



**Green Pond  
United Methodist**

## Small Group Study Guide

# THE WALK

FIVE ESSENTIAL PRACTICES  
OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

March 19, 2023  
“Give:  
Where Your  
Treasure Is...”

### **Opening Prayer:**

O God of heaven and earth, as we continue on our Lenten journey, we ask that you would open our eyes to the abundance around us, and remind our hearts to be grateful. As each of us make concrete choices about how to spend our time, energy and money, guide us to increase our capacity to live out your values. We long to collect “treasures in heaven,” and at the end of our days, we pray that our riches will be stored up with you, and not left in a pile for the auctioneer. In this uncertain economy, O God, help us hold fast to your peace and trust in your care for us. In Jesus’ name, we pray, Amen.

### **Scripture:**

#### **Matthew 6:19-21 (NRSV)**

19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

#### **Luke 6:38 (NRSV)**

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap, for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

#### **Acts 20:35 (NRSV)**

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

## **Introduction:**

As we continue our Lenten study on 5 essential Christian practices, we have explored Worship, Study, Service, and this week, we consider the practice of Giving. We don't like to talk about money in church, and yet, Jesus taught more about money than any other topic, including heaven and hell. We are most able to be generous when we are grateful for all that we have, which we know all comes from God. Winston Churchill, famously said, "we make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." When we generously give, we reflect the heart of God, who has given so generously to us, and find we are blessed.

## **Questions:**

1. What do you think Jesus meant when he told us to "collect treasures in heaven"?
2. First read Mark 12:41-44. The Jerusalem Temple was a huge religious, social and even business center, bustling and noisy. How much would the widow's contribution pay for in this enormous system? By honoring the widow's generosity, what spiritual impact of generosity did Jesus recognize? How does giving, of any amount, enrich you spiritually?
3. First read Matthew 6:19-24. In verse 24, the word "money" or "Mammon" means wealth in the language Aramaic (the common language Jesus spoke). Scholar Craig Keener wrote that Jesus takes this word for possessions or money and "seems to be personifying it as an idol."\* Few of us would ever think of bowing down before a valued possession or our bank account. Given that, what do you think it means to make wealth an idol today? What picture comes to mind? What does it mean for you to choose to serve God rather than wealth?
4. First read Luke 12:13-21, a parable Jesus told. Do you ever think about who will get all the stuff you accumulate? How do you understand Jesus' phrase to be "rich toward God"? How can you take steps to be "rich toward God," and what is something about your life you want to share with your children, grandchildren or others you influence?
5. First read 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. Paul wanted the church to give without hesitation or pressure. Have you ever given reluctantly or felt coerced? What was that experience like? Has there been a time when giving brought you great joy? Describe that experience.

## **Application:**

We are meant to practice generosity the way a musician practices his or her instrument to play the music by heart. Generosity is to be the rhythm of our life. Plan one act of generosity for each week, from now until Lent. If you can, describe what you chose to do next week with the group.

\*Craig S. Keener, comment on Matthew 6:24 in *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.