

Cultivating Daily Reflection

How to Elevate Your Finances Week of July 5, 2020

If you missed this weekend's messages, watch at cultivate.sc/discussion

The reality is all good things require work. What we really need when life gets challenging is a new way to look at ourselves, our relationships and the world around us. Whether you choose to share your thoughts in community or use this as a personal exercise, we encourage you to daily reflect, respond and pray so that Jesus can elevate your life.

Day 1 – Cultivate Wholeness: Whether it's our finances and possessions or our hopes and dreams, if we want Jesus to elevate anything in our lives, we first need to give Him access to it. Sometimes that means we hold that thing more loosely and sometimes it means we surrender it altogether. A whole life is a life lived in obedience to Jesus – and that often requires sacrifice.

“Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.” Romans 6:16 NLT

“If you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.
But don't begin until you count the cost.” Luke 14:27-28 NLT

Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”
Matthew 11:28 NLT

Reflect on the verses above. Anything in our lives – financially, physically, emotionally, spiritually or relationally – that has more control over us than God does, has become our master. Ask God to show you if there is anything in your life you are holding more tightly than you're holding onto Him. Now, count the cost. How is it impacting your life? Your relationship with God and others? Your health, habits, finances, emotions, thoughts, actions, etc.?

Change happens when the cost of holding on becomes greater than the cost of letting go. What would it look like to either loosen your grip or completely surrender that thing to God? Pray, asking God to help you offload your burden. It may involve sacrifice, but your reward will be freedom, righteousness, wholeness and rest.

Day 2: *Read Matthew 6:19-21.* We live in a culture that often focuses on consuming, rather than contributing. What we pursue with our resources – money, time & talents – reflects what we value. God calls us to serve and use our spiritual gifts SO THAT we store up treasure that can never be stolen from us. How can you use what you have (resources) and what you've been given (talents, gifts) to invest in the things of God? Pray, asking God for both direction and opportunity.

Day 3: Pastor Matt challenged us to shift our perspective – OFF what we don't have and what we want ONTO what we do have. Take some time today to thank God for what He has supplied in your life. Include practical provisions and possessions, but don't forget people, relationships, love and kindness. Resist the urge to ask for anything – that will come later. Today, simply offer Him your thanks as an act of worship.

Day 4: *Read Romans 12:2.* Social media and a 24/7 news cycle gives us instant access to what's popular. But, as followers of Christ, we are called to follow our convictions, not the crowd. Do you find yourself tempted by what's trending – even contributing your finances to it? Be REAL and reflect on what motivates that response – peer pressure, comparison, appearances, fear of missing out, a desire to fit in, etc. Pray, asking God to elevate and transform your thinking so that you can discern His will for your life – which is beautiful, satisfying and perfect.

Day 5: Jesus can elevate our finances when we do our part to: watch what we spend, calculate the cost, force ourselves to save and learn from others. Which of these could you do better AND what is a first step you could take to pursue that? Pray, asking God for **what** you need AND **how** you can do your part to grow in financial wisdom.

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