

LESSON 4

Missions & Cooperative Program and Stewardship

–Kevin Boles–

Focal Passage: Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Corinthians 8:1-5

Knowledge Aim: To learn how I can personally fulfill the Great Commission.

Application Aim: To commit to being on intentional mission for God.

The act of conducting missions through the local church is not separated from stewardship. Part of using the gifts, abilities, and talents God has given us is in the area of missions action.

The Great Commission commands us to *go* into all the world. It would be impossible for each person to go to all nations and complete the tasks set forth in the Great Commission. That is why the Cooperative Program is important. It allows us to be good stewards of the Great Commission by providing funds to send someone else.

The Point: Youth will see the biblical principle of giving to the church and will understand the work of the Cooperative Program.

Before the session: Obtain enough copies of your church budget for each youth.

Tithes that Bind

1. WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE!

As youth arrive, explain that simply by attending this session, they are the recipients of one million dollars. They can spend it any way they want! The question is what will they do with it? On a focal wall/board, have youth list the first five things they would do with their fortune.

2. A BOOK TO LIVE BY

Point out that what people do with their money reveals much about their personal values. Jesus taught that discipleship involves using our possessions to meet needs. Giving is an integral part of discipleship.

Divide the group in four smaller groups. (Remember! One person can serve as a group). Have each small group read one of the following scripture passages and look for what Jesus was teaching in each situation: *Luke 10:12-24; Luke 16:19-31; Luke 21:1-4; Luke 19:1-9*. Have each group determine a spokesperson for their group. Allow time for research, and then call for responses. Have each small group list their findings on tear sheets and display them on a focal wall.

3. SINCERELY PAUL

Focus on the scripture by explaining the situation of the people in the Macedonian church. They were very poor. From the beginning their property and goods had been destroyed through unmerciful persecution. Yet, they responded with joy to the needs of others.

Explain that Paul wrote a letter to the church in Corinth asking them to respond to a need. Call on a previously enlisted youth to read I Corinthians 8:1-5.

Explain that the best practice of stewardship should begin with a basic personal commitment to the Lord. This is where it began with the Macedonian Christians, who first gave themselves to the Lord and the Lord's cause. Out of that basic commitment, they sacrificed their own possessions by sharing with those who were less fortunate. Stewardship is more than a matter of tithing. As Christians we are as responsible for what we do with the nine-tenths we keep as we are with the one-tenth we give back to God. Stewardship is a responsible use of all that we have. In these verses, people who were poverty-stricken themselves gave generously for the relief of Christians in Jerusalem who were suffering even more. That generosity came from a basic commitment to the Lord.

Ask: *If Paul wrote a letter to our church about giving, what do you think it would say?*

NOTE: Now is a wonderful time to share the good news of salvation. A good resource is the FAITH outline.

3. BIG BUSINESS

Instruct youth to stay in their small groups. Explain that they are going to function as a stewardship team to plan a budget for the next year. Ask the small groups to plan a church budget. Explain that they have \$100,000 to distribute among the needs and ministries of the church, and they must decide on how much to allocate to each budget request. Since they do not have enough money to meet all the requests, they must determine ministry priorities.

Use the following worksheet for help:

MISSIONS: \$15,000 requested for Cooperative Program
BUILDING LOAN PAYMENT: \$35,000 requested
PERSONNEL: \$30,000 requested for salary of part-time pastor, church secretary, and custodian.
EDUCATION: \$7,000 for Sunday School, Discipleship Training, missions organizations, VBS, and music for choirs.
SPECIAL SERVICES: \$2,000 requested for pulpit supply, special speakers, flowers, revivals, etc.
ACTIVITIES: \$2,000 requested for special activities (youth, children, etc.)
BUILDING AND EQUIPMENT: \$15,000 requested for electricity, water, insurance, repairs, supplies, and equipment.
CHURCH PROMOTION: \$1,000 requested for postage and printing of church letters, brochures, bulletins.
MISCELLANEOUS: \$3,000 requested for special occasions, new hymnals, and unexpected expenses.

Allow time for groups to work on their budgets, and then ask them to share the results of their work.

Ask:

According to your budget, what appears to be the priority of your church?

Would you say your church is practicing good stewardship?

Would you want to serve on a church stewardship or finance committee?

What have you learned about a church's responsibilities of stewardship?

Distribute copies of your church's actual church budget and explain the various ministry allocations.

Share about the Cooperative Program and mission opportunities. Materials about the Cooperative Program are available from the Alabama Baptist Convention, State Board of Missions (1-800-264-1225). Help youth understand that when they give to the church, they are truly involved in touching the world.

4. BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

In closing, have youth fill in the blanks as you wrap up the principles covered in this lesson:

- 1) The way people use money shows what is most important to them.
- 2) Jesus taught that disciples must use their possessions to help others.
- 3) Paul praised the Christians in Macedonia and asked that everyone follow their example.
- 4) Genuine stewardship grows out of commitment.

Challenge youth to discover a new way they are going to use a possession to serve Christ.