



Men's Golf Fellowship

Speaker Discussion Questions

Steve Robinson

Leader's Guide

Spiritual Topics: Growth, Religious Performance, Stewardship and Generosity

About the Talk

Steve Robinson's life was filled with what he called "milestone moments" that helped shape him both personally and spiritually. Some of these changed and challenged his perspective on such things as money, spiritual growth, the Church community and even how he approached his relationship with God. Let's explore these and other subjects together as a group.

Discussion Questions

- Steve told of a "milestone moment" when he got involved in a church for the first time and he began to really grow as a Christian. What role does Church community fill in your life? Is attending Church simply another checkbox to mark off in your weekly schedule, or is it more than that? Should it be more? In what way(s) do you think Church should challenge you to grow in your faith? (*Leader note: being part of a Church community challenges us in various ways such as dealing with people who are unlike you, forgiving people, caring for people, supporting one another physically/emotionally, allowing others to speak into your life, correct you, admonish you, etc.*) **Related Scripture: Ephesians 4:15-16 – Growing in Community**

- *Where we're going: The Church's role in spiritual growth.* God has designed the Christian to grow within the community of the Church. This concept should begin to unearth the importance of Church community in a believer's life.
- *Going Deeper:* Steve shared a story about four Blue Angel planes crashing several years ago. When asked why all four planes crashed, they responded that the only pilot that was navigating was the lead pilot and that the other three pilots were just flying off the flight leader's wing.

This is an apt metaphor of how we should be following God. What principles do you see in how the Blue Angels are trained to fly that are transferable to the Christian walk? (i.e. following Christ no matter where He leads, trusting where He leads, not relying on your own understanding and keeping your eyes on Christ, etc.)

- Steve discussed the time when he went on a corporate retreat and developed the Chick-Fil-A corporate purpose: *To glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us and to have a positive influence on all who come in contact with Chick-fil-A.* What if you began to live out that corporate purpose in your personal life? How would it change your life if in every decision you considered how: 1) it could glorify God; 2) you could be a positive influence and 3) you could practice great stewardship? What if you began to consider how you could glorify God with your spare time, with your finances and with the talents that you have? Think of one way that you could be a positive influence with the people in your life like your wife, your children/grandchildren, your friends and even the people who work at your club? Please share that with the group. What if every financial decision was made with the overriding consideration of being a good steward? As a group begin to share a few ways of being a better steward with the things you have. **Scripture Reference: 1 Corinthians 10:31**

- *Where we're going: Living the Christian life.* What we want to begin to accomplish is to get men thinking about Christianity in concrete terms and not just theoretically. The Christian life has day-to-day implications that we want to encourage men to consider.
- *Going Deeper:* Read Psalm 24:1-2. The idea of stewardship is a basic principle in Scripture. In JRR Tolkien's book *The Return of the King* he tried to make this more understandable through a character named Denethor who was the steward of the Kingdom of Gondor. He was not the true king, but one who sat on the throne until the rightful king came back. He had control over all the resources, but was supposed to make all the decisions with his stewardship role in mind. In reality, that is what scripture teaches us with regard to all that we have. What reaction do you have to that? Do you believe that you worked hard for what you have and that it is yours to do with as you please as long as you're responsible? Tolkien goes on to write that the longer the true king took to return, the harder the steward-king's heart grew and the more the steward felt that everything was his. Is that how we sometimes feel?

- Steve shared another milestone moment in his life with regard to money. He was asked by his pastor to chair a building project for his church. He had already put in his pledge, but felt that God wanted him to increase the amount of his pledge. By his own admission, he said that he held onto his money “tightly”, but that God used this experience to “loosen his grip” on money. What are some ways that blessings can flow as a result of our loosening our grip on money? *(Leader note: read Malachi 3:8-10, which uses the language of “robbing God” when you are not being generous with your resources. Ask the men how they react to that.)*
 - *Where we’re going: **Generosity.*** An evidence of true Christian faith is generosity. We begin to be more like Christ when we are free of the inordinate influence of money. This concept is designed to begin to help men recognize how they view money.
 - *Going Deeper:* Read Matthew 6:19-21 & 24. Another benefit of giving is freedom. It’s a matter of basic physics. The greater the mass, the greater the hold that mass exerts. The more things we own, the greater the gravitational hold that mass exerts and the more grip it has on us, setting us in orbit around them. Finally, like a black hole, they suck us in. Generous giving begins to change all of that. It breaks us out of orbit around our possessions. We escape their gravity, entering a new orbit around our treasures in heaven. Discuss this principle with the group. How many truly believe this? How many truly want this freedom? Has anyone experienced this freedom as Steve Robinson did? What “milestone moments” have people in the group had regarding financial generosity and/or loosening their grip on money?
- Steve shared how growing up in a Christian home taught him to be a moral person and that his relationship with God was based on being a good person (what he termed “performance-based” religion). He confessed that as a result, he always felt a sense of guilt towards God. What do you think of that? Is that your experience? What, if anything, is wrong with this type of thinking? *(Leader note: you may have to explain that this is not the faith of the Bible. That all of our good works do not earn us anything from God. Refer to the related scripture below.)* Let’s explore some ways in which some people try to perform (i.e. earn our righteousness before God). *(Leader note: the point here is to try to identify some ways in which we try to earn our salvation. These can be such things as giving offerings at church, being a moral person, not drinking, being a faithful husband, not cursing, or serving on committees at church. These are not bad in and of*

themselves, but they don't contribute to earning favor with God.) **Related Scripture: Ephesians 2:8-9 – Salvation as a Gift**

- *Where we're going: **Understanding Grace***. Scripture tells us that there is no amount of good works or "clean living" that is perfect enough for God. In all of our activities, even good ones, there is often a selfish or secondary motivation. The only work that God accepts is the completed and perfect work of His Son, Jesus Christ.
- *Going Deeper:* Read Luke 18:9-14. This parable gets at the crux of a performance-based life. Read the parable aloud and ask the group to notice the contrast in how these two men approached God. The Pharisee stood to be seen, the tax collector stood humbly at a distance. The Pharisee assumed his position was above others, the tax collector could not even look up. The Pharisee bragged about his good performance, the tax collector beat his breast in repentance. The Pharisee assumed that through his good works he was pleasing God, the tax collector assumed he was a sinner in need of God's mercy.

Closing Prayer

Lord, help me to understand that as I approach a relationship with you, I bring nothing, I earn nothing, I am helpless and I need you to forgive me and wash my sins away. Help me to understand that I simply need to cling to the gracious and merciful cross of Christ. Amen. (Prayer based on the hymn *Rock of Ages* by Augustus Toplady)