

# LOVE OF GOD

## **Psalm 89:2**

*<sup>1</sup>I will sing of the LORD's great love forever;  
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known  
through all generations.*

*<sup>2</sup>I will declare that your love stands firm forever,  
that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself.*

There's a limit to human love. It wears out. It dries up. That's why you have to have God's love in all your relationships if they are going to last. God's love never wears out. God's love is patient, persistent, and persevering.

Isn't it good news to know that God never gives up on you? No matter what you do, his love never gives up. It's wide enough to include everybody, and it's long enough to last forever. God will never love you any more than he does right now. But he also will never love you any less than he does right now.

He loves you on your good days. He loves you on your bad days. His love is not conditioned by your response. God is love, and his love is given freely. It cannot be earned, and it is not deserved.

Accept his love and worship him, knowing that his love is long enough to last for all time: *And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge.* - **Ephesians 3:17b-19a.**

## **Additional scriptures:**

**Psalm 86:15** *But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.*

## **Reflect:**

- Do you feel you're important to God? Why?
- How have you limited God and His love in your own mind?

# GOD IS LOVE

## **1 John 4:8b-10**

*God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

The Bible says God is love. It doesn't say God has love; it says God is love. Love is his nature.

God created the entire universe. He created this planet; He created the human race; then, He created you. God created you as an object of his love. He made you so he could love you and so you could love him. God's love for you is the reason your heart is beating right now; it's the reason you're breathing.

God's good news is that he loves you on your good days as much as he loves you on your bad days. He loves you when you can feel his love, and he loves you when you can't seem to feel his love. He loves you whether or not you think you deserve his love.

There is nothing you can do that will make God stop loving you. You could try, but you simply can't do it, because His love for you is based on His character and not on anything you do or say or feel.

God loves you so much that he sent his only Son, Jesus, into this world, so that "*whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*" **John 3:16**

Jesus stretched his arms out as wide as the cross, saying, "I love you so much that I'll die for you so that I won't have to live without you."

God's love surpasses all human knowledge. He defined love through His son, Jesus.

## **Additional scriptures:**

*Rom. 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

## **Reflect:**

Describe God's love from your perspective.

# GOD'S LOVE RESCUES

## **Psalm 18:16-19**

*<sup>16</sup> He reached down from on high and took hold of me;  
he drew me out of deep waters.*

*<sup>17</sup> He rescued me from my powerful enemy,  
from my foes, who were too strong for me.*

*<sup>18</sup> They confronted me in the day of my disaster,  
but the LORD was my support.*

*<sup>19</sup> He brought me out into a spacious place;  
he rescued me because he delighted in me.*

There are times when we all think, "I'm going under for the last time! I'm about to sink!" But no matter how deep your problem is, God's love is deeper. "There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper."

Maybe you're having health problems or you're frustrated and can't help but think, where is God, when you hit bottom. He's right there underneath you. He is *your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms* - **Deuteronomy 33:27**

The psalmist so clearly mentions that God delighted in him. And so, He can't help but rescue His beloved from the hands of suffering. Drop into his arms of love. Let him catch you and support you when you have nowhere else to go. God wants to comfort you in troubles and he can relate with you. Salvation was costly not for us but to Jesus. He paid a great price for our salvation and willingly died for our sins.

The great joy is that Jesus died and rose from the dead and we have a hope to live on this earth even though we are surrounded with different kinds of troubles in our life.

## **Additional scriptures:**

*2 Cor. 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*

## **Reflect:**

- How is your attitude toward God when you're in trouble or worried? (may be for exams, etc.)
- God's love is deep enough to handle anything. What pain or hurt or problem do you need to hand over to him today?

Make a list of the times when you felt that God rescued you from trouble. Share one incident with a friend.

# GOD'S LOVE DEFINES YOUR WORTH

## Isaiah 43:4

*Since you are precious and honored in my sight,  
and because I love you,  
I will give people in exchange for you,  
nations in exchange for your life.*

God says that you're not only accepted, you're also valuable. How much do you think you're worth? Don't ever confuse your valuables with your value as a person. You can be rich or poor, but it has nothing to do with your value as a person.

What determines the value of something? These are the two main things:

1. It depends on what someone is willing to pay for it. How much is a watch worth? To some people, it's worth nothing. To a collector, it could be worth a lot of money. Some people are willing to pay lakhs for a watch?  
How much is a piece of art worth? Whatever someone is willing to pay for it.
2. It depends on who owned it in the past. Sometimes something is valuable because of who used to own it. For example, would a car owned by Virat Kohli would be more valuable than a car you owned? Probably. Or would a guitar be more valuable because it was owned by A. R. Rahman? Yes.

Based on these two factors, what's your value? Ask yourself, "Who owns me?" "What was paid for me?" The Bible says, "You have been bought and paid for by Christ, so you belong to him — be free now from all these earthly prides and fears" (1 Corinthians 7:23)

You have been bought and paid for by Christ. The Bible says you belong to God. God exchanged his own Son for you. The cross proves your value. Jesus didn't die for junk. You are incredibly valuable. Nobody has ever paid a greater price than God paid for you. You are accepted, and you are valuable!

## Additional scriptures:

Rom. 5:8 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Ps 139: 1-16

## Reflect:

- When do you most struggle to see yourself as valuable to God?
- How does knowing your value to God help take away your pride and fear?

Study Psalm 139 and pray through the psalm.

# GOD'S LOVE FORGIVES

## **Genesis 3:8-9**

***8** Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. **9** But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"*

In Genesis 2, God entered into a very special relationship with His people by speaking to them. With the rest of creation, He simply spoke it into being. With humanity, He spoke and created a relationship. He made us His people.

And even after we sinned, God still speaks. Adam and Eve rejected Him, but He did not reject them. He could have destroyed them, which is precisely what we would have done. But He didn't. Instead, He looked for them, He found them, and He spoke to them.

God demonstrates His faithfulness to His people by promising that one day He will send someone who will strike back against the sin and evil that threatens His creation, His people, and His plan.

Despite their sin, He promises a solution. He didn't have to. God could have allowed them to suffer the dreadful consequences of their action without hope. But, that's not how God does things.

God demonstrated His grace and love upon Adam and Eve. We see that this is a story about grace and His unconditional love. There is good news in the garden: the good news that God is still God and He has not given up on His plans, His purposes, and His people. He is still a God of glory and grace and love.

## **Additional scriptures:**

***Psalm 32:1-2** Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.*

***Luke 23:33-34** When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals - one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."*

## **Reflect:**

- What did almighty God do when we sin?
- Are you able to acknowledge God's grace and love in your life? Why/How?

Confess your sins to God in prayer and give thanks to Him for His forgiveness through Jesus.

## FEELING FOR YOUR FRIEND

The Bible says to have friends, we should ourselves should be friendly.

We have lot of examples in the bible about friendship how to love and care and feel for friends the best example always set by Jesus we look through that.

### **John 11:1-44**

This Paragraph depicts that Lazarus and his sisters were close friends of Jesus. When Jesus was in Bethany, he stayed at their home and had dinner with them.

When Jesus learns that Lazarus is dead, he is deeply troubled, as any friend would be and he wept (v.35). Jesus loved Lazarus, cared for his family, had the genuine love for him. Jesus was comforting Lazarus' family. He was present for them in times of sorrow, his love was real that others also can see and feel that relationship. Jesus & Lazarus had a friendship the foundation of which was pure love and care.

### **Reflect:**

- Think about your friendship. How are your friendships today?
- Do we really care and show that kind of love to our friends?
- In what way can we become like Jesus and Lazarus in our relationships?
- Do you care & love for your friend's family? When your friend is in pain do you feel the pain and sorrow they go through? Are you comforting like Jesus was?
- How does Jesus' friendship inspire you to feel for your friends?
- How Jesus' feelings for Lazarus reflected in your friendship?

This week encourage and comfort a friend who is in need of it.

## BEING OPEN ABOUT FEELINGS

### Matthew 26:36-38

*Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."*

Jesus was about to get arrested at the garden of Gethsemane and he was aware of what was going to happen following his arrest. At this point, Jesus was troubled and was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. So much that he was even sweating blood. He had asked his disciples to pray for him. He then took Peter, James and John who were very close to Jesus of all the other disciples whom he considered his friends and shares with them what was on his heart, how he was feeling.

Jesus, the God almighty had humbled himself down to the point that he even shared his feelings, fears and weaknesses with his disciples although they might not have understood or could have been able to understand or empathize with him.

We all go through ups and downs in life. We all face tough times and go through a lot of emotional trauma ourselves. Imagine being able to be yourself, speak your heart, even your most shameful feelings and still be valued and cared for.

No friend is perfect and no friendship is perfect. Your friend may not exactly be or respond the way you want them to, but when you allow them to know you fully – your mistakes, your worries, etc. – you pave way for a stronger and deeper friendship.

### Reflect:

- Recollect any past experience of you going through an emotional roller coaster. How did you handle it?
- Have you felt the need to just be able to share what's on your mind with someone?
- How difficult is it for you to share your darkest secrets, thoughts and feelings to your friend? Why?
- Do your friendships reflect humility, trust and care for each other? How?
- Do you take your burdens and your friend's burdens to God and pray for each other?

Write down how your friendships can be better and what can you practically do to help them get better. Pray that God can help you and your friends to grow in your humility, trust and care and that you may be blessed with amazing friendships.

## UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER

Friends can speak their minds without fear; friends can share their hearts without shame; friends can stay close even at a distance. A best friend is one who loves you just the way you are, and yet helps you in the trouble and being there for you all the time.

Read **1 Samuel 20:1-17**

In the above passage we see emotions expressed by David and Jonathan. David came very close to holding Jonathan responsible for Saul's actions, and Jonathan came very close to getting defensive. Their initial words to one another were natural under the circumstances.

What is NOT natural, however, was their freedom to speak their minds and move on to resolution without any conflict. Jonathan's words are amazing, "*Whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you.*" (v.4). Jonathan didn't necessarily agree with David, but he agreed that David was upset and needed his help instead of his doubt.

**1 Samuel 20:17** *And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.*

Allowing others to speak their fears even when we can't understand is characteristic of uncommon friendship. Willingness to listen, then to let the potential insults pass, is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of strength. The bonds of uncommon friends are deeper than the width of their differences.

### **Additional scriptures:**

**Ecclesiastes 4:9-10** *Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no-one to help him up!*

### **Reflect:**

- How do you handle conflicts or misunderstandings in your friendship?
- How difficult is it for you to resolve and why?

Think of a friend who needs your presence and how can you help them.

Think of a friend who supported you through your difficult times and express your gratitude to him/her.

## HONOURING EACH OTHER

### **Matthew 26:47-50**

*47 While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. 48 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." 49 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. 50 Jesus replied, "Do what you came for, friend."*

When Judas betrayed Jesus, did you notice what Jesus calls him in the verse above? He did not call him a traitor. He did not call him a back stabber. He called him a friend. Jesus was not trying to be nice either. Jesus always called things the way He saw them. So when Jesus called Judas "friend", he perceived him as a friend. Jesus knew His war was not with flesh and blood but against Satan himself.

One of the hardest things to do is to be kind and forgiving to people especially when they have done you wrong. When someone mistreats you, the normal response is to hurt them like they've hurt you, to just do something to teach them a lesson. That's what is considered normal.

It was very painful for Jesus to see his friend betray him but still he chose to remain calm and in control. Even in that situation, he showed him respect and honour and called him 'friend'.

We must be ready to forgive our friends as Jesus did. We should pay attention to what we speak. Choose today to be more careful about what you say. Your words are powerful, so be sure that you're using words that build others up and help them.

**Ephesians 4:29** *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

Doing this isn't normal, and it isn't easy, but it's what's right.

### **Additional Scriptures:**

**Proverbs 20:22** *Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the LORD, and he will avenge you.*

**Romans 12:10** *Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.*

### **Reflect:**

- How would you perceive if your friend betrayed you or did something wrong to you? Would you show respect and honor them even in such circumstances?
- What kind of words you use when someone does you wrong?

Decide to resolve with a friend who has hurt you. Pray about it.

## FRIENDS THAT LEAD US TO GOD

### Mark 2:1-5, 11-12

*A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. [2] They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. [3] Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. [4] Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. [5] When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." [11] "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." [12] He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"*

The paralyzed man was brought before Jesus by his four friends. They were so determined to bring him to Jesus that even though they couldn't get through the crowd directly, they took him to Jesus through the roof and dug it up and lowered him there.

Vs. 5 says when Jesus saw their faith, he healed the paralyzed man and forgave his sins.

Friendships are truly an amazing gift of God. They fill our lives with fun, joy, memories and complete us. There might be many who may come to us and befriend us in such times. But only a few remain when we aren't joyful, we're going through bad times and probably we don't have anything to offer. Think about it, how many of your friends would stick to you if you were paralyzed?

The four men really cared for the paralyzed man and wanted the best for him. They didn't just wish the best for him, they acted on it. They had faith that Jesus could really heal him and they really made all the effort to bring him to Jesus. And it was because of their faith, which was evident through their deeds, that Jesus healed the paralyzed man and that changed his life completely.

Imagine having such friends in your life.

Friends who really care for you, stick with you during your rough times, are willing to go an extra mile to help you out, are willing to do anything to take you to God even when you cannot or don't want to, because they believe God can heal.

Imagine being that kind of a friend to others.

### **Reflect:**

- How do you help your friends when they're struggling?
- How can you be a better friend to your friends in times of need?

Pray specifically for ways in which you can grow to be a better friend. Pray that God can bless you with friendships that comprise of true Godly love and care.

# PUTTING GOD FIRST

Meaning of prioritizing - To arrange or deal within order of importance; to treat or consider as of greater importance than other matters.

Jesus was as human and had friends, family, relatives, feelings and emotions just like us. But Jesus prioritized GOD over everything else and everyone else.

## **Matthew – 16:21-23**

*From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. <sup>22</sup>Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him “Never, Lord” he said “This shall never happen to you!” <sup>23</sup>Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of GOD, but merely human concerns.”*

Here we can see Peter’s love for Jesus. When Jesus explained about his death, Peter was worried and he took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him.

We can see from the bible evidently that Jesus and Peter shared a very close relationship. Out of the 12 disciples, Jesus trusted Peter more than other disciples.

## **Matthew – 16:18-19**

*<sup>18</sup>And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. <sup>19</sup>I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”*

Jesus chose Peter to build the church and gave to him the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Jesus gave high authority to Peter. But when it comes to choosing between God and Peter, Jesus was very clear whom to prioritize. That’s when Jesus rebuked Peter.

He prioritized doing God’s will over what he or his friend wanted him to do.

## **Reflect:**

- How do you position God in your life amongst all the other people?
- What do you do when there is a conflict of interest between what God wants you to do and what you or your friends want you to do?
- How can you change to be like Jesus even in your friendships?

Make a list of situations where you find it difficult to follow God in comparison to your friends. Pray about it and ask God for wisdom and guidance to help you through such situations.

# CHOOSING FRIENDS

## Daniel 3:13-14, 16-18

*Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, [14] and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up?" [16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. [17] If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. [18] But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."*

In this story, we have three friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who were Jews brought captive to Babylon in exile along with all the other Jews.

King Nebuchadnezzar had made an image of gold which was 90 feet high and 9 feet wide and everyone in the kingdom, starting from all the higher officials, were expected to bow down and worship that image of gold or else they would be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace.

It was amongst such a large crowd that these three friends stood out and chose to stand up for God's glory. God is constantly looking throughout the earth for men and women who would stand up for His glory and righteousness amongst the billions and billions of people on the earth. And like always, there's only a handful of those who do stand out for that.

It's not easy to live a life that God is calling you to live in the world where the majority aren't.

But it's much less difficult when you have friends who would be willing to do the same along with you, call you higher, encourage you, support you and lift you up when you find it difficult to live a godly life.

## **Reflect:**

- How would you feel if you were to stand up against the whole crowd in your school/college to live a life that glorifies God? How would people treat you?
- How were Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego able to stand up against the King's death threats?

Deeply desire to live a life that glorifies God. Ask God to bless you with amazing friendships that are fulfilling and can lead you to Godliness.

## GIVING IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

God is almighty and self-sufficient he doesn't need anything from us mere human. He is not served by human hands. However, he is pleased with our generosity.

Q. What are some ways Bible describes about giving as an act of worship?

1. In the Old Testament, sacrifices to the Lord were designated as "gifts" - **Numbers 18:11**
2. When the wise men from the east worshipped the baby Jesus, their devotion was displayed in the form of "gifts" - **Matthew 2:11**

There's nothing you can give God. He owns everything. But when you give him an offering, you're saying, "God, I love you. I'm thinking of you. I am grateful to you and I want you first in my life."

There are many incidents in the bible which show that the act of giving is always considered as worshipping God. Paul talks about giving in most of his letters. Let's meditate on one of them.

### **Philippians 4:18**

*I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.*

The Philippi church supported Paul for his missionary journey. After receiving their money, he says, your giving is fragrant and it is an acceptable sacrifice and pleasing to God. The church must have felt so happy after hearing from Paul that their giving is accepted and God is pleased.

God desires to be pleased through our giving as well. Cain and Abel also gave to God from their earnings. Abel's offering was accepted and God was pleased in his offering but Cain's offering was not.

When we give, God looks at our hearts and our motives. So, when you give, give with all your heart because your giving is an act of worship to God.

### **Reflect:**

- With what motive do you give or share with others?
- What are some things that you can present to God as an offering?

Make a list of all the things that you have given or shared with someone and think of your motivation behind it.

## BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE

How did you feel after writing down the list of your giving? Does that please God? Was that an act of worship to God?

We all like to receive gifts and stuff like that.

In **Acts 20:35** Paul recollects the words of Jesus, '*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*'

We remember Jesus' conversation with the rich, young ruler, and how he was unwilling to give up the one thing that prevented him from entering the kingdom of God; it was his money. And we also are aware of how Jesus observed the widow who cast into the temple treasury all that she had.

### **Mark 12:43-44**

*Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."*

Do you think Jesus notices what you give on Sunday morning? He does. He notices those, who by faith, give with a willing heart. He notices the amount you give. Jesus closely observed and made note of what the widow had given. In fact, He compared it with what the rich had given. When it comes to giving, the Lord said it is more blessed to give than to receive.

### **Reflect:**

- How was the widow able to give all that she had to the temple treasury?
- What made her to do this?
- Why did Jesus only notice her specifically?
- How can you become more like the widow when it comes to giving?

Give something to someone today from what you own: clothes, sports item, books etc. and pray how can you give more.

## CHOOSING TO GIVE

Now you know that giving is an act of worship and it is blessed to give than to receive. Now let's learn how we can choose to give.

What should you give? Do you need to make a choice to give?

You ought to give everything to God and giving is not an option. Choosing to give means developing a heart of giving.

Let's go back to the rich young ruler again, he had everything - money and position - but he didn't have a heart to give or give up for Jesus.

### **2 Corinthians 9:7**

*Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

This scripture is encouraging to give what you have decided to give in your heart. Even before you decide to give you need to prepare your heart or develop a heart of giving.

How can you have the attitude God wants you to have when you give? It starts with your heart. God is more interested in your willingness to give than whatever you give, because he's interested in what's happening in your heart when you decide to give.

Do you feel a compulsion when you give? Don't give because you feel pressured by someone. God's not going to bless it anyway. But rather give every time you feel challenged by God.

How can you develop a heart to give?

1. Knowing Jesus - Who was Jesus? Why did he come to this earth? What kind of heart did he have? Jesus was God. He came to this earth to give whatever he got from his Father and most importantly he came to give his life. He had a heart to give to the fullest.  
**John 10:10** *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.*
2. By practicing - Practicing can help us to develop and improve our hearts to decide to give. Start practicing today.

### **Reflect:**

- What makes giving a difficult choice?
- In what areas do you struggle to give?

Pray for an opportunity to give sacrificially to someone this week.

# STEWARDSHIP - 1

## What is stewardship?

Dictionary meaning is conducting, supervising or managing something.

## What is biblical stewardship?

Biblical stewardship is, "Utilizing and managing all resources God provides for the glory of God and the betterment of His creation."

We are called to be God's stewards to manage that which belongs to God. While God has graciously entrusted us with the care, development, and enjoyment of everything he owns as his stewards, we are responsible to manage it well and according to his desires and purposes.

Stewardship involves three important things - THREE 'T's. They are:

1. TIME
2. TALENT
3. TREASURE

### **1. Time: Investing the Minutes of Life in the Priorities of God**

You've heard it said, "Life is like a coin. You can spend it however you want, but you can only spend it once." Time is important. Bible says there is time for everything. A time to laugh, a time to be happy, etc.

Does God need your time?

### **Mark 1:35**

*Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.*

Jesus being God he took time out to pray and he started his day with God very early in the morning.

How are you giving your time to God? Time has to be handled carefully.

Are you spending enough time praying to God? God has given you enough time to play and have fun. And God is also looking for you to give your time to Him by meditating on His word and praying and spending time with other people.

### **Reflect:**

- What activities take up most of your time?
- How can you please God with your use of time?

Write down how much time you spend on different activities apart from your time at school/college. Compare it with the time you spend with God (praying, reading the Bible, etc.) or to build your faith (attending meetings, meeting with people, evangelising, etc.). Decide to give the best of your time

## STEWARDSHIP - 2

### 2. Talent: Putting Your Skills to Work in the Family of God

As a steward of God as we give our time to God we should also use and give our talent for his glory.

What is talent? Talent is our skill. Our skills are given to us by God and God is looking for us to use our skills for Him.

What is your talent? Maybe you can sing or play an instrument. Maybe you're good at making friends. Different individuals have different talents or different skill sets.

We all know the parable of the talents.

#### **Matthew 25:19-23**

<sup>19</sup>“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

<sup>21</sup>“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

<sup>22</sup>“The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’

<sup>23</sup>“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

What can you learn from this parable?

The master was pleased with his two servants for their talents. Likewise, when you use your talents for God he is pleased with it and he is honoured by your talent.

**Matthew 5:16** *In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*

The light can be your talent which will help other people around you to honour and glorify God.

#### **Reflect:**

- How have you been using your talents that God has blessed you with?
- What will God say to you when He sees the fruits of your talents?

Think about your talents and skills and how you can use them to glorify God. Ask your friends and mentors in what way you can serve better.

## STEWARDSHIP - 3

### 3. **Treasure: The Joy of Joining with God**

God wants us to give to Him because it is an act of worship and when our generosity goes deep, our giving delights Him.

#### **Psalm 24:1**

*The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;*

God created everything that we see on this earth. Everything belongs to God. Even our wealth. As stewards our job is to manage what belongs to God, that is, everything.

Many of the parables of Jesus speak to us about money or material possessions: the lost coin, the widow's giving, the buried treasure in the field, the rich young man, and the Good Samaritan who gives two silver pieces to the innkeeper. Jesus talks about money because he knows how personal it is to us.

Stewardship of treasure is not about giving to a need, but rather it is the need to give.

It is important for us to share our money and our material possessions because all the good things that God has made are meant to be shared. We need to return thanks to a loving God for the many blessings we have received.

How important is money to you?

Money is important in our lives but it's not everything. God is everything to us. God is more personal to us than money.

There are many wonderful things here on Earth that we can treasure, but the greatest treasure that we could ever obtain is Heaven. As Christians we should be content to give up our Earthly treasures so that we can store up our treasure in Heaven.

#### **Additional Scriptures:**

Luke 15:8-10 *Parable of the Lost Coin*

Mark 12:41-44 *The Widow's Offering*

Matt. 13:44 *Parable of the Hidden Treasure*

Matt. 19:16-30 *The Rich Young Man*

Luke 10:25- 37 *The Parable of the Good Samaritan*

#### **Reflect:**

- How regular are you in your tithing?
- What things do you spend most on?
- Is it difficult for you to help someone in need? Why?

Decide to tithe regularly without compromise and let someone hold you accountable.