

Trusting God with Everything (Luke 12)

Being good stewards of the gifts God has given us

The big idea for the series

This series unpacks the entirety of Luke 12 over 5 weeks. The overarching theme of the series is our need to trust God in the different areas of our lives and to be good stewards of the gifts that God has given us.

Study 1 - Trust God and don't be afraid (Luke 12:1-12)

1. When do you find it easy to trust God? When do you find it hard?
2. What disciplines, meetings, people, tools etc. help you to trust God more in the hard times?

Read Luke 12:1-12

3. What hypocrisy of the Pharisees does Jesus have in mind? (Hint: look at the end of Chapter 11) Why is this 'yeast'?
4. What encouragement/challenge does Jesus give about the exposure of hypocrisy? How does this make you feel?
5. Why does Jesus tell his followers that they should not be afraid?
6. Are you ever made to feel afraid because you are a follower of Jesus? Does what Jesus says here offer any help to you when you feel this way?
7. What timeframe does Jesus have in mind when he is speaking about the Son of Man acknowledging or disowning people? Is this any help to us?
8. What is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? (Hint: I find the context of Mark 3:22-30 helpful as background to this thorny one!)
9. What help in the present does Jesus promise that the Holy Spirit will give us? Have you experienced this in your own life?
10. On a slip of paper write down one thing that you are afraid of. Place it (anonymously) in the middle so that there is a collection of 'fears' for the group. Take turns to pray about each one asking God for release from fear and deeper trust. You might like to pray verses from this section or other Scriptures as part of your prayers.

Study 2 - Trust God and not money (Luke 12:13-21)

1. People view money in different ways; which of the following best describes you:
 - a. Money as freedom
 - b. Money as security
 - c. Money as power

What are the strengths and weaknesses in each view?

2. How hard or easy do you find it to trust God with your money? Why?

Read Luke 12:13-21

3. Have you ever had any experience of a fight over an inheritance? How does Jesus handle the dispute here?
4. What does Jesus mean when he speaks about 'all kinds of greed?' What is greed?
5. If life doesn't consist in the abundance of possessions, what does it consist of?
6. What mistake does the man in Jesus' parable make?
7. What does being rich towards God look like? Is it possible to store up things for yourself and to be rich towards God?
8. What practical disciplines help you to avoid greed and be rich towards God? How can you as a group help and encourage each other in this?
9. Spend some time praying together
 - a. Name before God how your particular view of money may be in danger of leading to greed and ask for him to guard you against this
 - b. Ask God to help you all to be increasingly rich towards him

Study 3 - Trust God and don't worry (Luke 12:22-34)

1. What things do you worry about?
2. How do your beliefs about God impact your worrying?

Read Luke 12:22-34

3. How does Jesus' teaching on worrying flow out of the previous passage on money?
4. How does an awareness of the created order impact our perspectives on food and clothes? Can you think of other aspects of creation which would give a different perspective on the things that you worry about?
5. What positive things does worrying bring to your life? What does it cost you?
6. What does this passage teach us about the character of God? How do these impact on our worries?
7. What does it mean to seek God's Kingdom? In practical terms how do you personally do this?
8. What is treasure in heaven? Does this inspire you to live differently? What would help you to have your heart located there rather than on earthly wealth?
11. On a slip of paper write down one thing that you are worry about. Place it (anonymously) in the middle so that there is a collection of 'worries' for the group. Take turns to pray about each one asking God for release from worrying about this and develop deeper trust. You might like to pray verses or images from this section or other Scriptures as part of your prayers.

Study 4 - Trust God and serve him (Luke 12:35-48)

1. What urgent and important events do you have coming up in your life at the moment? How do the reality of these coming events shape your thoughts and actions?
2. How often do you think about Jesus' return? Does the reality that Jesus is coming back have any impact on your thoughts and actions day to day?

Read Luke 12:35-48

3. The main image throughout this passage is about a master and his servants. When he returns he finds different things happening. Get different people to retell the story with the following different endings:
 - a. The master returns home and finds things in good order
 - b. The master returns home to chaos and violence
4. In what ways is Jesus like the master in the story? Are there any ways that he is not like him?
5. In what ways is Jesus like a thief? In what ways is he different?
6. Who was Jesus telling this parable to: to the disciples, to everyone, to Christian leaders, to all Christians?
7. How hard or easy do you find thinking about the return of Jesus? Why?
8. Do you feel like you would be ready if Jesus were to come back today? What would make you ready?
9. What has God given you and entrusted you with? What expectations might he have of you in light of what you have been given?
10. Spend some time praying together using the following ideas:
 - a. Ask God to firm up in your minds the reality that Jesus is coming back. Give thanks for this
 - b. Name and confess before God the areas where you don't feel ready for Jesus to return
 - c. Name the things that you are longing for when Jesus returns
 - d. Ask for God's help to be faithful in using the things that God has given and entrusted to you

Study 5 - Trust God in the midst of conflict (Luke 12:49-59)

1. What areas of conflict (big or small) are you experiencing in your life at the moment? Is being a Christian resulting in any conflict for you?
2. As Christians should we expect more or less conflict in our lives as a result of our faith?

Read Luke 12:49-59

3. If Jesus is the 'Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6) then why does he say that he hasn't come to bring peace but division? Is this a contradiction?
4. How have you seen or experienced family conflicts as a result of someone's decision to follow Jesus?
5. What does Jesus hope people will interpret about the present time? (v.56)
6. Is Jesus' point about reconciliation with an adversary before facing the magistrate wise advice for human conflicts or is he making a spiritual point about reconciliation with God?
7. Do you find it hard to trust God when you are experiencing conflict, especially conflict because of your Christian faith? What would help to deepen your trust in these circumstances?
8. Pray together about conflicts that you are facing asking for God's wisdom, strength and grace in the midst of them
9. Thinking back over this chapter what have been the most significant areas where you want to strengthen your trust in God:
 - a. In the face of fear?
 - b. With your money?
 - c. When you are worried?
 - d. In your service of him?
 - e. When faced with conflict?
10. Pray together about these areas and ask God especially to deepen your trust in him