

STUDY GUIDE: Our Great Exchange

Week #7 | CELEBRATION

JANUARY 26-31

This in-depth video-based study explores why our almighty God entrusts us to be managers of - and collaborators in - his restoration project.

NOTE: Contact Jeannie McCoy @ jeanniem@rbccpc.org for access to the weekly video segments..

INTRODUCTION

Last week we explored the idea that in making us his stewards, God is conforming us more perfectly to his image. No discussion of stewardship can really be complete without looking at the way in which Jesus was the ultimate steward. All things were given over to him, and what did he do? He gave his whole self for the world! At the end of the day, *stewardship is about making a gift of your very self*, following Christ's example.

WATCH VIDEO

READ AND DISCUSS

Ephesians 5:1; Philippians 2:1-13

Think about this: Jesus received from the Father the entirety of creation and with it, absolute power over it. If it were a normal human put in this position, it would be a recipe for disaster (Just imagine a four-year-old left alone all day in a house! Now scale that house to the size of the universe!) But Jesus, the God-Man, acting in love, instead of asserting his prerogatives over the world, chose to give himself over to the world, to make a gift of himself, to give himself up to the chaos and destruction of our sinfulness. The result? Death drowns in the gift of love.

We are given ourselves – our souls and our bodies. We are given our free will, absolute power over our own choices. We talk about offering our whole life to God, but really, this often seems very abstract.

- What does it mean to give our very self away? Is it possible to “kinda” give your life to God?
- What would “giving your very self away” mean for you in light of your every action, intent, and decision-making? Share some examples of times when you have struggled with this concept.

READ AND DISCUSS

Ephesians 5:21-33

In the video, Ben Patterson talked about the iconic imagery of a bride and bridegroom wearing a crown, symbolizing the role of a martyr. Paul talks about the way the Jesus poured himself for us.

- What do you think about the idea of the roles/responsibilities of a steward being similar to that of a spouse? Do actions flow primarily from a sense of duty, or from love for the other?

In the film, Dan Patterson says, “Christ didn’t need our gift of stewardship. We needed to give it.” Why is this? What do we gain from gifting ourselves back to God?

Life is a gift that God both gives and redeems. He is over all things, and he created us to be people who carry out good works in the power of his Spirit. Have you ever watched someone who was really good at what they did? Have you ever noticed how someone acts when they are doing what they were created to do, being what they were created to be? The only word for what they have is “joy.” And if we are all called to be stewards, then the life of stewardship is a life of joy!

- How does this idea or result fit with the concept of self-sacrifice? What does joy have to do with self-sacrifice?

APPLY

We all know the phrase, “I’m spent.” When an athlete has poured everything they’ve got into a race, they might say, “I’m spent.” There’s nothing left. All has been offered. Everything the athlete had to give was given. BUT – they don’t say this as if they regret being spent. They recognize that in giving all the energy they had, some other good has been made possible! And here is the heart of the most profound purpose God has in making us his stewards. We are to spend ourselves – to pour ourselves out as an offering to God, as an offering to others.

- How are you revering God with your being and possessions? What are you holding back from Him? What of yourself do you still claim as your own and not God’s?
- What would happen if all of us embraced the realization that everything really is Christ’s?
- What if everyone of us truly became a steward?

CLOSE IN PRAYER