



Trusted & Trustworthy  
**Stewardship**

**River Church's 2024 Spiritual Growth Campaign**

**By Louie Marsh & Brie McRae**

**Trusted & Trustworthy -A Biblical View of Stewardship**  
**Small Group Lesson #1 - Stewardship as Leadership**  
**By Louie Marsh**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**INTRODUCTION:**

**When you hear the word “steward” or “stewardship” what’s the first thing you think of? Do you often think of yourself as God’s steward?**

**LESSON: [Play video, fill in the blanks below]**

**1<sup>st</sup> Leadership Principle in the U.S. Marine Corps is this: “Know Yourself – Seek Self Improvement.”**

- **To know yourself as a Christian leader is to know all you have and are comes from God. It is to know you are a steward.**
- **Seeking self-improvement isn’t trying to exalt yourself, but to become more like Christ.**

**1) Leadership is \_\_\_\_\_**

*“<sup>7</sup>For an overseer, as God’s **steward**, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain,” (Titus 1:7, ESV)*

*“<sup>14</sup>You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14–16, ESV)*

- **Good, Better, Best, “How can I do or be better?”**

**2) Excuse me, but no excuses \_\_\_\_\_.**

**1<sup>st</sup> Excuse – They Won’t \_\_\_\_\_.**

*“<sup>1</sup>Then Moses answered, “But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you.’ ”” (Exodus 4:1, ESV)*

- **God’s Answer – \_\_\_\_\_**

*“<sup>8</sup>If they will not believe you,” God said, “or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. <sup>9</sup>If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”” (Exodus 4:8–9, ESV)*

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Excuse – \_\_\_\_\_ ?

*“<sup>13</sup>Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?””* (Exodus 3:13, ESV)

- **God Provides His Sacred \_\_\_\_\_.**

*“<sup>14</sup>God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”*” (Exodus 3:14, ESV)

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Excuse – I’m not \_\_\_\_\_.

*“<sup>10</sup>But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.”*” (Exodus 4:10, ESV)

- **Answer - God is & can qualify \_\_\_\_\_.**

*“<sup>11</sup>Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? <sup>12</sup>Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.”*” (Exodus 4:11–12, ESV)

## 4<sup>th</sup> Excuse – He gets HONEST.

*“<sup>13</sup>But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.”*” (Exodus 4:13, ESV)

- **God makes things \_\_\_\_\_ !**

*“<sup>14</sup>Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, “Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. <sup>15</sup>You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. <sup>16</sup>He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him. <sup>17</sup>And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs.”*” (Exodus 4:14–17, ESV)

## 3) God calls me to do what \_\_\_\_\_.

*“<sup>6</sup>“I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. **Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.** <sup>7</sup>Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. <sup>8</sup>For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.”* (John 17:6–8, ESV)

*“<sup>12</sup>**While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.**”* (John 17:12, ESV)

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- 1) You didn't know there was such a parallel between the Marine Corps & Christianity did you?**
- 2) How does a Christian arrive at a factual & accurate view of themselves?**
- 3) Which of Moses' excuses have you used? Do you still think any of them are valid? Do you have one that Moses didn't think of?**
- 4) Did God bring this discussion to a close successfully? How did he do it?**
- 5) Name several things that God has given to you to be a steward of.**
- 6) Pick one and share how you can be a better steward of that person, thing, ministry, etc.?**

**CLOSE IN PRAYER**

**Trusted & Trustworthy – A Biblical View of Stewardship**  
**Small Group Lesson #2: Serve Jesus, Not Tradition**  
**By Brie McRae**

**Opening Prayer**

**Opening Questions**

- 1) What is your most cherished family tradition?
- 2) Do you like change or do you prefer things to stay the same?

**Lesson Video & Fill-in-the-Blanks**

- 1) Tradition in and of itself is not \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) The Pharisees and Scribes wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ **Jesus.**

*Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.” (Matthew 15:2, ESV)*

- 3) This washing of hands was \_\_\_\_\_ **rather than hygienic.**

*For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.” (Mark 7:3-4)*

- 4) The Pharisees valued \_\_\_\_\_ **over Jesus.**

*“You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.” (Mark 7:8, ESV)*

- 5) The Jews \_\_\_\_\_ **tradition.**

*“Thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.” (Mark 7:13, ESV)*

- 6) Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_ **than tradition.**

- 7) My \_\_\_\_\_ and my \_\_\_\_\_ **must honor God.**

*“This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” (Mark 7:6b-7, ESV)*

## **Discussion Questions**

1. What traditions do you see either in your church service or in your personal study time? Have you checked these traditions against the Bible?
2. How can traditions help us and how can they hinder us in our spiritual growth?
3. Why do you think the Pharisees were stuck on this specific tradition? If you're interested, check out John 5:1-17 for another example of traditions outweighing Jesus' Words.
4. Are you practicing what you are "preaching" or are you like the Pharisees who participated in "empty worship"?
5. How can you incorporate healthy tradition into your current personal study time?

## **Close in Prayer**

Share prayer requests with your group and commit to praying for one another until you meet for the next lesson. Specifically pray that your heart would be close to God and that your worship honors Him.

Trusted & Trustworthy -A Biblical View of Stewardship  
Small Group Lesson #3 – Seeing My Stewardship  
By Louie Marsh

## OPENING PRAYER

## INTRODUCTION:

It's not always easy to know exactly who or who I'm a steward of. Do you have a clear idea of what your stewardship is composed of? Name a few that you aren't sure of. How does this make a real difference in your life or ministry?

## LESSON:

1) God wants me to know \_\_\_\_\_ as a steward.

- Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ did.

*"<sup>22</sup>And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon."<sup>23</sup>But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us."<sup>24</sup>He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 15:22–24, ESV)*

- Paul had \_\_\_\_\_ about it.

*"<sup>7</sup>On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised <sup>8</sup>(for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles)," (Galatians 2:7–8, ESV)*

2) But sometimes I have a hard time \_\_\_\_\_.

*"<sup>36</sup>When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9:36, ESV)*

- But it's important I figure it out \_\_\_\_\_.

*"<sup>10</sup>As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, **as good stewards of God's varied grace.**" (1 Peter 4:10, ESV)*

3) It can and will \_\_\_\_\_.

*"<sup>19</sup>For though I am free from all, **I have made myself a servant to all**, that I might win more of them. <sup>20</sup>**To the Jews I became as a Jew**, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. <sup>21</sup>To those outside the law **I became as one outside the law** (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. <sup>22</sup>**To the weak I became weak**, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. <sup>23</sup>I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings." (1 Corinthians 9:19–23, ESV)*

#### 4) How can I do this?

- \_\_\_\_\_ your gifts and callings.

*“<sup>6</sup>For this reason I remind you to **fan into flame the gift of God**, which is **in you** through the laying on of my hands, <sup>7</sup>for God gave us a **spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control**.*

*<sup>8</sup>Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but **share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God**, <sup>9</sup>who saved us and **called us to a holy calling**, not because of our works but **because of his own purpose and grace**, which **he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began**.” (2 Timothy 1:6–9, ESV)*

- \_\_\_\_\_ the responsibility that God gives me.

*“<sup>15</sup>Moses spoke to the LORD, saying, <sup>16</sup>“Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation <sup>17</sup>who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be as sheep that have no shepherd.” <sup>18</sup>So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him.” (Numbers 27:15–18, ESV)*

- \_\_\_\_\_ to have fun with it.

*“<sup>15</sup>And when he had come to the king, the king said to him, “Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we refrain?” And he answered him, “Go up and triumph; the LORD will give it into the hand of the king.” <sup>16</sup>But the king said to him, “How many times shall I make you swear that you speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?” <sup>17</sup>And he said, “I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, ‘These have no master; let each return to his home in peace.’ ”” (1 Kings 22:15–17, ESV)*

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) When it comes to knowing my stewardship, what about my family, friends, pets, property, people I work with, etc.? Am I a steward in any of those areas?
- 2) Why did Jesus treat the Canaanite the way he did? Was he rude? Was he being racist (as one online “Pastor” says). How do you explain this in terms of knowing who you are serving as a steward?
- 3) Paul clearly says he’s called to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles (non-Jews). So why did he often go into the Synagogues and preach to the Jews there?
- 4) Almost everyone claims to have the gift of service. So, other than that, what gifts has God given you? Are you using them as good steward of these gifts? Are there any gifts you have that you currently not using? Do I always have to be using *all* my gifts?
- 5) Louie said my stewardship would change. But why? If I’m comfortable serving here, why would God call me into something I might not be so comfortable in?
- 6) How do you renew your gifts and callings from God? Have you ever done this? If so, how?
- 7) Serving God is a blessed and holy thing. Souls’ eternal destiny are at stake – *this is no time for joking* right? Or does God want us to enjoy serving Him? Do you enjoy serving God?

#### CLOSE IN PRAYER



**Trusted & Trustworthy -A Biblical View of Stewardship**  
**Small Group Lesson #4 –What To Do When Things Get Tough**  
**By Louie Marsh**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Many people seem to think serving God should be fairly easy, so when things get rough, they bail out. Where do we get the idea that service to God should be easy? Could it be Satan? Could it be my ego?

**LESSON:**

**When it gets hard to be God’s steward, I must...**

**1) All stewards expected to be \_\_\_\_\_.**

*“<sup>1</sup>This is how one should regard us, as **servants** of Christ and **stewards** of the mysteries of God.*

*<sup>2</sup>Moreover, it is **required** of **stewards** that they be found **faithful**.” (1 Corinthians 4:1–2, ESV)*

*“<sup>21</sup>His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much....’ (Matthew 25:21a, ESV)*

**2) Those who remain faithful receive a great \_\_\_\_\_.**

*“<sup>21</sup>His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant...Enter into the joy of your master.’ (Matthew 25:21, ESV)*

*“<sup>37</sup>Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. <sup>38</sup>If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! (Luke 12:37–38, ESV)*

**3) Jesus gave us clear \_\_\_\_\_ this would happen.**

*“<sup>51</sup>Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. <sup>52</sup>For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. <sup>53</sup>They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” (Luke 12:51–53, ESV)*

*“<sup>21</sup>Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, <sup>22</sup>and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.” (Matthew 10:21–22, ESV)*

**4) Believers in the New Testament were \_\_\_\_\_.**

*“<sup>8</sup>And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. <sup>9</sup>Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the*

Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. <sup>10</sup>But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. <sup>11</sup>Then they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." <sup>12</sup>And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council," (Acts 6:8–12, ESV)

**5) I must draw strength from God to \_\_\_\_\_:**

- \_\_\_\_\_

*"<sup>11</sup>You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many." (2 Corinthians 1:11, ESV)*

*"<sup>18</sup>praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, <sup>19</sup>and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup>for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak." (Ephesians 6:18–20, ESV)*

- \_\_\_\_\_

*"<sup>48</sup>But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" <sup>49</sup>And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! <sup>50</sup>For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'" (Matthew 12:48–50, ESV)*

- **Stay \_\_\_\_\_ on Jesus.**

*"<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1–2, ESV)*

- \_\_\_\_\_ **for God's deliverance.**

*"<sup>8</sup>For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. <sup>9</sup>Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. <sup>10</sup>He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again." (2 Corinthians 1:8–10, ESV)*

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1) Can I be a steward and be unfaithful at the same time? Stewardship and faithfulness are synonymous, does this make you worry about being a good steward? Why?

2) Jesus often spoke of rewards in heaven. Isn't getting into heaven a reward itself? What other kinds of rewards could there be? What do you think God will reward you in heaven with?

- 3) How well do we respond to warnings? Do those signs on the road slow you down? Do you dress according to the weather forecast? Do you carry extra water with you on extreme heat days? Why don't more people heed the many warnings around us (like not driving into washes when it's raining)?
- 4) What is persecution? Do you know of places where Christians are being persecuted right now? Would you include the USA on that list? Why or why not?
- 5) How does prayer help you endure suffering? How does other people's prayers help?
- 6) What part does fellowship play in staying faithful in suffering? Have you ever been helped by your spiritual family in getting through a time of suffering while remaining faithful?
- 7) Staying focused on Jesus sounds pretty easy, but is it? Why is it so hard for so many of us? And why does suffering seem to make it even more difficult?
- 8) We are to look with faith for God's deliverance. Millions of Christians have died for their faith. Is that death, which ushers them into the presence of the Lord, count as a form of deliverance? Share a time when God delivered you from suffering and how he did it.

## **CLOSE IN PRAYER**

**Trusted & Trustworthy – A Biblical View of Stewardship**  
**Small Group Lesson #5: Get the Support I Need**  
**By Brie McRae**

**Opening Prayer**

**Opening Questions**

- 1) Do you find it hard to ask others for help? Why or why not?
- 2) Who do you usually turn to first when you need help or guidance?

**Lesson Video & Fill-in-the-Blanks**

- 1) Asking for help is \_\_\_\_\_ a sign of weakness.
- 2) God created me to be in \_\_\_\_\_.

*Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (Genesis 2:18, ESV)*

- 3) Community is a \_\_\_\_\_ of Christian living.

*"And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:39, ESV)*

- 4) Relying on others allows people to live out the \_\_\_\_\_

*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2, ESV)*

- 5) I can only do what I am \_\_\_\_\_ to.

*For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (Romans 12:4-5)*

- 6) Allow others to do what they are \_\_\_\_\_ to do.

*Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them..." (Romans 12:6a, ESV)*

- 7) Don't let your \_\_\_\_\_ get in the way of asking for help (from God or others!)

*In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, "There is no God."*

(Psalm 10:4, ESV)

*When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. (Proverbs 11:2, ESV)*

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Do you enjoy helping others or do you see it as a burden? If you like to help others, why do you find it hard to ask for help?
2. On a scale of 1-10, how do you rank your support system around you?
3. Look back at point 4, how does that change your perspective on asking for help?
4. Have you ever felt overwhelmed and like you are falling behind? When that happens, do you find yourself trying to balance everything?
5. What are some ways you can "delegate" tasks that are on your table in a way that allows you to do what you can and allows others to do what they can?
6. Have you ever seen your pride get in the way of asking for help?

### **Close in Prayer**

Share prayer requests with your group and commit to praying for one another until you meet for the next lesson. Specifically pray that you would have the humility to ask for help and that you are surrounded by people who are willing to help you.

**Trusted & Trustworthy – A Biblical View of Stewardship**  
**Small Group Lesson #6: Take Up My Cross & Follow Jesus**  
**By Brie McRae**

**Opening Prayer**

**Opening Questions**

- 1) When you hear “take up your cross” what immediately comes to your mind?
- 2) What do you think is the most well-known symbol of Christianity?

**Lesson Video & Fill-in-the-Blanks**

- 1) I am first called to \_\_\_\_\_ myself.

*Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself...”*

(Matthew 16:24a)

- 2) What does it mean to \_\_\_\_\_ myself?

a. To \_\_\_\_\_ oneself. (Blue Letter Bible)

b. To \_\_\_\_\_ (oneself) from gratification of desires. (Merriam Webster)

- 3) When I deny myself, I turn to \_\_\_\_\_ God.

*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)*

- 4) I am then called to take up my \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Take up his cross and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24b)*

- 5) People in the first century had a \_\_\_\_\_ view of the cross.

*“Under the Roman Empire, crucifixion was viewed as a shameful execution method reserved for enslaved people, Christians, foreigners, political activists, and disgraced soldiers.” (Smithsonian Magazine)*

6) **The cross was a symbol of \_\_\_\_\_.**

*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20, ESV)*

7) **Bearing my cross is not equal to a minor \_\_\_\_\_.**

8) **Bearing my cross is a call to \_\_\_\_\_ self-denial.**

*And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." And Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead." (Matthew 8:20-21, ESV)*

9) **We are all called to bear our cross, but we won't necessarily be put to**

\_\_\_\_\_.

*"For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?" (Matthew 16:25-26, ESV)*

## **Discussion Questions**

1. How does the general public view the cross? How do you view the cross? Is it more of a positive or somber perspective?
2. What have you had to sacrifice as a result of following God?
3. How has following Jesus changed your life?
4. Even if we aren't persecuted, how do we still "bear our cross"?
5. Jesus tells His disciples that they will have to be willing to bear their cross in Matthew 16. Right before this, Jesus predicts His own death by crucifixion. How do you think the disciples would have felt at this moment?
6. How does denying ourselves and bearing the cross go against human nature?

## **Close in Prayer**

Share prayer requests with your group and commit to praying for one another until you meet for the next lesson. Specifically pray for our brothers and sisters around the world who face real persecution on a daily basis.