

PRIORITIES

WELL DONE

Step One



A Personal or Small Group Guide for the *Stewardship*
WELL DONE
JOURNEY

Welcome!

This personal or group discipleship guide is the first in a series to help you embrace a holistic view of stewardship and utilize a number of key actions to make your life's journey of stewardship *well done*. Let's begin by reading the following article *Priorities*, and then we'll discuss it in greater depth.

Priorities

by FMF Financial Services

You are invited to travel with us on the *Stewardship Well Done Journey*. Many Christians only associate stewardship with tithing to their local church, but that is just one small part of a more holistic definition that ultimately impacts our entire life. Each of us has resources God has entrusted to our care. Whether we have little or much, it all comes from God and He calls us to manage it well. The *Stewardship Well Done Journey* is a **biblically-based financial roadmap** that can lead from a mundane, legalistic view of stewardship to the realization that wise stewardship leads to freedom and joy in Christ.

Priorities

The first step on the *Stewardship Well Done Journey* is **priorities**: Determine what life priorities matter most to *you*. These priorities will help narrow your focus and steer each of the other steps in the right direction.

Does this surprise you? If you are like me, you might have guessed creating a budget would be the first step. But the journey must begin by deciding the destination. If you don't know where you are going, chances are, even with the best intentions, you are going to take a detour along the way. Having your life priorities clearly in front of you guides each future step. King Solomon put it this way, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own

understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take" (Proverbs 3:5-6, NLT).

Unfortunately, in today's world, there seems to be a consistent drift away from what really matters in life. Slowly over time, our best intentions often become distorted by a wide range of influences. The tyranny of the urgent reigns supreme. Most of us yearn for excellence, alignment, and fulfillment but we often find ourselves being complacent, confused and frustrated because we fall short of all we can be.

It has been said, "Your priorities aren't what you say they are. They are revealed by how you *live*." You may think you know your priorities, but what does your life say? Your calendar and your spending habits are two great indicators of your priorities. Would you be embarrassed at the priorities someone would discover if they saw your daily planner or your bank statement? What would three friends who know you well say your priorities are?

Determining your life priorities doesn't happen by chance. It takes thoughtful prayer and careful thinking. But it doesn't need to be an unpleasant task! Jesus clearly defined the first priority when He said, "Seek first the Kingdom of God," and "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment" (Matthew 6:33 and 22:37-38, NIV). Once you have fully surrendered to the first priority, begin



PRIORITIES

WELL DONE

the process by thinking of the people that mean the most to you. Think of your hopes, dreams, and those things that quicken your heart. Think of the gifts God has given you and who He created you to be at your very core. Think of the things that excite you, that you are passionate about, and what you simply can't live without.

Author Rick Warren once stated, "Personal fulfillment, satisfaction and meaning can only be found when we realize that it's not about us and we discover our purpose by figuring out what on earth we are here for."

When life priorities are defined, they provide guidance at every fork in the road. Without these priorities in place, critical decisions are often based upon urgent, shifting, less important factors which can lead to regrets about "what might have been". Commit to clarifying your purpose and determining what life priorities matter most. It is the first, and perhaps the most important, step on the *Stewardship Well Done Journey*.

As you read the article, was there a particular thought, concept, Scripture verse or word that caught your attention. Write it down here as well as any thoughts you have about that:

Acting upon our priorities is something we all do every day — quite often, automatically — without pausing to give serious thought to them. We prioritize our family and personal needs, our work, and even our recreation, and greater amounts of our time and resources are given to those things we're most passionate about.

With that in mind, what are *your* priorities?

How much of your time and resources are given to each of your personal priorities? *Here's an example to get you started thinking of your own priorities in life.*

Examples:	Time per day	Dollars per month
My Children's Education		\$
Ministries/Projects		\$
Work/Business Ventures		\$
Caring for family		\$

How aware are you about how you spend your time and resources?

Are you surprised by where you spend your time and resources?

A Worldview Shaped by the Lordship of Jesus

Let's take our priorities off autopilot and pause to consider them. For the Christian, our entire life is framed by our belief in God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — and that the Kingdom of God is our *home*. Giving our devotion to Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives changes the way we see the

PRIORITIES

WELL DONE

world and respond to it. *Priorities Well Done* begins with framing our worldview with Jesus as Lord of all — Lord of us.

Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. (1 Chronicles 29:11)

Restate your priorities (listed above) in this way: “Jesus is Lord over _____.”

Did saying them aloud cause any tension? Did any seem untrue?

Our Identity is Shaped by our Values

The Free Methodist Church applies this kingdom-minded, Christ-framed approach to our denominational priorities, and put it in writing: *The Free Methodist Way: Five Values that Shape our Identity*. This document is designed to center us as a Christ-centered movement on our distinctives as a rallying point for the whole church.

“Of the many values we hold dear, these five lie at the heart of our movement. We view them as a whole, each one bringing necessary balance to the others.” —*The Free Methodist Way: Five Values that Shape our Identity*

This same principle can be applied to your own life. Just as the FMC has values we hold dear, you do as well. Just as these values are at the heart of our movement, you have priorities that lie at the center of your heart. In the same way we see our values balancing one another, yours will do the same.

How do you remain accountable to the things that matter most to you?

What happens to our priorities when they are left to chance?

Life-Giving Holiness Defines the Stewardship of our Lives

Consider this quote from “Life-Giving Holiness,” part of *The Free Methodist Way*.

“Forgiven and filled, we approach life with confidence that we are acceptable to God even as He continues to transform our character and behavior to become more and more like Jesus. Life-giving holiness, then, is the fruit of full surrender to the loving reign of God over every aspect of our lives, establishing within us love that is truly love.”

What words or thoughts were especially meaningful to you?

PRIORITIES

WELL DONE

To what degree is your life fully surrendered to God? Which things do you find hard to surrender to God? Why?

Is there any part of our lives that Jesus does not care about?

When our entire being is surrendered to Jesus then our entire life becomes stewardship. How do I spend my time? How do I spend my money? Do I tend to be mindful of my actions or do I leave things to chance? When we begin to ask and answer these questions of ourselves, we have begun *The Stewardship Well Done Journey*.

An Accountability Partner and Guide

We at FMF Financial Services share your worldview. As part of the Free Methodist Church, we're here to help you attain holistic stewardship of your life. We can help you sort through your priorities and establish a plan that sets you on a course to seeing them fulfilled. We share your commitment to Christ and can help you use the resources entrusted to your care to fulfill your God-given purpose. We hope you will join us on the *Stewardship Well Done Journey*.

Let's begin the conversation. Call 800.325.8975 or email us at info@fmfoundation.org or use the QR code below to visit us on the internet. We're ready to help you take action in the direction of what you value most.



Listen in with FMF for a conversation about *Priorities Well Done*. Scan the QR Code to watch.

