

Ten Principles of Economic Discipleship

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About Delhi House Society and Sewa Ashram:

Sewa Ashram, a program under Delhi House Society, strives to reach the poorest of the poor through holistic ministry. These economic discipleship materials are a tangible resource which embodies the philosophy of Delhi House Society.

Our Mission

Isaiah 58 continues to inspire our mission:

- To take in the poorest of the poor and to care and love them unconditionally, regardless of religion, caste or gender.
- To provide them with the tools needed to live restored and dignified lives.
- To empower and strengthen individual and community capacity.
- For the development of community hubs that are places of blessing and catalysts in the restoration of broken lives, families and communities.
- To stand against injustice and be a voice for the voiceless.

Our Vision

Our vision is to see lives of the poor transformed: economically, physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually and walking in the fullness of life as purposed by God. To be a community of people that loves God, loves people and is a blessing to those in need.

Our Values

- People First – People are our highest priority.
- Leadership – Leadership is servant hood. We listen, learn and serve.
- Visionary – We are big picture people.
- Organic Community – We are intentional in our beliefs and aspirations, but organic in the development of the journey.
- Collaboration – One Team, One Dream.
- Integrity – What we say, we do.
- Pioneering – We have a pioneering spirit that does not fear doing what has not been done before, to prepare the way as God calls.
- Justice – Just as God requires.

Notes about Study Model:

This economic discipleship curriculum has been based on Alvin Mbola's *Small Business Training Manual* and Dr. Viv Grigg's *Conversations on Kingdom Economics*. The structure of this model has been adapted in order to meet the unique context and set of circumstances in which these men live.

In order to keep the study simple and easily accessible for anyone, I have structured each study around one or two key Bible verse and have made all questions discussion-based so that no previous knowledge is needed in order to participate. Each session has questions related to the following four themes:

- **Foundational Truth:** What does the scripture teach us about God?
- **Self-Reflection and Evaluation:** What does the scripture teach us about humankind?
- **Transformation:** Given this new knowledge, how should we live differently? What are some areas of our lives that need to be changed?
- **Service:** What are the needs within the group and the larger community, and how can we care for them?

Based on what I have heard from patients and staff at Sewa Ashram, there is a need for economic discipleship in the recovery process. Each lesson will, therefore, focus on one of ten basic biblical economic principles. The first week will be a basic introduction to who God is and why economic discipleship is important. Each lesson after that will build off of this basic knowledge and will focus on one principle a week.

Every discussion and activity will have its roots in appreciative inquiry – looking at what a person comes to the group with and figuring out how to use these talents and resources to create something unique and beneficial to others.

At the end of each session, the patients will also be asked to write out personal goals for improvement related to that day's topic. This includes two phases – short-term (How can I apply these principles to my life in the coming week?) and long-term (How can I use these principles to begin seeing bigger changes in my life for the future?). Mentorship and partnership is key in this process. Patients will work with staff and others in the group to create a practical strategy for accomplishing these goals (Mbola, 2009).

The goal of the study is to walk with the poor on this journey of biblical exploration and economic empowerment.

Introduction/Pre-Lesson – Why Economics is Spiritual

The creation account in Genesis shows us how God originally intended the world to be and how He desires us to live. However, our reality is that man sinned and his relationship with his creator was broken. This is why we live in a world full of hurt. God wants to redeem every part of our lives back to Himself, including our economic lives.

- Starting principle: God is the Creator who provides.

In many religions (such as Hinduism), people believe that spirituality and economics are separate. Each has its own little compartment in our lives. The truth is that every area of life impacts another – physical, emotional, spiritual, economic, social, and intellectual. We will start with Genesis and go through other parts of the Bible that show how God is working for the welfare of His people, which ultimately leads us to Christ and the Church.

Discussion

- Can you think of any examples of choices you made in one area of your life that also impacted other areas (economic, spiritual, social, etc.)?

We have to change our way of thinking to become more holistic. When we change our way of thinking, we can begin to make wise choices and change our way of living.



What did Jesus come to do?

Luke 4:18-19 says that Jesus came to:

- Proclaim good news to the poor
- Proclaim freedom for prisoners
- Recover the sight of the blind
- Set the oppressed free
- Proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (the year of Jubilee)

As fallen human beings, it is our nature to seek out worldly pleasures in an attempt to fill this hole in our hearts. We try desperately to fill this hole with substances like drugs and alcohol, but this only results in addiction which only causes this hole to get bigger. It can only bring us loneliness and an increased sense of desperation which only drags us further away from our Creator. This insatiable hunger within us can only be satisfied by restoring right relationship with God, man, and creation. Only then are we able to find our true identities as children of God, who were created in His own image (Genesis 1:27) for great purposes (Genesis 1:28).

As we go through these ten biblical economic principles, it is important to recognize that these are not strictly economic in nature. Each reflects the heart of God in caring for His creation in a holistic way. Jesus came to set us free from all that holds us captive and keeps us from achieving the full potential and purpose for which we were created. Let us explore together what this looks like in terms of economics, and how each principle works to bring about transformation in other areas of our lives as well.

1. Love, Dignity, and Human Worth

(Genesis 1:26-27)



God is love. He has shown us this from the beginning of time. When God was creating the world, He made mankind in His image. We are a reflection of who He is. We are able to reflect God through some of the character attributes that we share with Him, such as creativity. Mankind was created for a purpose – to be in relationship with God and to care for the earth which He created.

However, somewhere along the way, we lost our identity and our sense of who we are – our value and purpose in life. Man chose his own way apart from God, which only led to his own destruction. He selfishly sought his own pleasure over relationship with God and the goodness of the community. As this love disappeared from societies, economics were effected. Without love, there is immorality, exploitation, and dehumanization (Grigg, 2010).

But there is good news! While we were still sinners, Christ died for us in order to restore right relationship with us. He recognizes how polluted our hearts are, but still sees the potential in us and considers us to be people worthy of His love. When we know who He is, we know who we are. We are able to understand where we came from and what our lives should be all about. We can find hope in His unfailing love.

Let me tell you a story...

The Parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32)

11 Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

13 “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

17 “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ 20 So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

21 “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

22 “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

25 “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 27 ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

28 “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. 29 But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

“‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

We need to understand that God loves us and that we have value before we can progress past our addictions and the strongholds in our live. Your chains can be broken.

➔ Where have you been finding your identity? You no longer have to live in the identity of an addict. Jesus has come to set you free from that and give you a new identity in Him.

This is also true in regards to how we treat others. If we have been shown God’s grace, we should also show it to others and affirm their worth in God’s sight. We need to follow the example of the father in the story and show love and forgiveness to those who may have hurt us in the past. We can also find freedom from the chains of anger and bitterness that keep us bound to the past.

Discussion:

- How do you see God’s goodness/qualities of God in yourself?
- What “chains” are holding you back from finding your true identity and potential?
- What does it mean to show love and forgiveness to people who have hurt us? Does this mean that what they did was okay?

Goals:

- How will you invest in your own well-being and the well-being of others?
 - o This week:
 - o Long-term:

2. Creativity

(Genesis 1:28)

What is creativity? It is the ability to make new things or think of new ideas. God is our ultimate example of what it means to be creative. God created the world and gave us free reign to be creative beings with His creation. He values His people and wants to see them live up to their full potential.



This creative power did not stop with the initial creation of the world. The Bible says that God has the desire and the capability to make us into new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). He is able to transform our lives from our own self-destruction to new life through the precious gift of True Life that can only come through Jesus. He has the power to make everything new.

Part of receiving this blessing intentionally changing the way we live. This means living healthy lives for ourselves but also looking out for the good of others. As the image-bearing reflection of a very creative God, we also have the ability to be creative, and should use our creative gifts and abilities for the betterment of the entire community.

Two ways of doing this are through invention and innovation (Mbola, 2009).

Invention: Something that has never been done before.

- *Example:* Village women in India had to walk very far every day to get water and carry it back to their homes. Then they designed a rolling water jug that would save them time and energy.

Innovation: Improving a product or service that already exists.

- *Example:* Cow dung could just be considered waste, but instead people have creatively used it for fertilizer and fire fuel.
- *Example:* Cow milk is something that we can get naturally, but someone had to be creative to make milk, which already exists, into curd or butter.

DISCUSSION: Can you think of other examples of creativity that could be used in a business?

Let me tell you a story...

- The Parable of the Bags of Gold (Matthew 25:14-30)

14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. 15 To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag,[a] each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. 17 So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. 18 But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

19 “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

21 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

22 “The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’

23 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

24 “Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

26 “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

28 ““So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. 29 For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Discussion – Appreciative Inquiry

- Each person has been created with different gifts and talents to offer the world. What are yours?
- How can these gifts and talents be used for your own benefit and for the benefit of others?

Have someone in the group write these down for each person.

Goals:

- How will I use my gifts and talents for the benefit of the community?
 - o This week:
 - o Long-term:

3. Productivity

(Genesis 1:28, 2:15)

When God saw what He had made, the Bible says that “He saw that it was good.” Work is good and a necessary part of life. Man was created to work, as demonstrated by the Garden of Eden that God gave him to tend. It was only after man chose to disobey God and selfishly go His own way that work became cursed and toilsome.



The conditions of man’s work may have changed, but his responsibility to work is the same. Not only is work essential for survival, it is part of man’s purpose on earth. No matter what kind of work you do, it should be something that increases goodness and order on the earth. There is no point in giving your time and energy to something that has no benefit or is even harmful to yourself or others. Work that is truly productive and good gives the worker a sense of satisfaction, dignity, and self-worth. It should also be beneficial and good to others in the community.

Activity

Identify whether or not these business owners are involved in productive and good business practices. Consider the following questions:

- Did they meet the needs of the business owner?
- Did they meet the needs of the community?

- *Rohit mixes one rotten tomato with three other tomatoes and sells to her customers at 20 rupees.*
- *Kailash sells yesterday’s green vegetables that have been preserved in water but informs his customers of their state and sells them at a discounted price.*
- *Vishal the milk vendor secretly adds some water in his freshly acquired milk and sells it to his customers at a cheaper price.*

Now consider what you did yesterday.

- Was it a productive use of time and resources? Was it beneficial to you and/or others?

Let me tell you a story...

- The Parable of the Ten Minas (Luke 19:12-27)

12 He said: “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. 13 So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas.[a] ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’

14 “But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, ‘We don’t want this man to be our king.’

15 “He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

16 “The first one came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned ten more.’

17 “‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’

18 “The second came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned five more.’

19 “His master answered, ‘You take charge of five cities.’

20 “Then another servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. 21 I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.’

22 “His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’

24 “Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’

25 “‘Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten!’

26 “He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away. 27 But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.’”

We must invest in the right things in order to be productive. One rupee does not simply turn into two on its own. It takes dedication and hard work to make this happen. This usually starts small. It is only when we can first handle the small things that people will begin to trust us with bigger responsibilities. This is not only true of business practices but also in our own personal development. Progress and improvement in our lives is directly related to the time and effort we have invested in ourselves.

Goals

- In what ways can I use my time to be productive, investing in myself and in my community?
 - o This week:
 - o Long-term:

4. Cooperative Economics

(Genesis 1:26, 2:18)

As God was creating the first man, He said that it is not good for man to be alone. We are social beings by our very nature. We were created for relationship with God and with others. Our actions impact the people around us and everyone with whom we have a relationship. This is true in every area of our lives, including how we choose to spend our money. Our human work should have purpose and the welfare of others at the heart.



Let me tell you a story...

A Community-Focused Lifestyle – Acts 4:32-35

32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. 33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all 34 that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales 35 and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

Because we have been created for community, we have an obligation to help each other on this journey to recovery and wholeness. We need to work together to accomplish things bigger than ourselves. One example of this principle is starting a business. The best way to fail in business is to start it by yourself. It is important to share this responsibility with other people. One person cannot realistically do it alone.

Activity – Finding creative solutions together when working with limited funds

Each person will be given pieces of paper that represent different denominations of money (10 rupees, 20 rupees, etc.). Everyone will start off with the same amount of “money” but will not have enough to buy anything good or beneficial by themselves. Pair up with others to combine your funds come to a consensus on how to spend the money. Try to “buy” the item that you think would be most beneficial for the community.

Discussion afterward: Did you find that you had to set your own desires aside in order to make a good decision that would benefit the whole group?

Goals

- In what ways can I care for the needs of others?
 - o This week:
 - o Long-term:

Jubilee Principles

Practices for being loving, creative, productive, and co-operative members of society



5. Work and Rest

(Genesis 2:2-3)

After God was done creating the world, He rested and made the seventh day holy.

As we have covered previously, work is good and a necessary part of life. However, times of rest are a necessary element in creative and productive work. Man is not a machine. We need time to be rejuvenated in order to continue to be useful and find joy in our work. This rest allows us to reflect back on the work we have done and gain a fresh perspective on life.



Discussion:

How does the principle of Work and Rest encourage the previously mentioned economic principles (love, creativity, productivity, cooperation)?

Demonstration/Example

A wise, bearded sheep-shearer once told me a story about grazing animals. When you put animals out in a field to eat, let them continue to graze until the grass gets down to about 10%. At this point, it is necessary to move the animals to another field in order to let the grass rest and regrow. If you let them eat until there is nothing left, the animals will have nothing to eat the next time around.

The same can be said about people. We need time to rest and be rejuvenated so that we can continue to be creative and productive. If we do not take time to rest, we will burn out and our work will be a burden rather than a joy.

Discussion: Good ways vs bad ways to rest

Rest does not just mean sleeping. What are different ways to rest?

Goals

- How will I practice the principle of work and rest in my life?
 - o This week:
 - o Long-term:

6. Simplicity

(Genesis 2:15-17)

Our goal is not to gain the whole world but to live contently with what God has given us. We need to live with the purpose of bettering our lives, not with acquiring more material wealth.



Discussion:

- What is the difference between acquiring wealth and living a good life?
- Does more money or possessions necessarily mean a better life?
- Jesus said that we are to store up treasure in heaven, not on earth (Matthew 6:19-24). Discuss what this means.

Let me tell you a story...

Luke 12:16-21 – The Parable of the Rich Fool

13 Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

14 Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” 15 Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

16 And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. 17 He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’

18 “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. 19 And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’

20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’

21 “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

Storing up things seems like it might make life easier, but what benefit is this long-term? You can’t take this with you and it’s not benefiting anyone else while you have it.

Activity – Budgeting

Follow the budget sheet guidelines. How much do you spend on food, clothes, rent, etc.? We will discuss this as a group afterward.

Goals

- How can I live a more simple life?
 - o This week:
 - o Long-term:

7. Management and Savings

“The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender.” (Proverbs 22:7)

Opening Discussion:

- What is the purpose of making money?
- What is the difference between storing up things for yourself and creating savings?

What is the purpose of creating savings?

- Emergency situations
- Money available for those in need – Lending or gifting



We are stewards of God’s resources. It all belongs to Him, so we need to use it wisely. Money management is necessary to provide for yourself, your family, or anyone else who depend on you. It is important to use your money and resources in a way that is responsible and concerned with the benefit of your community and the rest of creation.

Let me tell you a story...

The Parable of the Shrewd Manager (Luke 16:1-15)

Jesus told his disciples: “There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. 2 So he called him in and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.’

3 “The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig, and I’m ashamed to beg— 4 I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.’

5 “So he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’

6 “‘Nine hundred gallons[a] of olive oil,’ he replied.

“The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.’

7 “Then he asked the second, ‘And how much do you owe?’

“‘A thousand bushels[b] of wheat,’ he replied.

“He told him, ‘Take your bill and make it eight hundred.’

8 “The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. 9 I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

10 “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. 11 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? 12 And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?”

13 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

14 The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. 15 He said to them, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God’s sight.

Discussion

- What are some creative ways of keeping savings/investing savings in something? Share this with each other and the staff to begin making a savings plan.

Goals

- How can I be a better manager of my money and resources?
 - o This week:
 - o Long-term:

8. Redistribution for Equality

Even if you consider yourself “poor,” you still have a responsibility to be a part of creating an equal and just society. We all have assets and abilities that can contribute to this process. If our work and our lives are concerned with the goodness of the entire community, we will naturally desire to give and make sure that others are taken care of.



The Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:8-17)

8 “Count off seven sabbath years—seven times seven years—so that the seven sabbath years amount to a period of forty-nine years. 9 Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. 10 Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan. 11 The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. 12 For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields.

13 “In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to their own property.

14 “If you sell land to any of your own people or buy land from them, do not take advantage of each other. 15 You are to buy from your own people on the basis of the number of years since the Jubilee. And they are to sell to you on the basis of the number of years left for harvesting crops. 16 When the years are many, you are to increase the price, and when the years are few, you are to decrease the price, because what is really being sold to you is the number of crops. 17 Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the Lord your God.

Jubilee Principles (Grigg, 2009, p. 23)

- Liberty: It is synonymous with the year of liberty. Slaves are to be set free. Freedom is inherent in the gospel message.
- Debts are to be canceled: Economic freedom is inherent in the gospel message.
- Celebration: Celebration is inherent in the gospel message.
- Redistribution: The means of production, the land was to be returned to the original owners. Redistribution of the means of production is inherent in the gospel message.

Jesus came to fulfill the Jubilee, giving people the opportunity to live in the freedom only He can give. He declared an “eternal Jubilee of liberty from oppression” (Grigg, 2010, p. 21).

What did Jesus come to do? - Luke 4:18-19

- Proclaim good news to the poor
- Proclaim freedom for prisoners

- Recover the sight of the blind
- Set the oppressed free
- Proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (the year of Jubilee)

Discussion:

Why is redistribution good? (Review the key principles from Leviticus 25 and Luke 4.)

What is your role in redistribution?

Goals

- How can I be a part of bringing about justice and equality?
 - o This week:
 - o Long-term:

9. Celebration

Setting aside time to rejoice helps us to keep life in perspective. Even when we have hard times, we must recognize the goodness in our lives and how far we have come from where we once were. Thankfulness should be a part of our daily lives. This could be anything from taking pleasure in the work of your hands to



Discussion

Share your Joy: Reflect on the past few weeks and your time at the ashram.

- How have you seen your life change for the better?
- How have you seen others at the ashram make positive changes as well?

Let me tell a story...

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet – Matthew 22:1-14

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 2 “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

4 “Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’

5 “But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. 6 The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. 7 The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

8 “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. 9 So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ 10 So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11 “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12 He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless.

13 “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

14 “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

Activity

Party Time: Have a small party as a way of celebrating everything you have overcome together. Begin the party with a time of prayer thanking God for all that He has done for them in their recovery process. This time should be open to (or even led by) anyone in the group who wants to pray.

Goals

- What specific ways can I celebrate things in my life on a regular basis?
 - o This week:
 - o Long-term:

10. Ownership

Over the past few weeks, we have learned about how to use our money and resources for the benefit of ourselves and others. This is not only an economic practice but also a spiritual one. Restoring right relationship with God and others brings about emotional and spiritual healing. Reconnecting with one's family and taking responsibility of one's household is an important part of this process. When our identity is restored through this process, we are able to see our economic lives in the proper perspective.



The concept of ownership is an important one to examine more closely. To start, we must recognize God as the true owner of everything that we call "ours." We are simply stewards of His creation. Therefore, we need to take a position of "private ownership without possessiveness" with anything we "own" (Grigg, 2009). However, the title of stewards means that we have the responsibility to ensure that God's creation, which He entrusted to us, is well taken care of. Handling this responsibility well only further affirms our sense of self-worth and strengthens our new-found identity.

The Promise of the Land – Exodus 32:13

"Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.'"

God owns everything, but He has invited us to be stewards of His creation. He wants His people to take ownership of the land and establish great things upon it that will benefit all the people. Therefore, business should not only be for one's own financial stability but also a way of giving back and investing in the community. We should have the desire to give even out of our lack, but why not invest in something that can produce profits that can be used to bless others?

Discussion

- What does the responsibility of ownership look like in your life?
- At the Sewa Ashram, many items and facilities belong to the ashram but are used by everyone. How should we treat belongings that have been entrusted to our care but do not necessarily belong to us? Is it any different than we should treat something that we ourselves actually "own?"

Goals

- What steps do I need to take to own my own property or business?
 - o This week:
 - o Long-term:

References

Grigg, V. (2010). *Conversations on kingdom economics*. Auckland: Urban Leadership Foundation.

Mbola, A. (2009). Introduction to business. In *Small business training manual* (pp. 1-32).

Mbola, A. (2010). Business leadership and management. In *Small business training manual* (pp. 1-57).