



Scripture calls us to reimagine a world where our social and economic systems are not built to disparage or impoverish, but instead to provide for and benefit all. This week we revisit the story of the widow's mite, a scripture that begs for reimagination and reinterpretation from the harmful ways it has been used. Instead of commending the widow's giving practices, perhaps Jesus is condemning the economic system that created her poverty. The Jewish practice of the Jubilee year invites us to imagine leaving the edge of the harvest for the poor and immigrant to reap; in the fiftieth year, the harvest is shared and disparities are rebalanced. In light of these stories in scripture, we are called to reimagine our own money stories.

Questions for Reflection:

- What is the money story of this scripture? What are the money stories of the characters in the text?
- What does this text teach us about God's money story?
- Reread Mark 12:38-40. How do these verses provide the context for Jesus' response to the widow's offering in verses 41-44? If the widow's mite is a familiar story for you, how does reading verses 38-40 help you reimagine the impact and tone of Jesus' words?
- Use your imagination to rewrite this story so that it paints an image of the kingdom of God for everyone. Now insert yourself as a character in your reimagined story. What part do you play in this kingdom vision?
- Consider the directives in Leviticus 19:9-10. How could you leave the edge of your own harvest and resources to share with the poor and the immigrant?

Adapted from SANCTIFIED ART OUR MONEY STORY

Spiritual Practice: Stewardship – Watch the *Spiritual Practices 101* video [here!](#)

Often when we hear the word stewardship, our first thoughts turn to money. Even misunderstanding that stewardship is about God and/or the church just wanting our money. The story of Joseph in Genesis is one example showing us that God is really wanting something much more valuable than money. God wants us to give our lives to the work of God's kingdom. A steward is someone who manages another's property or financial affairs. Stewardship begins with recognizing that everything we have really belongs to God and that we are simply the stewards of God's gifts and opportunities. Stewardship is caring for, using and sharing the gifts God has given us. Adele Calhoun describes spiritual practice of stewardship as "the voluntary and generous offering of God's gifts of our resources, time, talents and treasure for the benefit and love of God and others." The key to the spiritual practice of stewardship is offering our lives to God with joy so that we can mature and be transformed over time. God calls us all of us to be stewards and invites each of us to practice stewardship in order to reach the world with God's loving care. God has given each of us gifts and abilities and wants all of us to use them to serve God by building and taking care of God's world.

The Spiritual Practice of stewardship includes:

- Adopting an intentionally generous lifestyle flowing from love of God and others
- Being liberated from greed, self-centeredness, money, etc so that the generous spirit of Jesus grows in you
- Living in a way that exemplifies that your life, your time, your money, your home, your family are not your own
- Living as a steward in all areas of your life; stewardship of your character, the environment, etc
- Thoughtfully investing resources and spiritual gifts to benefit the body of Christ
- Generously sharing the resources God has given you: physical, mental, natural, economic, and spiritual
- Becoming more aware of the ways we may act selfishly and portray a lack of love for others
- Modeling God's goodness and generosity
- Making offerings that go beyond the tithe
- Embracing generous hospitality toward those in need
- Cultivating generosity by being generous with your time, money, praise/encouragement, belongings and knowledge - <https://www.umc.org/en/content/cultivating-generosity>
- Investing in the kingdom of God, building up treasures in heaven
- Loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and loving your neighbor as yourself
- Experiencing a life in Christ that makes us generous in every way with our kindness, compassion and love made evident in the ways we use our time, resources and money. Adapted from *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun