

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

TOOLS FOR CREATING A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW | ROMANS 12:2

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The text 'FIRST THINGS FIRST' is rendered in a large, bold, dark green sans-serif font. The words are stacked vertically. The letters are partially filled with or overlaid by botanical illustrations. The word 'FIRST' at the top has yellow flowers and green leaves. The word 'THINGS' in the middle has green leaves. The word 'FIRST' at the bottom has green leaves. Small brown seed-like dots are scattered around the text.

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Where did God show up?

As you see the goodness of God move in your life, use this page to write down how He's blessed you. Encourage one another and celebrate victories within and/or outside of your group meetings.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears to be a standard notebook page or a sheet of stationery designed for writing.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

WEEK 1: WHERE IS IT... GOING?

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Letting Jesus Lead What We Hold

Jesus forms the way we treasure, trust, spend, steward, and give.

SERMON REWIND

This week begins our **First Things First** series by asking an honest question: **Where is it... going?**

Jesus invites us to live fully surrendered lives. That surrender includes our relationships, our decisions, our time, our habits, and even our money. Although, money is not the only window into the heart, Jesus does teach that it is one of the clearest places where our values, fears, trust, and priorities are revealed.

In Matthew 6, Jesus says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." He then says we cannot serve both God and money. What Jesus is doing here is He is inviting us to let Him form one of the most personal parts of our lives.

For most of us, our wallet is one of the last places we let Jesus lead. We invite Him into our families, our pain, our calling, and our habits, but we still struggle to surrender the way we spend, save, steward, and give.

This series is about formation and for us to invite Jesus to form and to disciple every part of us, including what we hold.

The invitation this week is simple: To ask Jesus what haven't I

surrendered to him and for Him to lovingly reveal what we treasure so He can form us into who He desires us to be.

KEY VERSES

Matthew 6:19-34 (NIV)

Additional Verse: Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 Money Is Never Just Money

Jesus teaches that money is connected to the heart. It is a great indicator that can reveal what we love, fear, trust, and serve.

- a. Why do you think Jesus talks so directly about money and possessions?
- b. What are some ways money can reveal what matters most to us?

2 Where Your Treasure Is

Jesus says in Matthew 6:21 "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

- a. What does the word "treasure" mean to you?
- b. How have you seen your own heart follow what you give your time, attention, or money to?

3 A Window to the Heart

Money is not the only thing that reveals our heart, but it can act as a window into what we value most.

- a. What are some things our spending, saving, or giving might reveal about us?
- b. How can we invite Jesus to lead this area of our lives without falling into shame or fear?

4 The Last Place We Surrender

For many of us, money is one of the hardest areas to fully surrender to Jesus.

- a. Why do you think money can be such a difficult area to trust God with?
- b. What would it look like for Jesus to form the way we spend, save, steward, and give?

First Things First

Jesus invites us to reorder our lives around His Kingdom.

- a. What are some things that can quietly compete for first place in our lives?
- b. What is one practical step you can take this week to put Jesus first with what He has given you?

DIVE DEEPER

Reflection Questions: Money can be uncomfortable to talk about because it touches trust, fear, pressure, shame, security, and control. But Jesus brings this part of our lives into the light because He wants to form us in freedom.

- Take a moment to think about your spending, saving, and giving over the last month. If your bank statement could tell a story, what might it reveal about what you value most?
- Where might Jesus be inviting you to surrender more fully?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

This week, practice putting first things first by:

- Take a few minutes to look honestly at where your money, time, and attention have been going.
- Ask Jesus, "What does this reveal about what I treasure?"
- Choose one small step of surrender in the way you spend, save, steward, or give.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you trust Jesus with every part of your life, including what you hold.

CLOSING SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

Let the group close by remembering that Jesus invites us to seek first His Kingdom. When He becomes first, everything else begins to find its proper place.

NOTES

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FIRST THINGS FIRST

WEEK 2: MAKING ROOM FOR WHAT MATTERS

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Contentment and Simplicity

Jesus forms the way we consume, prioritize, and make room for what matters.

SERMON REWIND

This week continues our **First Things First** series by looking at how consumption quietly forms us.

We can spend without thinking, upgrade without needing, accumulate without noticing, and build lives so full that there is little room left for obedience, generosity, or purpose. The problem is not that we own things or enjoy things. The problem is when what we own begins to own us- our attention, our money, our peace, and our obedience.

Paul reminds us in 1 Timothy 6 that godliness with contentment is great gain. Contentment is not about having nothing. It is about learning to live with Jesus as our source, instead of constantly chasing more.

This week is about making room. Not minimalism as a trend, but simplicity as discipleship. If everything God gives us is consumed by us, there will be little left to steward.

Jesus is inviting us to own less, love more, and make room for what matters.

KEY VERSES

1 Timothy 6:6-19 (NIV)

Additional Verse: Luke 12:15 (NIV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Formed by More

Consumption can quietly shape our values, desires, habits, and priorities.

- a. What are some ways our culture encourages us to always want more?
- b. How can "more" become spiritually dangerous, even when the things are not bad?

2

When What We Own Owns Us

The issue is not having things. The issue is when our things begin to have us.

- a. How can possessions, upgrades, or financial pressure begin to affect our peace and obedience?
- b. What are some signs that something we own may be owning too much of us?

3

Godliness with Contentment

Paul says godliness with contentment is great gain.

- a. What does contentment look like in real life?
- b. Why do you think contentment is so difficult to practice?

4

Making Room

Simplicity is not just about removing clutter. It is about creating space for obedience, generosity, and purpose.

- a. What are some things that can crowd out spiritual margin in our lives?
- b. What might you need to make room for in this season?

5

Own Less, Love More

Jesus invites us to live with open hands so we can love and steward well.

- a. How could consuming less help us love people more?
- b. What is one practical step you can take this week to make room for what matters?

DIVE DEEPER

Reflection Questions: Consumption often feels normal until we slow down enough to ask what it is forming in us.

- Where do you feel most tempted to consume without thinking?
- What is one place in your life where clutter, debt, busyness, or discontentment may be crowding out obedience or generosity?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

This week, practice making room by:

- Pause before one purchase and ask, "Do I need this, or am I being formed by more?"
- Choose one small area to simplify, declutter, or reorder.
- Look for one way to use your time, attention, or resources to bless someone else.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you live with contentment and make room for what matters most.

CLOSING SCRIPTURE

1 Timothy 6:6-7 (NIV)

Let the group close by remembering that contentment is not found in consumerism, but in trusting Jesus with what we have.

NOTES

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FIRST THINGS FIRST

WEEK 3: BUT FIRST GOD

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Tithing and Firstfruits

Putting God first through worship, trust, priority, and obedience.

SERMON REWIND

This week focuses on the invitation to put God first with what He has entrusted to us.

Throughout Scripture, God teaches His people to bring their first and best, not their last and leftover. Tithing is not simply about a percentage. It is about priority, trust, worship, and obedience.

Many people have questions about tithing, but the heart of it is simple: God wants our hearts. He is not interested in what is left after everything else has been consumed. He invites us to honor Him first because He is forming us into people who trust Him.

Tithing is not the ceiling of generosity. It is the starting place of surrendered stewardship.

This week is an opportunity for each person to take a faithful next step. Some may need to start giving. Some may need to give consistently. Some may need to move toward tithing. Some may need to stretch beyond tithing.

When we put God first, His blessing continues through us to others.

KEY VERSES

Malachi 3:7-10 (NIV)

Additional Verses: Proverbs 3:9-10 (NIV) Matthew 23:23 (NIV)

Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 First and Best

God teaches His people to bring their first and best, not their last and leftover.

- a. What does it communicate when we give God our first and best?
- b. Why can it be easy to give God what is left over instead of putting Him first?

2 More Than a Percentage

Tithing is not only about math. It is about priority, trust, worship, and obedience.

- a. How does it change the way we understand tithing when we see it as worship?
- b. Which word feels most challenging to you: priority, trust, worship, or obedience? Why?

3 Returning to God

In Malachi, God connects returning to Him with the way His people handle tithes and offerings.

- a. Why do you think God connects our hearts with the way we give?
- b. What might giving reveal about our trust in God?

4 A Starting Place

Tithing is not the ceiling of generosity. It is the starting place of surrendered stewardship.

- a. Why is it helpful to think about tithing as a starting place instead of the finish line?
- b. What does open-handed generosity beyond obligation look like?

5

Taking a Faithful Next Step

Each person's next step may look different, but everyone can take a step toward putting God first.

- a. What are some faithful next steps people might take in generosity?
- b. What is one next step Jesus may be inviting you to consider?

DIVE DEEPER

Reflection Questions: Putting God first is not just something we believe. It becomes visible in how we order our lives.

- Where are you most tempted to give God what is left over?
- What would it look like to trust God with the first and best in this season?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

This week, practice putting God first by:

- Pray honestly about your current giving rhythm.
- Ask Jesus, "What is my next faithful step?"
- Consider one step toward starting, consistency, tithing, or growing in generosity.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you trust God with the first and best of what He has entrusted to you.

CLOSING SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

Let the group close by remembering that Jesus calls us to seek first His Kingdom. When God is first, generosity becomes part of worship, trust, and obedience.

NOTES

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FIRST THINGS FIRST

WEEK 4: NEVER MINE

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Stewardship and Ownership

Everything comes from God, everything belongs to God, and everything can be used by God.

SERMON REWIND

This week focuses on one of the clearest truths of biblical stewardship: **it all comes from God, and it all belongs to God.**

In 1 Chronicles 29, David gives generously toward the temple, but he does not boast in what he gave. Instead, he worships God and says, "Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand."

That truth changes everything. We are not owners. We are all managers of something. Our lives, homes, incomes, gifts, time, influence, and resources are gifts from God entrusted to us for His purposes.

If everything belongs to God, then the question is not just, "What do I want to do with what I have?" The better question here is, "God, how do I honor You with what You have entrusted to me?"

Jesus is inviting us to see our entire life as a gift and to place everything under His leadership.

KEY VERSES

1 Chronicles 29:10-17 (NIV)

Additional Verses: 1 Corinthians 4:6-7 (NIV) 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)
Psalm 24:1 (NIV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 Everything Comes from God

David recognizes in Psalms 24:1 that everything that he has ultimately comes from God, and belongs to God. Nothing in our hands is truly ours to hold apart from Him.

- a. Why is it important to remember that everything we have comes from God?
- b. How does gratitude change the way we view our resources?

2 Managers, Not Owners

Biblical stewardship teaches us that we are managers of what God has entrusted to us.

- a. What is the difference between seeing yourself as an owner and seeing yourself as a steward?
- b. How might your decisions change if you viewed your resources as entrusted to you by God?

3 Never Mine

If everything belongs to God, then nothing in our lives is outside His leadership.

- a. What areas of life are easiest to see as belonging to God?
- b. What are the hardest things to surrender to God?

4 Honoring God with What We Have

It's less about "What do I want?" but rather "God, what do you want and how can I honor you in all things?"

- a. How can that question reshape the way we spend, save, give, or plan?
- b. What is one resource God has entrusted to you that you want to steward more faithfully?

5

Gratitude That Leads to Surrender

When we see God as generous, our gratitude should move us toward surrender.

- a. What is one thing that God has provided for you in your life?
- b. What is one way that gratitude could lead you to live more open-handed this week?

DIVE DEEPER

Reflection Questions: Stewardship begins when we stop asking, "How much of this belongs to God?" and start asking, "How do I honor God with all of this?"

- What have you been treating as fully yours instead of entrusted to you?
- Where might Jesus be inviting you to move from control to surrender?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

This week, practice stewardship by:

- Pray over your income, home, time, gifts, and responsibilities.
- Ask God, "How do You want me to honor You with what You have entrusted to me?"
- Choose one area where you can practice faithful stewardship this week.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you live as a faithful steward of everything God has placed in your hands.

CLOSING SCRIPTURE

Psalms 24:1 (NIV)

Let the group close by remembering that the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. We belong to Him, and what we hold belongs under His care and leadership.

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FIRST THINGS FIRST

WEEK 5: BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Open-Handed Generosity

God blesses His people so His blessing can continue through His people.

SERMON REWIND

This week closes our **First Things First** series by remembering that God blesses His people so His blessing can continue through His people.

From Abraham's promise in Genesis 12 to the generosity of the early church in Acts 2 to Paul's teaching in 2 Corinthians 9, Scripture shows that generosity is part of how God supplies needs, produces thanksgiving, and makes Himself known in the world.

This week, we land on trust. If we trust God with our eternity, we can learn to trust Him with our finances. God's way of handling money is different from the world's way, but His way leads to freedom, peace, joy, and purpose.

Imagine what God could do through a church where more people took their next step in generosity. More families cared for. More students disciplined. More people healed. More outreach sustained. More communities reached.

We are not generous because God needs something from us. We are generous because He is forming something in us and continuing His blessing through us.

KEY VERSES

2 Corinthians 9:6-12 (NIV)

Additional Verses: Genesis 12:1-3 (NIV) Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

Philippians 4:10-20 (NIV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 Blessed to Be a Blessing

God's blessing is not meant to stop with us. It is meant to move through us.

- a. What does the phrase "blessed to be a blessing" mean to you?
- b. How have you seen God use someone's generosity to bless others?

2 Generosity That Produces Thanksgiving

Paul teaches that generosity supplies needs and leads people to give thanks to God.

- a. Why do you think generosity often points people back to God?
- b. What happens in a church family when needs are met through open-handed people?

3 Trusting God with Our Finances

If we trust God with our eternity, we can learn to trust Him with our finances.

- a. Why can it be easier to trust God spiritually than financially?
- b. Where do you want to grow in trusting God with what you have?

4 God's Way Leads to Freedom

The world often teaches us to protect, consume, and keep more for ourselves. Jesus teaches another way.

- a. How is God's way of handling money different from the world's way?
- b. How can generosity lead to freedom, peace, joy, or purpose?

5

An Open-Handed Church

Imagine what God could do through a church where more people took their next step in generosity.

- a. What kind of impact could a more generous church have on families, students, outreach, healing, and communities?
- b. What is one way you want to keep growing in generosity after this series?

DIVE DEEPER

Reflection Questions: Generosity is not just about what leaves our hands. It is about what God forms in our hearts.

- Where have you seen God bless you so that you could bless someone else?
- What would it look like for you to live more open-handed in the next season?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

This week, practice open-handed generosity by:

- Thank God for one way He has provided for you.
- Look for one specific opportunity to bless someone else.
- Take one next step in generosity through giving, serving, encouraging, or meeting a need.

Ask the Holy Spirit to form you into someone who trusts God deeply and allows His blessing to flow through you to others.

CLOSING SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 9:11 (NIV)

Let the group close by remembering that God makes His people generous so that others may be blessed and thanksgiving may rise to Him.

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Prayer Requests

Note your prayer requests and fellow small group members' prayer requests here and pray for one another throughout the week.

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