



CONNECT GROUPS:

Money, Power, and Sex Part 1:

1 John 2:15-17

Do not love the world or the things that are in the world ... the lust of the FLESH (sex) and the lust of the EYES (money) and the pride of life (power) ... are of the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but he who does the WILL of God abides FOREVER.

Connect group:

- Choose ONE NIGHT a week to hold your connect group.
- Ask each member of your connect group to bring their Bible.
- If you want, you can also take communion together.

WELCOME

Ice breaker:

Choose one of the following topics and talk about it:

- a) Think of a time when you had to look after someone else's house, car, or pet while they were on holiday. Did you handle it differently (more carefully or responsibly) than you would have handled your own things?
- b) If you were to receive a large sum of money today to manage on behalf of an anonymous donor who wants to improve the world, what is the first thing you would do with it?

Prayer: Open with prayer.

WORD

Read:

Our Core Text for Today:

Gen 1:1

In the beginning, God CREATED the heavens and the earth.

Gen 2:5

...
there (were) ... no shrubs in the field ... and no plants of the field ... for the Lord God had not yet caused it to rain on the earth ... (for) there was NO man (manager) to CULTIVATE the GROUND.

Gen 1:26,28

Let Us make man in Our IMAGE ... and let them RULE ... And God BLESSED them, and God said to them: Be fruitful and multiply ...

Gen 2:15

Then the Lord God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to (1) CULTIVATE and (2) GUARD it.

Talk in your Connect Group about the following:

We often live with a fundamental misconception: We believe in the LIE of ownership over the TRUTH of stewardship. When we think we are the owners of our money, assets, and time, we easily become ensnared by the lust of the eyes (money) and the pride of life (power). We begin to love the world. But 1 John reminds us that these things are temporary and passing.

The question we must ask ourselves is: To whom does my money truly belong?

Genesis 1 gives us the answer: "In the beginning, God created." Because He is the Creator, He is the absolute Owner of everything. God created mankind not as owners, but as managers (stewards). In Genesis 2, we see that God withheld the earth until there was a "manager" to cultivate the land.

God's mandate to us as managers consists of two actions:

- Cultivate (*Avad*): The active maintenance and development of assets. This means leaving a resource better than you found it. We must not be passive regarding what God gives us.
- Guard (*Shamar*): The protection and safeguarding of resources against loss, waste, or mismanagement.

In summary:

The World's Way (Ownership)

Focus: It is mine, and I have a right to it.

Motive: Lust of the eyes and power.

Action: Use and consume for myself.

Result: The world and its things pass away.

God's Way (Stewardship)

Focus: It is God's; I am merely the manager.

Motive: To do the WILL of God.

Action: Cultivate (Avad) and Guard (Shamar).

Result: He who does God's will remains FOREVER.

Reread today's texts and talk about them:

- a) How does your perspective on your daily work, your income, and your expenses change when you begin to view yourself as a manager (steward) of God's assets, rather than the owner?
- b) Practically speaking, what is one way you can better "cultivate" (develop) and "guard" (protect against waste) your finances or gifts during this season?

WORSHIP

Make time to worship God today. Use the playlist on our Word and Life website under Connect Groups. Or bring your own worship songs.

WORKS**Now enjoy Communion together as a Connect Group:****Love for God, Love for People**

Now, as a Connection Group, spend just 5 minutes in silence, and each member should answer the questions below individually. Create a peaceful atmosphere and allow the Lord to speak to each one individually.

- Ask the Lord to forgive you for the times you believed that everything belonged to you.
- Ask the Lord to open your eyes to the things in your life that you currently need to "Avad" (develop) and "Shamar" (guard). What has He placed in your hands that you need to manage better for the sake of His kingdom?

LOVE GOD & LOVE PEOPLE