

## Embrace Your Stewardship Small Group Guide

**Warm-up Question:** (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. If you could try a job that is unlike any job you've ever had, what would you like to try?
2. Generally speaking, how clean do you keep your room, house, or apartment?

**Read the following passages:** Ephesians 3:1-13.

Paul's letters make one thing very clear: His life was hard. Even so, his life continues to inspire us because it was full of meaning. When life is difficult, we need purpose more than we need relief. Paul lived with purpose because he never lost sight of the fact that God had given him a stewardship: "to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8). What does it look like for us to steward the Gospel in our own lives? Three big ideas emerge in this passage: 1) We need to steward our access to God (Ephesians 3:12); 2) We need to steward the revelation God gives to us (Ephesians 3:2-6); 3) We need to steward our pain (Ephesians 3:13).

**Questions for Discussion** (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Do you currently have a strong sense of purpose in your life? Explain.
2. A stewardship is a mission, responsibility, or role given to us by another person, especially God. What are some things you are called to steward? If God were to ask you the question, "Did you do what I asked you to do?" how confident would you be in your answer? Explain.
3. One of the primary ways we steward our access to God is through prayer. Describe your prayer life. What are some ways you would like to see your prayer life grow? Are you confident that God is going to answer your prayers? What should we do if we feel like our prayers are not being answered?
4. What are some practical ways we can position ourselves to hear from God?
5. Paul saw with great clarity that the Gospel was for Jews and Gentiles equally. Can you think of any truths that God has made especially clear to you? Explain. Are there any truths that you feel particularly inspired to help others see or experience more clearly?
6. God often uses our daily lives to make himself known to us. David was a shepherd, and then he realized that the Lord was his shepherd. Peter was a fisherman, and then Jesus called him to fish for people. Do you have a sense that God is wanting to make himself known through any particular parts of your life right now? Explain.

7. In his book, *Hero on a Mission*, author Donald Miller writes the following:

*In stories, pain is the only way heroes transform into better versions of themselves. If you wrote a story about a hero who transformed, only you did not put that hero through a great deal of pain, the audience would not believe the transformation was authentic. They might accuse the writer of naïveté.*

*Intuitively, we all know that pain is the force that transforms us.*

Pain, however, does not always lead to transformation. Sometimes it leads to depression, anger, or resentment. (In fact, Donald Miller points out that the villain in every story has also experienced pain.) How can we respond to our pain in a way that leads to growth? Do you have any areas of unprocessed pain that are keeping you from moving forward? Explain.

8. If our pain leads to vulnerable connection with others, we are far more likely to grow. Do you have trouble being vulnerable with other people? Explain. How do we know whom to be vulnerable with?

**Pray**