

STEWARDSHIP

WEEK 4

TAKING CARE
OF WHAT
YOU HAVE

BECAUSE IT
ALL BELONGS
TO GOD



GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-7

MEMORY VERSE | Luke 16:10a

Thomas and his friend, Daniel, hopped off the bus on the corner as usual. Daniel lived just a few buildings down, but Thomas had five blocks to get home, and he was already tired and thirsty. He eyed the large bottle of water Daniel had just pulled out of his backpack.

“Hey man, could I have a drink?” he asked.

“You can have the whole thing,” Daniel told him, and handed over the bottle.

“Aren’t you thirsty?” Thomas wondered.

Daniel shrugged. “I’ll be home soon enough.”

“Thanks!” Thomas exclaimed. He quickly chugged down half the bottle, grateful. “You didn’t have to give me the whole thing.”

Daniel just grinned. “I wanted to,” he said.

It made Thomas think of his great-grandmother—and what she always said. He could see her bright, dark eyes and hear her voice in his head as she recited her favorite verse: “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give. You shouldn’t give if you don’t want to. You shouldn’t give because you are forced to. God loves a cheerful giver.”

Daniel’s voice cut into Thomas’ thoughts. “Hey, you coming or what?”

As the two boys started down the street, Thomas' phone buzzed. He pulled it out to check his new message, but the cracked screen went blank. "Not again," he groaned.

"You really need a better phone," Daniel said, holding up his own brand-new model.

Thomas sighed and shook his phone until the message reappeared. "Mom can't get me a phone this month 'cause our rent just went up," he noted. "But I'm gonna buy one myself. Mr. Salazar's paying me for trimming all the bushes and pulling weeds and stuff around the building."

"Your landlord?" Daniel asked.

"Yeah, I've been working on it all week," Thomas said. "Every afternoon."

When Thomas finally made it home, he spotted his older sister Camila's car parked outside the building. Just then Camila emerged from the entrance door, lugging Sofia, Thomas' 18-month-old niece, on her hip.

"To-mas!" Sofia giggled and toddled over to him, arms outstretched. Thomas scooped up his wriggling niece as Camila tossed the diaper bag in her beat-up Toyota.

"Mom says you cleaned up all the bushes and stuff out here," she said. "Looks great!"

Thomas surveyed the neat beds and trees around the building with pride. It did look pretty good. "It was a lot of work," he pointed out. "Just look!" He displayed the scratches on his arms.

"Well, you deserve a good paycheck, for sure!" Camila agreed.

Camila took Sofia and bundled her into the car seat. Sofia's curly head nearly reached over the top and her feet kicked the seat in front of her.

Thomas frowned. "Sofia's way too big for that seat, Cam."

Camila tried to clean a handful of Cheerios out of the seat, but they disappeared through the torn cover. "She can hold out a couple more months in this one. The toddler seats are so expensive we just can't do it right now."

“Oh.” Thomas sighed. There had to be a way to get Sofia a better seat. He waved goodbye to Camila and Sofia and headed for the door—just as Mr. Salazar rounded the corner of the building.

“Thomas!” he called, waving an envelope. He jogged over and handed it to Thomas. “Here. You did good.”

Thomas eagerly took the envelope and waited until Mr. Salazar had disappeared to check inside. There were five wrinkled twenty-dollar bills.

“One hundred dollars!” Thomas exclaimed. That meant a new phone for sure. Thomas bounded inside and up the flight of stairs to his apartment. He threw open the door.

“Mom!” he called.

**“One hundred dollars!”
Thomas exclaimed. That
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Thomas’ mother turned from the stove where she was cooking dinner. “Did Mr. Salazar find you?” she asked. “I’m so proud of you. All that work.”

She smiled, and for a moment, Thomas saw his great-grandmother in her face and heard her voice once again in his head.

“God loves a cheerful giver.”

Then Thomas pictured Sofia, bouncing around in her too-small car seat. He thought for a moment, then smiled back at his mother.

“Yeah. Mr. Salazar found me,” he said. Thomas pulled out his phone and did a quick online search.

“You gonna get your new phone now?” his mother asked.

Thomas shook his head and explained. “I saw Camila leaving. Sofia’s about to bust out of that car seat.”

As he spoke, Thomas found what he was looking for online: a brand-new car seat, perfect for an active toddler. He showed the picture to his mother and asked, “Can we order this for Sofia?”

Thomas’ mother took a quick look and shook her head. “I wish we could, Thomas, but rent is due tomorrow.”

Thomas took a deep breath and held out the twenty-dollar bills. “We can use this.”

“Oh, Thomas. Are you sure?” his mother asked.

“My phone still works okay,” Thomas pointed out. “And Sofia really needs a new seat.”

Thomas’ mother beamed. “I don’t know what to say, but . . . *thank you*. Camila will be so happy.”

Together, they studied the choices, and Thomas picked out a pink seat cover for his niece. Sure, he still wanted a new phone. But for now, he had a better use for the money.



Let's Talk!

Parents, share with your kids examples of how you use your money wisely for things like giving, saving and spending —or how you would like to use it more wisely.

Kids, think about the money you have, whether it’s an allowance, money for doing chores, birthday money, or even just spare change you’ve found. Now together, brainstorm ways you could wisely give, save, or spend that money. Choose at least one thing to do this week. Then together, ask God to help you make wise choices in how you use the money that He has given you.