



THEOLOGY OF STEWARDSHIP & GENEROSITY

| The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. - Psalm 24:1

C3 is a community motivated by individual transparency, the simplicity of growth steps, and inviting our neighbors, family, friends, and co-workers to experience through faith the salvation and Lordship of Jesus Christ. We believe God accomplishes His purposes through people like us. By managing God's blessings, God's way, for God's glory we will leave a legacy of love in the Tri-Cities and throughout the world.

TOGETHER our vision is to lead more people into a personal first-time relationship or re-engagement with Jesus Christ and to help each connected person grow in their faith and practice.

A VISION of this magnitude requires each of us to be fully committed and invested in seeing it through. We honor God by wisely stewarding all He entrusts to us toward accomplishing His purposes. This means giving freely and sacrificially of our time, talents, and treasure to others, without expecting anything in return. This type of giving is inspired by love and gratitude for all that God has generously given to us. We give because He first gave to us.

WE WANT everyone at C3 to grow as followers of Christ and be a part of fulfilling our vision. So, we must embrace a biblical perspective of stewardship and generosity, to grow Kingdom resources for Kingdom purposes. When in alignment, we will experience the joy of seeing God working through us as we help others become more like Jesus.

A GROWING FOLLOWER OF JESUS IS one who, by grace alone, practices and works through their faith journey. Our identity is strictly bound to Jesus Christ. Having set our minds on God's purpose, our behavior changes to become increasingly like Jesus—our heart comes into alignment. We begin to hear and follow God's will. This results in complete joy, satisfaction, and peace even amidst life's storms, and thwarts the enemy, Satan himself, through our lifestyle.

A growing follower of Jesus Christ at C3 exemplifies **FOUR MAJOR THEMES:**

1

WORSHIPER: Followers of Jesus gather in large and small group to focus on and thank God, to connect with each other, and to grow in devotion to God.

2

WITNESS: Followers of Jesus actively share personal stories about the good news of Jesus with others and plant seeds so that other people come to faith in Christ.

3

SERVANT: Followers of Jesus learn how God has gifted them, and we equip people to use those gifts to serve others inside and outside the walls of the church building.

4

DISCIPLE MAKER: Followers of Jesus learn to understand their primary ministry calling and help others grow through their steps of faith. The goals are to know our faith and act upon our faith.

GROWTH STEPS



DISCOVER MY JOURNEY

[next class]



EXPRESS MY FAITH

[gather to worship]



LIVE MY FAITH

[serve others]



ACCEPT MY FAITH

[salvation]



EQUIP MY FAITH

[connect in small group]



TRUST MY FAITH

[give]



DECLARE MY FAITH

[baptism]



GROW MY FAITH

[build my daily life with Christ]



SHARE MY FAITH

[share by telling my ongoing story and inviting others to join me]

FOUR FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS

As we multiply followers of Jesus Christ who then grow others (2 Tim 2:2), we build a culture of stewardship and generosity from a solid scriptural foundation. The following Truths are a foundation from which we teach and model stewardship and generosity to others.

TRUTH #1

GOD OWNS EVERYTHING AND NEEDS NOTHING

God's Kingdom never has a "need". It may have "unfunded Kingdom opportunities", but neither God nor his work ever needs anything.

GOD'S SELF-SUFFICIENCY

"The God who made the world and all everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything." Acts 17:24-25

"For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine." Psalm 50:10-12

GOD'S OWNERSHIP

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;" Psalm 24:1

"Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me." Job 41:11

"For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen." Romans 11:36

"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." Revelation 4:11

"The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it." Psalm 89:11

"But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today." Deuteronomy 8:18

TRUTH #2

WE OWN NOTHING AND NEED EVERYTHING

We easily forget that we are born into this world with empty hands and that we will leave this world with empty hands (1 Timothy 6:7). The inescapable conclusion, then, is that we possess nothing, and that God owns everything. While we are on this planet, our responsibility is to be managers of His possessions.

We are helpless to contribute to the work that God is doing without Him providing us with something to contribute - life, health, time, abilities, resources, etc. Everything we are and everything we have is a gift from God.

We can only return to the Lord what has flowed from Him in the first place.

"To this John replied, "A person can receive only what is given them from heaven." John 3:27

"Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb, and as everyone comes, so they depart. They take nothing from their toil that they can carry in their hands." Ecclesiastes 5:15

"For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it." 1 Timothy 6:7

"For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?" 1 Corinthians 4:7

TRUTH #3

GOD PROVIDES ALL OUR RESOURCES

God provides all our resources (tangible and spiritual). He uses the resources He has entrusted to us to sustain us and to advance His Kingdom.

To fully access God's resources, leaderships' priority and responsibility is to earnestly seek godly wisdom and wise counsel to be as certain as possible that our vision is indeed God's vision.

What God orders, He pays for. God would not give His people a vision and then fail to provide them the funding to realize it.

"His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness," 2 Peter 1:3

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment." 1 Timothy 6:17

"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19 (NLT)

"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." John 15:7

TRUTH #4

GOD USES STEWARDS TO MANAGE HIS RESOURCES

God not only uses stewards to manage His resources, but He deploys them to sustain and advance His Kingdom. Since there is no shortage of Kingdom resources, God's people already have possession of all that is necessary to accomplish His vision.

We are responsible for what He entrusts to us as stewards, not as owners. We dare not think of gripping the things He entrusts to us. We must seek to hold everything loosely. We simply manage the treasures He entrusts to us, never forgetting that any way He directs us to share, to save, or to spend, is His sovereign right.

Good stewardship is not just releasing a few dollars here and there to a church. We start by surveying all that we have and remember how everything that we have, EVERYTHING, kept or released, should be used mindful of eternity. God is not asking us just to share our resources, He is asking us to recognize that all our resources belong to Him. His desire is that we use what we need and then give the rest away.

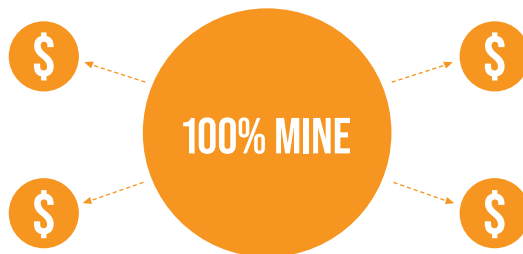
Learning how to recognize and receive His direction is critically important to how well we steward what He has entrusted to us.

Self-Absorbed Owner



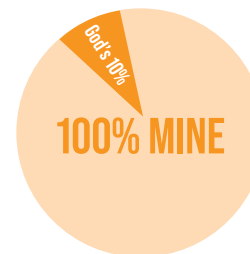
"I have full authority over my stuff."

Obligated Owner



"I have full authority over my stuff...but I feel obligated to give something."

Obedient Owner



"I will obey what God says I should do."

Love-Inspired Steward



"I have given God total authority over His stuff."

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE FOUR TRUTHS

If you accept the four foundational biblical truths of stewardship and generosity, then we would ask you to prayerfully consider implementing these **TEN PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS** in your life.

APPLICATION #1

I will make my primary objective as a steward to be more fully connected to the mind and heart of God, the Owner of all I possess.

APPLICATION #2

I will commit to being more attuned to God's will so that I can be more successful in effectively and obediently managing and deploying the resources God has entrusted to me.

APPLICATION #3

I will commit to living in a way that exemplifies the truth of Jesus and demonstrates spiritual awareness and maturity by asking the Holy Spirit to be my Stewardship and Generosity Guide.

APPLICATION #4

I will shift my view of having full authority over my stuff to giving God full authority over His stuff.

APPLICATION #5

I will take the next step forward in stewarding God's resources from where I am today.

1. **Initial Giver** – someone who decides to give for the first time in response to God's word.
2. **Consistent Giver** – someone who decides to give on a regular basis.
3. **Intentional Giver** – someone who is beginning to think of giving as applying to their time, talents, and treasure. Intentional givers look at their life and consider how their giving reflects their view of God and commitment to His Kingdom.
4. **Surrendered Giver** – someone who gives in a way that changes their lifestyle and seeks to honor God with 100% of what He has entrusted to them. Their giving governs how they use their time, talents, and treasure.

APPLICATION #7

I will have a heart of gratitude for all that God has done for me and look for ways to implement practices of gratitude so that I can grow a heart of generosity.

APPLICATION #9

I want my generosity to be a visible expression of God's infinite, incomprehensible love for me so I will commit to pray slowly through Ephesians 3:14-19 for 30 days.

APPLICATION #6

I will strive to be an extravagant giver by reaching for a level of giving that is dependent on God. Consider these three standards for biblical giving:

1. **Tithe** – A tithe is a portion (10%) of your income given as an offering to your local church. (Fun fact: The word tithe literally means tenth in Hebrew.)
2. **Sacrificial** – You've given sacrificially when your giving impacts your lifestyle. It is giving that is unusual, uncommon, excellent, outstanding, painful, and extra ordinary. God practiced it Himself as an example to believers. He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus, so He could bring the whole world to Himself. This sacrifice cost Him something. He did it out of love for the world.
3. **Shocking** – eye-opening, extravagant, brash giving.

APPLICATION #8

I will strive to exhibit generosity that flows out of a heart of worship by being disciplined in reading my bible and praying so that I can achieve a level of intentionality in my generosity.

APPLICATION #10

I want my sense of gratitude to motivate me to hold nothing back from God so I will write down every blessing I can think of from the past year and then look at that sheet and think about all that the God of the universe has done for me. I will let that awareness draw me to experience God like I never have before.



CONCLUSION

It is our hearts' desire to see everyone at Church become part of a unified family of believers who are motivated by the Great Commandment and devoted to the Great Commission. Therefore, we will teach them to obey biblical principles for how to manage the resources God entrusts to them. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to worship God, giving Him the central place in our lives. We worship God when we recognize Him as our Creator and Provider and submit to His authority in every area of our life. In a very practical way, how we manage the material resources entrusted to us reveals who, or what, we worship.

As you can see, this theology of stewardship and generosity sets an incredibly high standard for service and work; a standard that can only be reached through total commitment, humble surrender, and absolute obedience to the Lord. It is our desire to live and to engage in such a way that God will be glorified in not only what we achieve, but also in how we have achieved it. We believe that if we do our work God's way, the outcomes will always end well.

After all our labors are done, we want to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant."