



## Stewardship in the Second Testament

### Lesson 1: The Gospel of Matthew

#### Overview

This session explores Matthew's call to faithful and active stewardship in light of the coming Realm of God. Participants will reflect on how generosity, accountability, and service to others embody a life oriented toward God rather than wealth.

#### Preparation for the Teacher

- Read the texts (found below) ahead of time.
- Watch the video (link below)—it may stimulate additional questions appropriate for your context. Make certain you have tested the equipment necessary for showing the video—it helps to keep the technical gremlins away!
- Do a little homework about your church and community. Find the names of a few civic philanthropists who have made a difference in your community (perhaps a library or civic center is named after someone who donated a large sum of money for a particular project). It can also be a corporate citizen, but an individual name is preferable.

Do the same for your congregation. Are there specific funds or significant gifts that were given by individuals that make a difference in your congregation's ability to carry out its mission?

#### Background

The Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel's story and the one who brings the promises of God to completion. Scholars often note that Matthew is written for a community deeply rooted in Jewish tradition, seeking to understand how the life and teachings of Jesus relate to the Law and the Prophets. Throughout the Gospel, Matthew emphasizes that Jesus does not abolish the law but fulfills it (Matthew 5:17), offering a deeper interpretation that centers on righteousness, mercy, and faithfulness.

Matthew also highlights accountability and responsibility. Through parables such as those found in chapters 24–25, the Gospel portrays disciples as stewards entrusted with resources, relationships, and opportunities that are to be used faithfully in anticipation of Christ's return. These teachings stress readiness, wise action, and care for others—especially the most vulnerable.

***Pray for your students as you prepare this week's lesson.***

## Facilitating the Lesson

As the class begins, welcome the class and engage in your usual opening exercises (taking attendance, collecting an offering, prayer concerns, other announcements, etc.).

### Opening Activity

Ask the class to define the word stewardship (or its concept).

- What does the word mean to them?
- How is the word used in non-church settings?
- Are those good (proper) uses of the word or concept?
- Are they in any way biblically related?
- Is stewardship in the church only about money? Why or why not?

Ask them if they can give examples of people who are good stewards in the community in which you live.

- When naming people who have benefited the community as a whole through their personal generosity, does it bring to mind people who have done the same through the church?

### Scripture Reflection

Read the following texts from the Gospel of Matthew (ask individual students to read different passages):

- Matthew 6:19
- Matthew 6:24
- Matthew 24:45–51
- Matthew 25 (the entire chapter—three parables)

### Video Segment

Have the class watch the video: <http://youtu.be/ndbAQSl9-MY>

### Discussion Questions

Invite the class to wrestle with the following:

#### 1. Growing in Stewardship

Matthew urges his congregation to multiply its stewardship, like the ten- and five-talent servants (Matthew 25), even though his congregation is struggling.

- What would it take for you to increase your own stewardship?
- What about your congregation or Region?

## **2. Stewardship in Action**

The parables in Matthew 24–25 urge the congregation to be stewards of the Realm by doing things like feeding those who are hungry, clothing people who have no clothing, and visiting those who are imprisoned.

- Name three specific things that you can do—things that your congregation or Region can do—to engage in this kind of stewardship.

## **3. God and Wealth**

Jesus says, “You cannot serve two gods—God and Wealth (mammon).”

- How do you see people in our culture worshipping wealth?
- Do you or your congregation or Region worship wealth?
- Do you wrestle with this temptation?
- What can empower you to move away from worshipping wealth and toward worshipping God?

## **4. Impact on the Community**

- How can the faithful practice of stewardship by the community of the church impact the community around us for good and positive change?
- Does it matter if we do so? Why?

## **5. Bringing the Realm Near**

- Does your own practice of being a steward bring the Realm of God closer?
- Should it?

## **Closing**

Close the lesson time with prayer.

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*This is part of a 7-session series on Stewardship in the Second Testament, designed to be used as a Sunday School or small group lesson. Content is provided by Rev. Dr. Ron Allen in partnership with the Center for Faith & Giving ([www.centerforfaithandgiving.org](http://www.centerforfaithandgiving.org)).*