

EXPONENTIAL

Week 4- Day 1

EXPONENTIAL EXPANSION

Jesus started a movement of exponential disciple-making with the intention that as He multiplied his life into a few disciples, they would multiply their lives into others, and that cycle would continue until His Kingdom spread throughout the Earth. He prepacked the disciples with the gifts, talents and temperament they would need to continue His ministry after He ascended to heaven. As a good Master, Jesus promises to equip us with everything we need to accomplish His purposes and instructions. He understands that this task is impossible for humans to accomplish alone, so He imparts to us His power and authority and blesses believers with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Read John 14:12-14 and Acts 1:4-5, 8 below. Underline Jesus' instructions to His disciples and circle the ways He equips them.

¹²Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

John 14:12-14

⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:4-5,8

The richest people on Earth are believers in Jesus Christ because we are co-heirs with Him in the Kingdom of God. Not only do we receive eternal life in heaven, but we have also been given the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, abilities, resources, community, purpose, destiny, and the power and authority of the name of Jesus,

As we grow and make Jesus LORD of our lives, we gain a better understanding of how to steward everything that has been entrusted to us for His benefit instead of ours. Jesus understood that stewardship would be a difficult, but pivotal issue in the lives of His disciples. Relinquishing ownership isn't easy. Desiring a healthy transformation in His disciples, Jesus addresses the issue of stewardship in His teaching using several parables on the Mount of Olives.

Read Matthew 25:14 – 30. Fill in the chart below

Characters in the Parable	Words used to describe them	What did this character do with their talents?
The Master		
Servants 1 and 2		
Servant 3		

- Which servant do you relate to more?
- Have you ever felt like you didn't have enough? How did you react?
- What can you infer about the relationship between the third servant and the Master? Do you think this impacted the servant's willingness and obedience in this situation?
- How did the willingness and obedience of the first two servants impact the multiplication of their talents?

STEWARDSHIP ISN'T
A SUBCATEGORY OF
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.
IT IS THE CHRISTIAN
LIFE.

Randy Alcorn

“God expects us to use all of the resources He gives us to best carry out our responsibilities in furthering His Kingdom. This includes caring for our families, our homes and businesses, our planet and whatever else He entrusts to us.

Stewardship isn't a subcategory of the Christian life. Stewardship is the Christian life. After all, what is stewardship except that God has entrusted to us life, time, talents, money, possessions, family, and His grace? In each case, He evaluates how we regard what He has entrusted to us—and what we do with it. Our use of money and possessions is only one aspect of stewardship, but all aspects are overlapping circles. How we view and handle our money will correspond with how we view and handle our time, energy, talents, family, church, vocation, and every facet of life.”¹

Notable Quotables

Read the following quotes. What new insights do you gain about stewardship?

Every passage of Scripture on stewardship in the New Testament deals with the issue of trust, for stewardship is a trust. The more God adds to our lives, the more He trusts us. Remember, stewardship, and everything else to which God calls us, is all about partnership. God wants partners who are like Him.

Our stewardship of money (material wealth) exposes the state of our trust like nothing else, and this is why God continues to use money like the master did in the parable of the talents. Remember, money is power, and power exaggerates whatever is in our hearts. And God's interest is always in our hearts. He doesn't need us to make money for Him, and it doesn't cost Him to give us more. But it cost Him His own Son to restore us as sons and daughters who could share in His glory and His kingdom. This is why the most prized quality of the steward is not financial acumen, hard work, or even courage to take risks, but faithfulness, or trustworthiness. "It is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy" (1 Corinthians 4:2).²

Stephen DeSilva

You want to be changed into the person that is capable to dwell in the blessing that you're praying for. So often we want God to add something to our lives without us being transformed into one who is capable of stewarding well what we've asked for. The fight is for that purpose."

Bill Johnson

New life events are always followed by an upgrade of God's presence and provision. With every new situation there is a fresh provision. The God of peace is with us to bring us into a deeper, broader experience of rest that enables us to overcome.³

Graham Cooke

I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all. But whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess.

Martin Luther

God has given each of us something to steward, something to invest, or a talent to grow for the sake of the Kingdom. It does not matter how little or how much you have; it is what you do with what you have been given that matters. So, take some time to press against the glass walls of your capacity and begin to ask God for wisdom and insight into your constraints. Then develop a plan and muster the courage to increase your soul's capacity for more.⁴

Kris Vallotton

Record your new insights about stewardship below:

What about you?

- Kingdom expansion involves taking risks and trusting that God will be faithful. When is a time when you stepped out in faith and took a risk. What did you learn from that experience about yourself and about God? If you haven't, what is stopping you?

- What would it mean for you, as an individual, to risk for God? Is it harder for you to risk time, energy, resources, or money? What is God saying to you about that?

- How does the knowledge that you are a MANAGER of Kingdom resources change the way you think about the management of your money, time, resources, calendar, etc.?

EXPONENTIAL

Week 4- Day 2

EXPONENTIAL IMPACT

You were designed for Exponential Impact. God created us each to reflect him uniquely. We need each other to get a full picture of His glory. How exactly has God designed you? What piece of God's heart, character and glory do you reflect to the world?

Remember, He formed you in your mother's womb and designed you to do specific "works that He prepared in advance for you to do." (Eph. 2:10) How will you know what they are? Pay attention to your heart and your passions and what makes you excited because they are God-given.

In light of these truths, spend some time with God and ask Him to show you the answers to the questions below. Simply notice these things about yourself with Him as your guide in a non-judgmental way and write them below.

- **What are you attracted to in Creation?**
- **What stirs you to anger?**
- **What speaks to your heart?**
- **If you could do anything with no limitations (money, time, experience) what would you do?**
- **How would you like to spend a completely free day?**
- **Which local, national, or global issues catch your attention?**
- **What topics do you repeatedly talk about?**

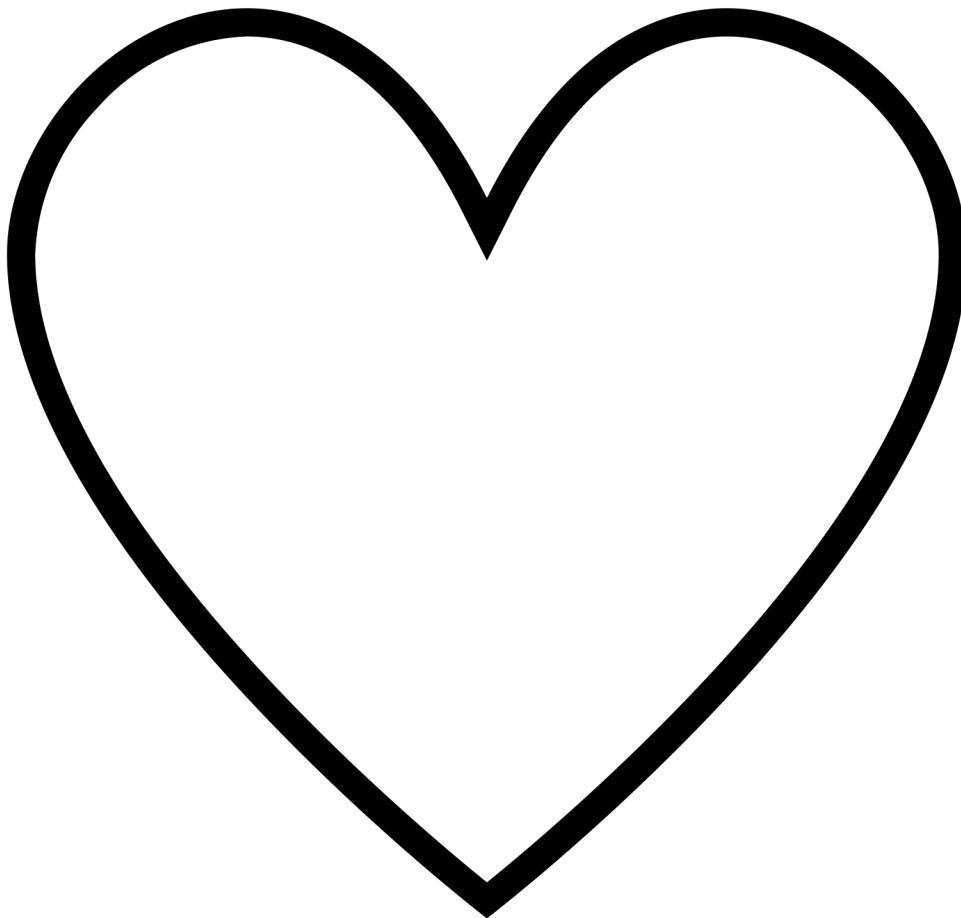
Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then **sink yourself into that**. Don't be impressed with yourself. **Don't compare yourself with others**. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.

Galatians 6:4-5 (The Message)

Read Galatians 6:4-5 in the Message above. Today we will look carefully at our heart's passions. God has uniquely created you to do what no one else can. The adventure we are on is to discover how God wired us and sink ourselves into that to make the contribution we were created to make.

Thoughtfully and prayerfully consider the things that you are inspired by or have compassion for. Reflect on the answers from the previous page.

What has God placed on your Heart?
What are you passionate about?



EXPONENTIAL

Week 4– Day 3

What does stewardship look like practically in our lives? Read the following excerpt by pastor and author Andy Stanley from his book entitled, *How To Be Rich*.⁵

Stewardship

Three thousand years ago, David was the king of Israel. Reaching the throne was not exactly smooth sailing for him. There were wars, scandals, and betrayals—some of the most dramatic stories in recorded history. For years, David had led his people on a nomadic journey to make God’s chosen people a nation. They lived in tents and even carried a portable version of God’s house called the tabernacle, which contained the ark of the covenant.

Eventually, though, David reached a point in his life when he’d arrived. All of his enemies had been defeated. All the battles had been won. Israel was the reigning superpower of the time, and there was peace in the land. In short, he was rich. One day it dawned on him how blessed he was. He lived in an incredible palace in an incredible kingdom at an amazing time in history.

David’s situation is not unlike yours and mine today. We live in the richest country during the richest time in history. If he could see us now, David would say we live like kings every day. And as he looked around him on this particular day, it evoked within him a response that gives us a model of how we should view our own situations.

David had always seen God’s hand in everything. God was present in every giant David faced, every battle he fought, and every victory he won. In fact, David wrote numerous psalms to praise God for being the provider of all he received. But now, as he looked out from his palatial home, he couldn’t help noticing that God had only a temporary home. The tabernacle was nothing more than a tent. So David resolved in his heart to build a permanent home for God—a temple. And David set out to begin designing the architecture and raising the money for what would eventually become known as Solomon’s Temple, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. David allocated gold and silver from Israel’s national treasury to pay for construction. He even donated a large portion of his own money for the project. Some scholars put David’s personal contribution at about \$14 billion.

When David called the Israelites together in Jerusalem to announce the plan to build the temple, the people were excited. Money started pouring in. They were still in touch with all God had done to bring them to this place of blessing. And their participation was heartfelt.

In the midst of all this euphoria, David prayed a prayer that gives us insight into his heart and perspective regarding life, God, and the purpose of money. Through this prayer, we discover the one primary objective that should guide the way we think about and handle our money. The mindset is the key to being good at being rich. It begins like this:

Praise be to you, Lord, the God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor. (1 Chronicles 29:11b)

In essence, David was looking back over all that God had taken the Israelites through, and he concluded, "God, this is all about you." Here's the king of the greatest superpower on earth, and he's publicly bowing down before God, whom he considers to be the King of kings. And that includes King David. He continued:

For everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. (1 Chronicles 29:11b)

As far as David was concerned, everything belonged to God. That included all the gold and silver from the treasury and all the money from the people. All of it belonged to God anyway. They were just moving God's money from one place to the next in order to build a permanent home for the ark of the covenant. Next, he said:

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. (1 Chronicles 29:12)

From David's perspective, not only did God own all material things, but he was also the source of the things money can't buy—things like honor and power and strength. David's comment was meant to describe everything a person enjoys in life, as well as everything that enables our accomplishments. And it wasn't just true for David, but for all the people throughout the nation and around the world. No matter who held what, it ultimately belonged to God.

This statement must have been astounding to some of David's onlookers. Many had seen how hard David had worked to become king. They had witnessed his cunning in battle. They'd seen his wisdom as a leader. They'd watched him make sacrifices for the good of the nation. But now David was openly professing to his people that it was God who enabled those things. He couldn't begin to take credit for the things he had achieved.

In short, David was declaring that everything belongs to God, everything comes from God, and everything is dispensed by God. He concluded with this:

Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name. But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. (1 Chronicles 29:13-14)

Wow. What a perspective! You don't see many rich people these days responding like that, do you? David even considered himself unworthy of the opportunity to be generous. This mindset is just the opposite of what many rich Americans convey today. In contrast, they seem to say, "This is mine. I worked hard for this, and I'm entitled to do whatever I want with it." Here in the land of opportunity, it's generally perceived that success is the by-product of hard work. And while that may be true in many cases, it's God who gives us both the ability and the opportunity to work hard. Once again, everything comes from him.

So, if everything belongs to God, comes from God, and is dispensed by God, what should be the one thing that governs our approach to money? How do you summarize David's mindset about money? If you want to replicate his perspective in your own life, what should your main objective be?

As I think about that prayer, two words come to mind: Honor God. Those two words encapsulate all the things David declared about his riches. If you were to pursue only one goal for everything you possess, this should be it. Honor God. Serve that single objective and everything else falls into place.

THE GIVING MYTH

If you've been around the church world for any length of time, it's not easy to get your head around what David's really saying here. You see, David says everything belongs to God—not just the percentage we put in the offering plate. I was taught from an early age to give God 10 percent of everything. That means if I got a dollar, I put ten cents in the offering plate. If I got ten dollars, one of them went to the work of the church. And so on. I'm very thankful that I was raised to practice that core value.

But I have to admit, that routine by itself doesn't quite engender the mindset that David expressed in his prayer. Even if you give 10 percent faithfully, it doesn't mean you'll come away with the right perspective about the other 90 percent. In fact, over time you can become a little possessive about it. As long as I give God his cut, I'm free to do whatever I want with the other 90 percent. God, here's yours. Now I'm taking the rest for me. Somehow, even tithing can become a task we check off our lists before moving on to something else. I gave my 10 percent. The rest is mine to do with whatever I want. That doesn't sound much like what David believed, does it?

It was always easy for me to give God ten cents of a dollar or ten dollars out of a hundred. I also remember getting a check for a thousand dollars and having no hesitation about giving God his hundred. But I'll be honest, when it got much bigger than that, a little alarm would start to go off inside. If you get a check for ten thousand dollars, are you really going to write a check for a thousand dollars? That's a lot of money. And even if it's only for a split second, you can almost feel irresponsible about giving away that much money.

If you've ever experienced that feeling, you know that I'm talking about. And there's a simple explanation for it. Whenever we sense that little hesitation, it's because we've started to view our money as our money. Unlike David, we don't really think of it as being God's. In those moments, we're not completely in touch with the fact that everything belongs to him, comes from him, and is dispensed by him. In a way, we're buying into the myth that we own it and we're giving it to God.

I call it a myth because, as David pointed out, who am I that I should be able to give as generously as this? God owns it all anyway. So I'm really just "giving" him what already belongs to him. Whenever I give God something, it's really just symbolic. The idea that we ever "give" God anything is really a myth.

As David's prayer suggests, it's not about giving, it's about living. And the same theme is found throughout Scripture. We are to honor God not with a percentage, but with all that we possess. It's not 10 percent. It's 100 percent.

When you view your possessions that way, it changes everything.

ON LOAN

A few years ago, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta signed an agreement with the Louvre in Paris in which priceless art from Europe would come to Atlanta "on loan." The collection included one-of-a-kind masterpieces from a span of 4,000 years. There were rare works by Raphael, Rembrandt, and Michelangelo. It was incredible. According to the agreement, everything still belonged to the Louvre. It was just being entrusted to the care of their American counterparts.

So here's a question: What percentage of the art collection did the Louvre expect the Americans to take care of? Do you think they'd have been satisfied if we sent 10 percent of it back with a note explaining that we used the other canvases to patch a leak in the roof? Not likely. World wars have been started over less. Of course, both parties understood that every irreplaceable piece would be cared for with absolute vigilance. Not even a fingerprint would be permitted.

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The governing principle behind that art exchange was ownership. The Louvre owned it all. And, therefore, everybody understood the responsibility of handling it properly. In essence, the Americans were bound to honor the expectations of the owners. Because that's what you do when you handle other people's stuff.

Is that how you view your stuff? Not just your money, but things like honor, strength, and opportunity too? Again, according to David, everything that's "yours" belongs to God, comes from God, and is dispensed by God. And here's the clincher. God sees things that way too. It's all his. It's just on loan to you.

That being the case, what would it look like for you to honor God with all of your stuff?

Now I have to ask you: Does that question give you butterflies in your stomach? Are you getting images of being called to the mission field, taking a vow of poverty, and living in squalor the rest of your life? Because if the thought of turning everything over to God makes you a little nervous, you're not alone. But here's what I want you to remember. God doesn't want to take your money; he just doesn't want your money to take you.

First of all, he doesn't need your permission to take your stuff. It's already his anyway. Second, God is a giver, not a taker. He didn't send his Son, Jesus, to collect from everyone who owed him. He sent Jesus to give his life for you. And by calling you to acknowledge him as the owner of your stuff, he wants to give you something yet again. He wants to give you freedom and peace that come with letting go. Did you know that the more you hold on to what you possess, the less peace you have?

So let me ask you again: What would it look like for you to honor God with all of your stuff? For starters, are you already honoring him with the first 10 percent? If you're not there yet, that's a great place to start. If you are, do you need to take it up a notch in the area of giving? Maybe bump it up a percentage or two?

Or perhaps honoring God would mean stepping up in the area of providing for your family. For some people, honoring God means saving more, spending less, or liquidating that cabinet full of collectibles. I don't know where this will land for you. But if you ask God, he will show you how to honor him with everything you have. Not just with a percentage of it, but with all of it.

What about you?

- Summarize David's view of money in your own words. Do you agree with him? Is there a specific part that poses a challenge for you?
- Do you regard your talents, opportunities, and accomplishments as God's?
- Write a prayer (or psalm) to God praising Him for all of the blessings that He has bestowed upon you.
- People often say that if they had more money, they would give more to charity, to God, or to people in need, etc. David gave \$14 billion to build God's temple because it was important to him. What would you consider giving your money to? Can you take a small step toward that? What would it be?
- What would it look like to honor God with all of your stuff?

Notes

Week 4

1. Alcorn, Randy C. *Managing God's Money: A Biblical Guide*. Tyndale House Publishers, 2011, 18-19.
2. DeSilva, Stephen. *Prosperous Soul: Stewardship Series Foundation Manual*. Accent Digital Publishing, Inc., 2010, p. 35.
3. Cooke, Graham. *Qualities of a Spiritual Warrior*. Brilliant Book House, 2013, 56.
4. Vallotton, Kris. *Poverty, Riches & Wealth: Moving from a Life of Lack into True Kingdom Abundance*. Chosen Books, 2019, 146.
5. Stanley, Andy. *How to Be Rich: It's Not What You Have, It's What You Do with What You Have*. Zondervan, 2014, 109-118.

