

Disciplines of a Disciple

Kingdom Stewardship Part 2

Rob Rogers October 16, 2022

Introduction

This is our final week in our Disciplines of a Disciple series and the reason why we're talking about the spiritual disciplines, the ways, and practices of Jesus is that information alone is not enough. The western church is not suffering from a lack of information, but a lack of application.

“Information will not grow us to maturity – Application will.”

Adopting and implementing the practices of Jesus' own life and teachings places us in a pressure cooker of transformation where the Holy Spirit molds us and shape us to become the type of people that look and live like Jesus. The practices aren't about earning something from God, but about delighting yourself in King Jesus, and living fully in the life of His Kingdom.

*“The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for **deep people.**” –Richard J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline*

So, what we've done is delineated the disciplines into these 4 specific categories:

1. PRIVATE DEVOTION
2. BIBLICAL COMMUNITY
3. MISSIONAL LIVING
4. KINGDOM STEWARDSHIP

We're talking about what it means to be faithful stewards of what God has entrusted to us. Today, we're introducing these disciplines and this teaching will by no means be exhaustive, but as we talk through 3 specific disciplines of KINGDOM STEWARDSHIP, pay attention to what the Lord is highlighting for you and dig more deeply into what He's pointing you toward.

WHAT IS A STEWARD? A steward is a manager of something on someone else's behalf.

As followers of Christ, we believe that our lives are on loan from God. They don't even belong to us. God owns it all. We are simply managers of what He's given us - our time our talent, and our treasure.

The 3 disciplines we're highlighting in the Kingdom Stewardship category are...

SUBMISSION
SIMPLICITY
GENEROSITY

Submission

Now the bible talks about submission in a few specific ways... submission to one another.

Ephesians 5:21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Submission to those in authority over you...

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and **submit to them**, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.

Just a side note:

what the entirety of the NT, (Philippians 2, 1 Peter 5) and the teachings of Jesus tell us is that if you leverage the biblical teaching on submission to coerce someone to submit to you — that's not biblical submission, that's spiritual abuse. Never once did Jesus model this, live like this or even come close to teaching submission in this way. When spiritual leaders leverage "submission" for self-serving purposes — run. Because they're not keeping watch over your souls... and will give an account to the Chief Shepherd when He returns.

What do we mean by submission as a discipline of Kingdom Stewardship, what are we talking about?

Biblical Submission is the freely chosen surrendering of the will.

Specifically, we're talking about submission to King Jesus.

Last week, we contrasted the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God and ended with a call to realign our will, our values, our priorities, and our possessions, to the will, the ways, the priorities of King Jesus. That's Submission.

In the life of Jesus, this is exactly why He teaches us to pray.

Matthew 6:10 "Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

A perfect picture of submission in the life of Jesus is seen in the garden of Gethsemane. "Let this cup pass from me." He prays it 3 times... and in the end, sets His gaze toward the cross that awaited Him knowing the will of the Father and submitting Himself to it. John Wesley captured it perfectly...

I am no longer my own, but yours.

Put me to what you will; rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you, exalted for you, or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing:

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious, and blessed God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

- John Wesley

OBJECTIVE: “Oh Rob, that’s so nice and poetic and pretty.” No, it’s not! This is our worst nightmare. If you pray this, you acknowledge that you no longer belong to yourself, you are relinquishing control of your whole life to someone else.

It’s “*Your will be done, NOT MINE. All my wants, all my desires, all those things I think I need or want to happen in my life... doesn’t matter anymore – YOUR WILL not mine. YOUR WANTS, not mine. YOUR DESIRES not mine. I lay my whole life at your disposal do with me what you will.*”

That’s the discipline of submission. What you’ll find is one moment, you’ll be submitted, and the next moment you won’t be. One moment, you’re surrendered, the next, you’ve placed yourself back on the throne. That’s why this is a discipline.

I want to give you an illustration to help us understand this.

ILLUSTRATION: Imagine a piece of metal that was alive and could talk – and I took that piece of metal, and I wanted to put it in the furnace to heat the metal up and make it pliable... but it refused. It said, “no, I’m not going in there.” So, I let the metal have its own way, didn’t put it in the furnace, and with all my might I start pounding on it, beating it, and bending, trying to mold it for a purpose it didn’t yet understand – what do you think the piece of metal would say to me?

- “STOP IT! YOU’RE HURTING ME! Why are you doing this!?”
- If I kept it up long enough, eventually that cold piece of metal would break and become useless to me.

Now, imagine, if I took that piece of metal and heated it in a furnace, and then began to hammer it, shape it, and slowly mold it into what I wanted it to be. While it’s in the furnace, it might be painful, and while I bent it, it might say “that hurts” but it wouldn’t break, would it? The heat of the furnace would make it pliable, bendable, shapable...

- When life comes at you, when you’re pounded with hardship, and you pray sincerely, “Father, your will be done...” at that very moment you’re saying, I’m willing to go into the furnace. You’re making yourself pliable, moldable, and shapable.
- But as hardship/suffering comes at you and you can’t pray, “your will be done,” you’re the piece of metal that will eventually break – you’ll become cold, hard-hearted, embittered toward God and others.

Q: Does going into the furnace hurt? You bet it does! Nobody wants to go in there! **It hurts to pray “your will be done” but it hurts far worse not to.** That’s submission.

Simplicity

In Western culture, we are bombarded with the idea that a fulfilled life, a contented life, is found in accumulation, in our possessions, in what we own. The idea “that more is better”.

So much of our lives are spent searching for the things that we’re told will make us happy.

In fact, every marketing campaign is designed to make you discontent with what you currently own, and if you’d just buy what “x” company is selling then and ONLY THEN will you be fulfilled.

ILLUSTRATIONS:

- Hyundai promises that owning their vehicles will make you a better parent.
- CBS tells you that buying a TV can prevent you from missing out on life-changing events.
- A snickers bar will keep you from turning into a diva losing friends.
- Axe body spray somehow will make you instantly and irresistibly attractive.
- It's the reason for Happy Meals and Happy Hours.

Every single one of these things is promising something, we internalize these things and without even realizing it, begin to believe... “yeah, maybe I do need a new car or a bigger house, or more Axe body spray or whatever

We begin to consume and accumulate all this stuff and we're still absolutely miserable.

If you ask someone, how they're doing — the most common response is, “I'm just so Busy!” Our schedules, our homes, and our lives are so overcrowded, we don't have time or space for what matters most in life.

Luke 12:15 “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the **abundance of his possessions.**”

Lutheran Minister Albert Schweitzer once wrote...

“If you own something you cannot give away, then you don't own it, it owns you.” Albert Schweitzer

The simplicity of the life of Jesus — calls us to create space in our schedules, in our homes, and in our finances for what really matters. It calls us to a life with Jesus, to abide in his goodness, and enjoy life to the fullness in the Kingdom of God.

What is the discipline? What is the practice?

Declutter your life. Create space in your schedule, your home, your work, your family, and your finances. But before you do — determine what God desires your life to look like. What you, in **submission to God**, desire your life to look like. What do you want to spend your life on?

“Every increased possession adds increased anxiety into our lives.”
– Randy Alcorn, Money, Possessions, and Eternity

The more you own, the more distracted you become. The more you accumulate, the more you must tend to and manage, and if you're not intentional your stuff will pull you away from what matters most.

Do you have breathing room, in your home, in your budget, in your calendar, in your closet, if you're constantly living on the fringes; you'll get to the end of your life and wish you could go back and do it differently.

Luke 12:22-23 And he said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. **23** For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.”

The benefits of the discipline of simplicity are fighting against the idol of materialism and accumulation, but it frees us up for connection with God, with our spouse, and with our children, because we're spending less time managing STUFF and we're able to invest in what matters most.

Generosity

Every follower of Jesus ought to be the most radically, dare I say, irresponsibly generous person on the planet. Why?

2 Corinthians 8: You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though He was rich became poor, so we through His poverty might become rich.

There's so much to say here but the motive for generosity is that when you see all that Jesus has done, all that He's given for you, that without Him, we're doomed to live in spiritual and relational poverty, and yet, He gave it all up for you! So that, you'd be filled with the riches of heaven (which is a far more significant form of currency than any material possession) you can't even come close to outgiving God.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7,11 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. **11 You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.**

- The Kingdom principle here is: If you're sacrificially generous, if you trust in the abundance of God, and therefore become a hilarious giver, what you receive in return is far more significant and beneficial than what you had to begin with! But if you live life with a scarcity mentality trying to hold on to what you believe is rightfully yours if you're a stingy person — you'll receive just as sparingly in return.

A biblical view of generosity begins with an understanding of the abundant, radical, and even irrational generosity of God toward us. As we recognize His generosity toward us, we plan, and eagerly look for ways to SOW BOUNTIFULLY toward God and others.

- And while that includes money, it's not limited to money.

It's about your time. Your talents, and your money. It's about your resources. Your possessions, your relationships, it's a heart posture of generosity in all areas of life because you know our God is a good and benevolent God that owns it all!

Tithing is not about the money, it's about the motive.

It's about obedience

It's why special and sacrificial offerings, that are above and beyond the tithe ought to be a regular part of the Christian life not only because we're commanded to practice these things in both the Old and New Testament, and even by Jesus Himself, but because look at all that God has given for us! How could we not freely and joyously give back to Him everything we are and everything we have?

It's why we bring our whole selves before God and offer our life in submission to God's priorities.

This is why the discipline of **Simplicity is** so important. Because our lives are so crammed full that we don't have the margin to even think generously. We're so busy being conformed to the pattern of this world, trying to accumulate for ourselves, and get the newest, nicest, hippest whatever — that living with sacrificial generosity isn't a possibility.

EXAMPLE: Grace Chapel, so many of you are faithfully generous, sacrificially generous... and you're making an enormous impact all around the world. A few weeks back, we hosted a fundraiser for Josiah's House, for the Hope Continues program that will allow kids that have aged out of the orphanage to remain within the structure, and support of biblical community as they continue their education or find meaningful employment. Forty-some people showed up. Their goal was to raise \$85K, those forty-some people raised \$59k dollars.

The money matters, but can I just tell you, it's not about the money. **It's about the motive.** It's a matter of the heart. There is no more generous giver than God Himself and He's made us in His image to reflect His generosity to the world. **You and I were made to give. We were made for radical, ridiculous, consistent, faithful, cheerful, and sacrificial generosity** as a lifestyle. And God takes pleasure in it and invites us to test Him in it...

- This isn't prosperity gospel. This isn't God wants you to have your own private Jet nor "*the blessing of God can be yours for the low price of 19.99/month.*"

But the entirety of scripture tells us that if you live a generous life — you open yourself up to the blessings of God in a way that you will NOT receive or experience otherwise.

"Good will come to him who is generous . . ." Psalm 112:5

"Generous people will be blessed . . ." Proverbs 22:9

"The godly are always generous...and their children will be blessed." Psalm 37:26

"Honor the Lord by giving Him the first part of all your income, then your barns will be filled to overflowing and your vats will overflow with the finest wine."

Prov. 3:9 "A generous man will prosper, and he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed."
Proverbs 11:25

This is the pathway to abundant life. Jesus himself said it's far better to GIVE than to RECEIVE.

SUBMISSION | SIMPLICITY | GENEROSITY

Disciplines of a Disciple Booklet — As you open it, you'll notice that every category and discipline in this series is outlined within it. This is designed to be a helpful tool that will allow you to sit with the Lord and evaluate how you're doing in the disciplines. There's also a place on Gracechapel.net with the teachings from this series, as well as a list of resources that will help you go deeper into any of the disciplines the Lord may be highlighting for you.

Our encouragement to you — is to listen to the Lord and ask God what areas He's wanting you to grow in and be intentional about them.

- As you go through it, you might say, "man, I'm way more consistent in getting into the word of God... but I really could grow in loving my neighbors." Or "I'm killing it, loving my neighbors, but I really need to look at simplifying my life, my calendar, my possessions, to make more room for what really matters..."

This isn't designed to make you feel guilty, it is designed to help you hear God's voice and grow to become like Jesus by practicing the ways of Jesus. It's yours, spend some time this week, going through it and ask the Lord what disciplines He wants you to grow in this year.

There's an additional component to this as well...

DISCIPLESHIP COVENANT: There's an insert in your booklet that is our DISCIPLESHIP COVENANT. Our elders, our pastors, and staff, Misty, and I, we're all going through this together as a church family, and here's what we want to invite you to do.

There are **5 specific commitments** in the **Discipleship Covenant**. Church, this is our playbook. This is what we're about here. Other churches might be about other things — this is what we're about here. If we're going to accomplish what Jesus has commanded us to accomplish, we must be on the same page. Setting our sights on the same objective, knowing how we're going to WIN together, and how we're going to function as a team – together. If you're all in with Jesus — want to be on the team — this is what we're going to be about.

When you sign this, you're making a commitment to the Lord that over the next year, I'm going to intentionally grow in PRIVATE DEVOTION, BIBLICAL COMMUNITY, MISSIONAL LIVING, and KINGDOM STEWARDSHIP.

I'm going to be a disciple that makes disciples and even though I will not do it perfectly, I'm going to blow it at moments, and I may fall off the wagon... I'm making a commitment that I'm going to give this my best shot over the next year and learn alongside my family here at Grace Chapel.

We want you to take this home and seriously pray over it. Talk with your spouse, about it. Ponder it. If you're all in with Jesus here, if you want to follow Jesus, be changed by Jesus, and live on mission with Jesus...

- on the bottom section, either **sign the physical copy** and bring it back and drop it in the offering bags over the next two Sundays.
- Or **scan the QR code** if you're feeling techy, fill out the form and let us know that you're on the team.

And if you're not ready to make that commitment quite yet, you're still checking things out here... we get it... we're glad you're here! Continue being a part of what God is doing here and continue to grow with us. But know, our desire is for you to grow in intimacy with Jesus, to become like Jesus, and do what Jesus did - and these are the ways we want to help you do that.

Church, would you stand with me? God has great things in store for Grace Chapel. He has and is preparing us for something much bigger than ourselves and our biggest prayer in everything we do is that He alone would get the glory.

He alone is worthy of it all.

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus calls us to be generous with our time, talents, and treasures. How does Jesus' generosity towards us compel us to live generous lives?
2. What is the top factor keeping you from living generously? One common obstacle is a "scarcity mindset" (an obsessive feeling of lack, fear of not having enough). Do you often struggle with being afraid to invest your time, money, or energy because you believe you'll be left with nothing?
3. What does being tight-fisted with our gifts sow in our hearts? In contrast, what does being open-handed sow in our hearts?
4. Now that we've walked through several key spiritual disciplines in Pastor Rob's latest series, what has God been tugging at your heart to do?
5. Each part of the Body of Christ is needed. Do you know what your part is? Do you feel needed? What can you do to find your part?

NOTES