughout scripture, God's makes it very clear that he desires for us to understand what really matters for eternity, and to invest accordingly. Rather than be the sole focus of our legacy, planned & estate giving become a natural outlet for the generous and forward-looking disciple.

The values we pass on to our children's children, ad infinitum, are the acorns falling from the trees of our lives.(i) But unlike the fruit of an oak tree, into which God has hardwired everything needed to reproduce a forest giant, we have a choice regarding the spiritual DNA we pass on to those who follow. Furthermore, we can help to plant those seeds in the proper soil, and we can provide nourishment and protection to enable them to thrive. (ii)

The motivation for setting the right example for our households arises from understanding Biblical precedents for financial stewardship. Scripture serves as a roadmap – whether you are single or married, parent or not – guiding the decisions that will shape your household's impact and legacy. (iii) How we approach our financial stewardship reveals our grasp of several key principles, several of which we've previously studied in this course:

- God is the owner, and we are the managers.
- Lifestyle & financial discipline flow from spiritual discipline.
- Choosing wisely – or poorly! – and understanding the consequences shows maturity.
- Debt is a drain on giving opportunities, potential, and relationships.
- We honor God by incorporating His will into our decisions.
- Those who prove trustworthy with little may be entrusted with much.

The question of legacy forces the issue of attitude: what are we modeling, as visible in our actions? What giving and stewardship behavior will future generations imitate? Today we will focus on several passages that provide examples for us to follow; in so doing, we establish a pattern worth repeating by those endeavor to train.

**THINK ABOUT IT: Consider how these six Biblical precedents help define faithful stewardship for the modern household.**

- **Tithes.** Lev 27.30, Mal 3.8-10

While many prefer to debate such questions as "Should a Christian tithe?" our perspective is, rather, "Why Wouldn't a Christian desire to surrender a mere tenth?"

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When taken as a guiding principle more so than a “point of Law” to argue, giving a tithe thus becomes an exciting, wonderful act of worship, not a duty.

- **Offerings. 1 Chron 29:3, 1Cor 16:2, 2 Cor 8:3**

Training our heart to do “more than what’s expected” shows an understanding of Philippians 2 (NIV): “And being found in appearance as a man, [Jesus] humbled himself by becoming obedient unto death – even death on a cross!” Whereas the faithful giving of our tithe reflects our obedience to the Father, “over and above” gifts evidence our desire to mirror His example of selfless generosity.

- **First-fruits. Prov 3.9, Lev 19.24, Num18.12-13, Exod 23.16, 19**

As different from both tithes and offerings, the passages above how a ‘first-fruits’ gift is all about understanding that we’ve been redeemed! This faith-filled gesture surrenders the initial “fruit” of our efforts or labor; we give it with great anticipation of what God will do in the harvest season that follows. (iv)

- **Thanksgiving. Ps 100.4, Phil 4.6, 1 Thess 5.16**

Giving thanks enables us to “enter His gates,” sets the stage for our petitions, and helps answer the question of His will for our lives. Gratitude and humility are symbiotic; developing a heart full of one bears great dividends of the other.

- **Sacrifice. 1 Chron 29**

David’s lavish, sacrificial ‘pre-gift’ helped ensure his son could complete the vision he helped conceive. In full knowledge that his kingly wealth was not his to possess but rather to manage, he embraced the perspective, “What will I do without, so that you will not?” In verse 12 of this important passage, David sums up what his heart had known for years: “Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.”

- **Submission. 2 Chron 24.1-14**

This passage retells one of the earliest, most exciting examples of what today would be termed a “capital campaign.” Whether in Joash’s day or ours, the act of “getting on board” implies trust in local leadership and requires a heart that will defer to, and support, those making decisions. This is particularly relevant to the timing and direction of funds and resources – ESPECIALLY in those instances when we have other ideas / preferences / priorities. Submit where you are, or go where you can.

**TALK ABOUT IT: What principles did the early church model for us?**

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#### LEADER NOTES:

Guide a discussion about the verses below, rather than fielding the usual responses from the group. Rather than simply print these ahead of time, encourage Bible use and knowledge: ask individuals or groups of 2-3 to look up the passages and convey the essence of the verses to the whole group.

**2 Cor 8.2-3**.....Sacrifice – giving up something you love to give to something or someone you love even more.

**Mark 14.3-9**.....Not legalistic, rather a reflection of the heart.

**Acts 4.32-37**.....Give according to your blessings.

**2 Cor 9.7**.....Giving regularly, deliberately (as each has decided in his heart), voluntarily, sacrificially, & cheerfully.

#### CONCEPT SUMMARY:

Reiterate the role of the New Testament church as a clearinghouse (i.e. the manager & distributor) of resources (v) rather than a storehouse. The local church has a better view and understanding of large-scale needs, plus it has the best mechanisms to distribute resources in an accountable fashion. Modeling the above principles for our families and fellow believers prompts faith and confidence in the Lord to deliver on what He says He will do.

**THINK ABOUT IT: You – not the church – are responsible for setting the tone in your household.**

If you do not teach your kids, someone or something else will. Society and our culture offer plenty of counterfeit and substitutes. Training children remains the responsibility of the parent – not their Sunday school teacher, not their school teacher, not their grandparents, not their bosses, and certainly not their peers. And yet many “churched” families willingly abdicate this direct command of scripture. (vi)

Understand and accept that every day, our children will be taught something, somewhere. And while how they act on it is up to them, how they’re trained to process it depends on the parents.

**TALK ABOUT IT: What can you do as parents to anticipate – not avoid – the alternate influences & opinions that your child will (not might) encounter?**

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#### LEADER NOTES:

The discussion that follows should reveal the wide spectrum of parenting philosophies and skills present in your group. Do your best – gently and with grace - to hold responses up to the Word, in order to ensure their Biblical appropriateness/relevance.

The point being, this isn't a question of differing ideologies, or methods. It's one of teaching our kids (1) to know and rely on Biblical truth in the midst of opposition (much of it condescending by nature) and (2) to convey the hope they have to others, with grace and perseverance.

#### SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

- Can't shield them or pretend it won't happen!
- Understand what "apologetics" means and equip your kids (1 Pet 3:15)
- Perspective comes from worldview. Worldview comes from belief/conviction.
- Faithfully model it (as discussed above)
- Establish strong foundations of faith AND academic learning
- Purposefully communicate the consequences of ignoring Truth
- Share your personal testimonies – especially the parts wherein you failed/strayed and God was faithful when you returned (Prodigal Son)

#### TALK ABOUT IT:

Why does leaving a legacy matter? How does it define how we live today?

#### LEADER NOTES:

Communicate to your group that this question is not just about \$ inheritance – though the Word speaks to that as well. What will you be remembered by? Lots of bio's/ autobio's about legacy – check out Phil Robertson from Duck Dynasty – maybe read quick excerpt from his testimony.

#### SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

- Evidences thought for the future; not just "living for today"
- Shows commitment to the generations that follow
- Because what we sow, will produce fruit – given the faithfulness of God's Promises ("train up a child")
- Full-on; no lukewarm, no holding back.

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#### PERSONAL/FAMILY APPLICATION

##### DISCUSS

What are you doing well, as a family? Where do you need to improve? Talk about the future with your kids (age appropriately) – do you have a will? Why/why not?

##### DECIDE

Establish in your household the priority of passing on Godly wisdom and practices.

##### DO!

Set measurable goals as a household in the area of growing in wisdom in this area. Practical ideas: start a savings account for your kids; set aside a dedicated fund to support overseas mission work

(i) Luke 6.44, Ezek 47.12, Ps 1.3

(ii) Eph 5.15-17

(iii) Ps 119.105

(iv) John 4.35, Luke 10.2

(v) 2 Cor 9:14

(vi) Ps 22.6