

## **New Identity**

### **Lesson 6**

#### **Managers**

Reflections from Session 5

1. Were you able to keep your schedule with Jesus over the past days? If you are doing well, what has helped you develop discipline in keeping your friendship with Jesus a priority in your life? If you have been struggling what has kept you from spending time with the Savior?

2. What can your group members do to help encourage and support you in spending time with Jesus in the coming weeks.

#### **The Big Picture**

Several of Jesus' most colorful parables were about stewards or managers. He talked about managers who were effective and careful and others who were unjust and careless. The apostle Paul called himself a manager of God's truth. He also encouraged other believers to view themselves as managers. The apostle Paul encouraged all believers to use their spiritual gifts in service to one another. In so doing, they would be good managers of God's grace. Jesus took it for granted that all of His followers viewed themselves as managers. He asked the following question rather pensively: "Who will be a sensible and a faithful manager? Who will it be? Which of My followers will manage My affairs faithfully?" We are all managers, but Jesus wants to know who will be a good manager.

Before any of us raise our hands and say, "I will, I will," we had better make sure we know what the responsibilities of a good manager are. Chances are the last time you ate at a restaurant you saw a person walking around, giving direction to the hostess or the servers or the cooks. You were probably watching a manager at work. Most likely the owner was not even on the premises. In fact, the owner might have five or six restaurants around the area, or perhaps around the country. So in order for that owner to make the establishment profitable, she tries to find a man or a woman who will manage each of the restaurants for her. This is how business is run these days in hotels, gas stations, health clubs, convenience stores, and many other businesses. They are often run by managers who are hired by the owners and then entrusted with the full responsibility of the day-to-day operation. Managers are in a very important position.

In this session we will try to understand what it means to be a manager and how we can be good and faithful stewards of what God has placed in our care. A very important part of being a Christian is understanding what kind of manager God wants us to be. Maybe it's necessary for us to back up one step and answer a more basic question. What is it that I, as a follower of Christ, am supposed to be managing? What has God put me in charge of? What did God turn over to my care? The specific things we will look at in this session include the secret things of God spiritual gifts, our households, and our bodies. These are things God has placed in our care and called us to manage in a way that is pleasing to Him.

#### **A Wide Angle View**

1 – Have you ever been managed by a great manager? What made that manager great?

2 – Why is it so critical for a business, church, or any organization to have effective managers?

## **A Biblical Portrait**

**Read Luke 12:42-48**

3 – How does Jesus portray the faithful manager and the unfaithful manager?

*What consequences do each of the managers face for the choices they make?*

*How did you feel when you read this parable? What kind of annual review would the owner give you as manager?*

## **Sharpening the Focus**

**Read Snapshot, “The Secret Things of God”**

### **The Secret Things of God**

We have received the challenge to be managers of the secret things of God. You say, “What does that mean?” In 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 Paul says, “So then, men our to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.” Paul felt the full weight of responsibility to be a good manager of the truths of the Christian faith. Paul realized that God’s plan for saving sinners, growing up believers, transforming a troubled world, and building a healthy church had been entrusted to believers. He knew we must be very careful in how he handled each of these. We have been called to manage or steward the very truth of God.

4 – What are some of the “secret things of God” we need to manage faithfully?

*What can we do to grow in our knowledge of these “secret things” and effectively manage them?*

**Read Snapshot “Spiritual Gifts”**

### **Spiritual Gifts**

We have been called to steward our spiritual gifts. In 1 Peter 4:10 we read “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others., faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” Peter is saying that God has done something as a symbol of His grace and His love for you. The minute you entered the family of God, without your even knowing it, God decided sovereignly to endow you with at least one spiritual ability that would give you the capacity to be of great service to other people in the family of God. Some of you were given teaching gifts, preaching gifts, hospitality gifts, counseling gifts, pastoring gifts, shepherding gifts, leadership gifts, mercy gifts, administration gifts and all kinds of other gifts. They were given as entrustments as God’s investment in you.

God says, “You don’t own that gift. It’s My gift. Bit I’m endowing you with it and I’m asking you to steward it. I’m asking you to manage it.” And what does God mean when He asks you to manage your spiritual gift? He means, first of all, to identify it. Make sure you know what it is. But then what? Develop it and sharpen it. And finally, He calls you to use it for His glory.

5. What is one of your spiritual gifts, and how are you using it as a good and faithful manager?

*What are you doing to develop and sharpen this spiritual gift?*

## **Read Snapshot “Households”**

### **Households**

We are called to be managers of our household. Paul addresses this in 1 Timothy 3:4-6. Although the strict context of this passage refers primarily to elders and deacons, it implies a responsibility all believers have. Our own households include property and people, values and activities. We are all called to help manage what God has placed in our care.

6. How can we effectively manage the material things God has put in our care?
7. How can we effectively manage those people in our home that God has placed in our care?

## **Read Snapshot “Our Bodies”**

### **Our Bodies**

Let's say you were given a divine eviction notice and had to vacate your body for five years. Supposed that before you left you had to choose someone else to manage your body during your absence. This person would be responsible to feed your body, exercise it, condition it, care for it, rest it and manage it while you are gone. Then, after the five years are over, you come back and take up residency in your body again.

We really are called to be managers of our bodies. The Apostle Paul addressed this topic in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. The key part of the text says, *“You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore, honor God with your body.”* Our bodies are the dwelling place of God's Holy Spirit. We are called to manage them well.

8. If you had to leave your body in the care of someone else for five years, who would you leave it with and why?

*Would you leave your body in the care of someone just like you? Why or why not?*

9. What practical things can you do to be a better manager of your body? Think about sleep, eating, exercise, drinking, vacations, work and sexuality.

## **Putting Yourself in the Picture Management Goals**

In this lesson you have reflected on four very special areas of spiritual management. Take time this week to identify one area in which you want to grow in your commitment to being a good manager of what God has placed in your care. Find a friend to pray for you and keep you accountable to work at this goal.

