GIFTED — PART TWO: STEWARDSHIP

Week 2 — "The Gift of Today"

Ephesians 5:15–17; Psalm 90:12

"Teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart."
— Psalm 90:12 (NRSV)

Opening Prayer: Gracious God, thank you for the gift of time and the opportunity to gather together. Open our hearts to your Word and help us recognize how we are using the days you have entrusted to us. Teach us to live with wisdom, love with intention, and recognize your presence in the ordinary moments of life. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Theme: Last week, we explored the truth that everything we have ultimately belongs to God. This week, we turn our attention to one of the most precious gifts God has entrusted to us: time. Unlike money or possessions, time cannot be saved for later or replaced once it has passed. Every day presents opportunities to love, serve, grow, rest, and experience God's presence. Yet our lives are often so filled with responsibilities, distractions, and obligations that we struggle to recognize the value of the moments we have been given. Stewardship of time isn't about accomplishing more or filling our calendars with church activities. It is about recognizing that every moment of our lives can become an opportunity to honor God.

Central Question: If someone looked at my calendar, what would they conclude matters most to me?

Secular Quote: *"The key is not in spending time, but in investing it."*
— Stephen R. Covey

Reflection: There is a difference between allowing time to pass and intentionally using it for something meaningful. What makes an hour of our lives a worthwhile investment?

Starter Question: Imagine someone gave you an extra two hours tomorrow with absolutely no responsibilities or obligations attached. How would you spend those two hours, and what does your answer reveal about what you value most? Encourage participants to share freely without feeling that their answers need to sound particularly spiritual.

Digging Deeper:

1. Time Is a Gift, Not a Guarantee
Read Psalm 90:1–12.

Moses reminds us that human life is brief compared with God's eternal nature. Rather than allowing this truth to create fear, he asks God to teach us to live wisely.

- What do you think it means to "count our days" or "number our days"?
- How might recognizing the limits of our time change the way we approach everyday life?
- Why do you think we often postpone important relationships, conversations, or acts of kindness until tomorrow?
- How can we appreciate the gift of today without becoming anxious about the future?

2. Busyness Is Not the Same as Faithfulness
Read Ephesians 5:15–17 and Mark 1:35–39.

Paul encourages believers to live wisely and make the most of their time. Jesus demonstrates that wisdom by making room for prayer even when people are demanding his attention.

- What is the difference between being busy and being faithful?
- Why does our culture often treat busyness as a sign of success or importance?
- Jesus had tremendous demands on his time, yet he withdrew to pray. What can we learn from his example?
- Have you ever been so busy doing something good that you missed something more important?

3. Our Calendars Reveal Our Priorities
Read Luke 10:38–42.

Martha was busy serving Jesus while Mary chose to sit and listen to him. Jesus did not condemn service, but he challenged Martha's worry and distraction.

- Do you identify more with Martha or Mary? Why?
- Can something good become a distraction from something more important? What might that look like today?
- If someone examined your calendar from the past week, what might they conclude about your priorities?
- What is one area of your life where you would like your use of time to better reflect your values?

4. Ordinary Moments Can Become Sacred
Read Colossians 3:17 and 3:23–24.

Paul reminds believers that whatever they do can be done in the name of Jesus and for God's glory. Faithfulness is not limited to worship services, church programs, or organized ministries.

- How might our understanding of stewardship change if we viewed every hour as belonging to God?
- What ordinary activities in your life could become opportunities for ministry?
- How can something as simple as a conversation, a meal, or a visit become an expression of God's love?
- Why is rest an important part of faithful stewardship rather than simply time spent doing nothing?

5. Giving Someone the Gift of Our Time
Read Mark 5:21–34.

While traveling to help Jairus' daughter, Jesus stopped to acknowledge a woman who had been suffering for twelve years. What others might have considered an interruption became an opportunity for compassion and healing.

- What does Jesus' willingness to stop teach us about the value of people?
- How do we distinguish between a meaningful opportunity to help someone and an obligation that may require healthy boundaries?
- Can you remember a time when someone gave you their undivided attention? How did it affect you?
- Who in your life or community might benefit more from your presence than from anything you could purchase for them?

Actionable — The Gift of One Hour
During the coming week, take a few minutes to examine your calendar. Consider where your time is going and whether those commitments reflect what matters most to you. Then intentionally dedicate one hour this week to something that reflects God's love and purpose. This might mean visiting someone who is lonely, calling a friend who is struggling, helping a neighbor, spending uninterrupted time with family, praying, or intentionally resting and reconnecting with God. The purpose is not to add another burden to an already busy life. It is to practice using time with greater intention. For some, that may mean replacing an unnecessary activity rather than adding a new one.

Closing Prayer: Loving God, thank you for the gift of today. Forgive us when we allow distractions and busyness to keep us from recognizing what truly matters. Give us wisdom to use our time faithfully, courage to slow down when needed, and hearts willing to be present with those around us. May our days reflect your love, our actions reveal your grace, and our lives bring glory to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

