

# Leverage: A Life Without Regret Series Discussion Guides

## January 2024

### Week 1 - Leverage | A Life Without Regret



LEVERAGE  
LIFE WITHOUT REGRET

#### Teaching Text

##### Hebrews 12:16-17

*See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done.*

#### Sermon Recap

This Sunday, Pastor Jon kicked off our January sermon series, Leverage, which is centered on the idea of living a life free of regret and fully leveraged for the Kingdom of God. Regret can be defined as a feeling of sorrow, disappointment, distress, or remorse about something the one wishes could be different. We can experience foundational regrets from our young adulthood around choices we made or did not make, moral regrets around violating our own consciousness, boldness regrets about not taking certain risks, and relational regrets when distance develops between ourselves and others. Regret is a distinctly human feeling, and Pastor

Jon laid out how regret happens, the real life consequences that cause regret, how we can avoid regret, and how regret can be redeemed as we move into 2024.

In the story of Jacob and Esau in Genesis, we see choices that end up causing regret to play out in Esau's life when he trades his birthright for a meal, and eventually loses his father's blessing to his brother Jacob. Esau has no sense of responsibility before God and has placed his physical needs at the center of his life, which lead him to trade away the eternal inheritance promised to his forefathers for temporary gratification. He was satisfied for a moment, but lost out on the destiny that was available to him. Similarly, the secular culture of our world is constantly trying to lure us away from living for our spiritual inheritance in Christ and towards lives built around our own desires, but we can learn to avoid regret by reversing Esau's choices. We must pursue God and His Kingdom with our whole hearts and reorient our lives daily so that He remains at the center. This means carrying an eternal vision for our lives and choices instead of a temporary one. Additionally, the book of Hebrews reminds us that we are not meant to do these things alone, but pursue them in community so that we have both accountability and encouragement.

Finally, Pastor Jon explained that regret that we may already be facing can still be redeemed. Esau experienced deep regret at the loss of his birthright and his father's blessing, but he did not express true repentance before God, and suffered the permanent consequences of a short sighted decision. However, when regret gives way to repentance, because of the merciful and powerful blood of Jesus, we can be restored to the Father. Jesus offers us the chance to not only live again through Him, but live a life free of regret that is poured out for His Kingdom.

## Week 2 - Leverage | Gifts



### Teaching Text

#### 1 Peter 4:7-11

*The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

### Sermon Recap

This Sunday, Pastor Suzy Silk continued our January teaching series, Leverage, with a teaching on leveraging our spiritual gifts for the Kingdom of God. We are each given one life, but often don't know how to live in ways that are honoring to God. We might end up wasting, or wrongly using our lives, but as followers of Jesus, we can actually live a life fully pleasing to the Lord. Spiritual gifts are sovereignly given spiritual abilities meant to serve the Christian community.

Spiritual gifts are for everyone who professes faith in Christ, are all equal in God's eyes, are often energizing to operate in, and are empowered by the Holy Spirit. We are meant to both eagerly

desire the gifts, and learn to excel in the ones we have received. Additionally, not having a specific gifting does not excuse us from obediently moving in things like mercy, generosity, or evangelism. These gifts are given to us, but they are not for us, but for the Body of Christ to glorify Him and advance His Kingdom. Jesus is the head of the Body, which is meant to work together to accomplish His desires and purposes here on earth.

Pastor Suzy warned us against wasting our spiritual gifts through ignorance, disobedience, or not walking in the Spirit. The enemy does not want the Body to function properly, and often sows the lies that we have nothing to contribute or it will not be worth it to serve in our giftings. The Lord has entrusted us with His gifts, and calls us to not be fearful or forgetful, but faithful stewards. We must also be weary not to use our gifts for selfish gain or ambition. Operating in spiritual gifts without the fruit of the Holy Spirit will end up drawing us into sin and leaving us hollow. Investing in our gifts means we are using our gifts to glorify God and build up the Body by walking in the ways of the Spirit, but Pastor Suzy encouraged us to go a step further. As Paul explained in 1 Corinthians, we are able to live and serve in a more excellent way – the way of love. When we are driven by the two-fold love for Christ and love for His Body, we can leverage our gifts to amplify the glorification of God.

Spiritual gifts will no longer be needed in eternity and will fade away. However, the Word tells us that faith, hope, and love will remain, and what is done in love on this side of Heaven will not perish. It is only by moving and serving in love that we can fully leverage our gifts for the Kingdom of God.

Below is the comprehensive list of Spiritual Gifts mentioned in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 4, and 1 Peter 4, along with additional reading references. To learn more about your Spiritual Gifts, we recommend taking our Gifts Course.

- **Administration:** *One who organizes towards God's mission (Acts 27:11, Revelations 18:17, 1 Corinthians 12:28, Titus 1:4-5)*
- **Apostleship:** *One who is sent to advance the gospel and Kingdom (Ephesians 4:7-12, 1 Corinthians 9:1, 12:28, Acts 1:21-22)*
- **Discernment:** *One who can distinguish the ministry of the Holy Spirit from false spirits/lies (1 Corinthians 12:10, Hebrews 5:14, Acts 5:3-6, 16:16-18, 1 John 4:1)*
- **Evangelism:** *One who shares the gospel and draws seekers in (Acts 21:8, 2 Timothy 4:5, Ephesians 4:11, Acts 8:5-12, 26-40, 21:8, Matthew 28:18-20)*
- **Exhortation:** *One who champions spiritual progress (Titus 1:9, Titus 2:11-15, 2 Timothy 4:2, Romans 12:8, Acts 11:23-24; 14:21-22; 15:32)*
- **Faith:** *A supernatural ability to trust God or inspire trust in God (Acts 3:1-10, Matthew 17:20, 21:21, 1 Corinthians 13:3, 1 Corinthians 12:9, Hebrews 11:1-40)*
- **Giving:** *One who keeps the church resourced for mission (Romans 12:8, 13, 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 9:6-15, Acts 4:32-37, Galatians 4:15, Philippians 4:10-18)*

- **Healing:** One who demonstrates God's powerful hand through healing (1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; James 5:13-16)
- **Interpretation:** One who can understand another or heavenly language in order to share God's message (1 Corinthians 12:10, 14:5-28)
- **Knowledge:** One who provides spiritual insight (1 Corinthians 1:4-7, 18-31, 12:8, Romans 15:14, 2 Corinthians 2:14)
- **Leadership:** One who provides direction & focus on the mission (Romans 12:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, 1 Timothy 3:4-5, 12, 5:17)
- **Mercy:** One who keeps us centered on God's love (Matthew 5:7, 18:33, Ephesians 2:4-6, Romans 12:8, 15, Luke 10:30-37, James 3:17, Jude 22-23)
- **Miracles:** One who demonstrates God's powerful hand through various kinds of miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28-29; Acts 1:8, 4:29-31, 9:35, 42; Galatians 3:5)
- **Prophecy:** One who can discern and declare the will of God (Romans 12:6, 1 Corinthians 12:10, 14:1-5, 22-33, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Peter 4:10-11, 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21)
- **Serving:** One who meets practical needs, keeps ministry moving (Romans 12:7, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 28, 16:15-16, Acts 6:1-7, 20:35, 2 Timothy 4:11, Revelations 2:19)
- **Shepherding:** One who nurtures and protects the flock (1 Timothy 3:1-17, Titus 1:6-9, Ephesians 4:11, Jeremiah 3:15, Acts 20:28, John 10:11-18)
- **Teaching:** One who keeps us learning and growing (James 3:1, Romans 12:7, Ephesians 4:11, 1 Corinthians 12:28, 1 Timothy 3:15)
- **Tongues:** A supernatural ability to communicate in another or heavenly language (1 Corinthians 12 & 14; Acts 2:4, 19:6)
- **Wisdom:** One who champions holy living (1 Corinthians 1:17-31, 2:1-16, 12:8, Psalm 111:10, Colossians 1:9-10, 2:1-3, James 3:13-18)

## Week 3 - Leverage | Time



### Teaching Text

#### ***Ephesians 5:15-17***

*Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.*

### Sermon Recap

This Sunday, Pastor Jon Tyson continued our January sermon series, Leverage, with a teaching on how we can leverage our time for the glory of God. While the modern world is riddled with deceptive mindsets and mechanisms created to steal and waste our time, God calls us to be conscious stewards of our time, and aim to live in our current seasons with the knowledge and hope of our future in eternity with Him.

God is the Author and Creator of time, and exists beyond the realms of chronological time as we understand it. As creations intentionally made in His image, eternity is set into our hearts, providing us with a purpose that should drive our lives on Earth. Using the Biblical framework found in Ephesians 5, Pastor Jon encouraged us to sit with God and undergo His "time

perspective therapy" to heal and reorient our ideas of time. Time is the most important commodity in our lives, and by moving from carelessness to carefulness we can honor God with the time He has given us on Earth. Treating our time foolishly can look like wasting it through exchanging worship of God for unsatisfying idols, hoarding possessions that will not last, and building our lives on weak foundations. However, pursuing a wise perspective ensures that we devote our lives to what truly matters rather than things that ultimately pull us away from God. When we live in light of the future, we can shift from squandering to leveraging our time to fulfill the purposes God has given each of us. Jesus is the prime example of living from the 'future self.' The majority of His days were lived in faithful obscurity, but the few years of public His ministry found in the Gospels reveal to us how to live in obedience to God in the present, and how powerfully God can move in the smallest amounts of time. Jesus was perfectly secure in the Father's love and purposes for His life, allowing Him to be interruptible, free of obligation, and truly relationally oriented. In following Jesus' example of time consciousness, we too can be intentional with the quality of each moment in time with God (kairos), rather than prioritizing chronological time (chronos) for productivity's sake.

Today, God is calling us to put our worldly perspectives of time to death, and reorient the way we spend each day, operating from a future-facing mindset instead of time poverty. God doesn't want us to live in shame or guilt from how we have spent our time in the past, but offers us a life spent abiding in His presence and taking up our cross daily for His glory. Time spent with and for the Lord allows us to live hopefully for the future, rejecting the anxiety that our culture tries to place on us. God has the power to redeem our time and ignite our lives with purpose. When we leverage our time for Him, we can be comforted by the truth that it cannot be wasted, and God will provide us with everything we need to accomplish the purposes He has called us to.

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Connect**

1. What are you looking forward to in Community Group this season?

### **Character**

Ask someone to read Ephesians 5:15-17 aloud. Then, ask the following questions:

1. What words, images, or phrases stood out to you?

2. What truth(s) are revealed about the Lord and His priorities for us in the passage?

### **Consider**

1. As we learn to leverage our time, Pastor Jon encouraged us to consider our individual season, God's Kingdom season, and the cultural season of our world. What are some of God's sovereign limitations and opportunities in your individual season?

2. Jesus was perfectly secure in the Father's love and purposes for His life, allowing Him to be interruptible, free of obligation, and truly relationally oriented. What encourages you or challenges you about how Jesus, God made flesh, spent His time on earth? What aspect of how He leveraged His time would you like to grow in this year?

3. Our orientation to time has radical implications on our lives, and God calls us to live with eternity in mind. Do you tend to live from your past decisions and traumas, or from the future you have been promised in Jesus?

### **Cover**

Pray together for this upcoming season of Community Group by asking God what He wants to do in and through your time together. Pray for God to give you grace to leverage your time individually and collectively for Him and His Kingdom.





## Teaching Text

### Psalm 86:11-13

*Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever. For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths, from the realm of the dead.*

## Sermon Recap

This Sunday, Pastor Jon Tyson continued our Leverage series with a teaching on leveraging our love and the importance of an “undivided heart” from Psalm 86. When we seek behavioral modification instead of true heart change, it is like stapling healthy apples to a struggling tree. Our temporary solutions and quick fixes will end up rotting because they are disconnected from a true source of life. Our world is obsessed with the visible fruit of productivity, however, without a secure identity we end up making fragile, cosmetic changes that only last as long as our will power. As followers of Christ, our identity is sealed in Him and His love for us. This truth should enable us to live freely and wholeheartedly for him, but division can still make its way into our hearts.

Our hearts can be divided through idols. Jesus tells us in Matthew that we cannot serve two masters, and idols are anything that rival God for our devotion. Other loves do not deliver what they promise, and we must rightly order our loves to experience all God has to offer. Wounds can also divide our hearts. In this world, we experience emotional, identity, physical, dignity, relational, soul, and heart woundings, but God actually desires to heal all of these areas and

promises He can. Finally, our own evil desires and selfish ambition can keep us divided from God. We can never live from the whole of our hearts without knowing God, so we must make the choice to surrender our autonomy and embrace the assurance of what Jesus has done for us.

There will always be a temptation to withhold part of our heart from God, but we were created to remain in His love. In His mercy, God desires to unite our hearts towards Him. When we humble ourselves to learn how to fear His name and rely on His faithfulness, God promises to change our hearts to bear enduring fruit connected to Christ.

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Connect**

1. Share a memory of a time you felt loved by a friend or family member.

### **Character**

Ask someone to read Psalm 86:11-13 aloud. Then, ask the following questions:

1. What words, images, or phrases stood out to you?
2. What challenges you in David's cry to God to unite his heart?

### **Consider**

1. Have you ever tried "quick fixes" in the past that only yielded temporary change? How did those end up breaking down?
2. What do you find divides your heart most often or most severely?
3. What most compels and shocks you about God's love for you?

### **Cover**

Think about the two brothers from the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal which brother you are most like: the one who is running away from his father, or the one who is trying to work for his father's love. Then, make space to sit and receive the love of the Father. Consider breaking into pairs and practicing listening prayer for one another.

## **Week 5 - Leverage | Money**



## Teaching Text

### 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty

*will supply what you need. The goal is equality, as it is written: “The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little.”*

## **Sermon Recap**

This Sunday, Pastor Jon Tyson closed out our Leverage series with a teaching on leveraging our money for the Kingdom and how we should have a vision for giving, referencing 2 Corinthians 8:1-15 as an example case study on generosity in the New Testament.

In this passage, Paul urges the Corinthians to finish the work they had previously started on an offering for the suffering saints in Jerusalem. The Macedonians heard about their need, and despite their historical poverty, displayed generosity because they wanted to be a part of what God was doing. Ultimately, Paul points to the generosity of the people with limited resources to try to inspire those who have greater resources to be more like Jesus.

Developing a vision and theology of giving is essential to our spiritual maturity and discipleship. We need a Godward view of giving, remembering that all we have has been given to us by God and is His to do with as He pleases. This is all in pursuit of becoming more like Jesus, who demonstrated radical generosity toward us on the cross. Throughout church history, God has leveraged Gospel patrons for the advancement of the Kingdom, from the women referenced in Luke who funded Jesus’s ministry, to our calling to be Gospel patrons in New York City today. God loves a cheerful giver and is looking for our giving to be sacrificial, not circumstantial, spurred by the joy in our hearts. We don’t have to give, but rather, we *get* to give to be part of what God is doing.

Jesus often taught about the dangers of a love of money. Especially in an environment like New York, we need to be careful not to let mammon creep into our hearts and dictate our visions for our lives, and instead we must prioritize having a true Kingdom vision. Giving is an act of spiritual warfare; perpetual generosity is the perpetual de-deification of money. God is calling us to a few active steps: to start giving, to be strategic and thoughtful in how we give, to embrace giving in secret, and to cultivate an instinct of generosity that allows for spontaneous giving. Our hope is that we can continue to become a more generous church that leverages what we have for the Kingdom of God.

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Connect**

1. What is your favorite treat in New York and why?

### **Character**

Ask someone to read 2 Corinthians 8:1-15 aloud. Then, ask the following questions:

1. What words, images, or phrases stood out to you?
2. What does this passage reveal about generosity and how God Himself is generous?

### **Consider**

1. Have you ever been the recipient of someone else giving beyond their ability?
2. How does it make you feel to imagine what "giving beyond your ability" could look like in your life? Is it exciting, freeing, hard to imagine, or even scary?
3. Pastor Jon said, "If you have a 'vision board' for 2024, do you also have a 'giving board'? As we consider the year ahead, how can you plan to incorporate the Lord's call to give generously into your year?"
4. Gospel patrons are people who see a need and leverage their resources to meet that need. Have you witnessed a Gospel patron before? What steps could you begin to take toward stepping into the role of a Gospel patron yourself?

### **Cover**

Pray together over the idea of radical generosity. Ask God how you can best steward your money to bring His kingdom the most glory. We know that all giving is based on grace, so pray for God to help you give from a place of cheerful generosity, not from guilt. Ask God to start a movement of Gospel patrons within our church and that this desire would begin to grow within your own heart first.