

STEWARDSHIP

WEEK 5

TAKING CARE
OF WHAT
YOU HAVE

BECAUSE IT
ALL BELONGS
TO GOD



TREASURES IN HEAVEN

MATTHEW 6:19-24

MEMORY VERSE | Luke 16:10a

Jordan sighed as she pulled into an employee parking spot at Potter's Pizza Palace. Her tiny car with peeling paint and missing hubcaps looked especially ratty next to Mr. Potter's brand-new red sports car.

"Next year, that'll be me!" she promised herself.

Jordan had been saving every penny she could spare to buy a new car. It was tough fitting in extra shifts at the Pizza Palace between her college classes, but she was determined.

"It'll be so amazing," she murmured, "flying down the road with the top down and the wind in my face."

Inside the kitchen, Jordan grabbed an apron. Mr. Potter called her over to where he was manning the brick oven, a hairnet over his wild, gray mane.

"Ray's out sick with the flu," he told her. "Can you fill in the next two evenings?"

"Sure thing, Mr. Potter!" she exclaimed.

"You sure it won't cut into your studies?" he worried. "Don't want you missing class, young lady."

Jordan was studying to be a nutritionist. "Someone's gotta be here to make you kale and flax seed pizza," she joked.

Mr. Potter pretended to gag. "You bring a single sprig of kale around this place, and you're fired!" he snapped, but there was a twinkle in his eye.

The next day after her chemistry class, Jordan took a few minutes to check her savings account online. Despite all her hard work, the total still seemed to grow so slowly.

"I gotta work even more hours," she muttered, "or I'm gonna be driving a beater car forever."

Her thoughts were interrupted by Professor Watkins, who was approaching her seat. "Jordan?"

Jordan quickly shut her laptop and jumped up. "I was just leaving."

Professor Watkins smiled, "Actually, I was noticing your jersey."

Jordan glanced down at her red and gold soccer jersey. "Oh. Thanks . . ."

"Do you play soccer?" her professor asked.

"I used to," Jordan told her.

"I'm coaching a team of fourth grade girls, and we could really use an assistant," her professor explained. "Would you be interested?"

Jordan had loved playing soccer, and she really missed it. "Wow!" she exclaimed. "That would be cool."

"We practice Tuesday and Thursday evenings with games on Saturdays."

"Oh." There was no way Jordan wanted to give up the money she could be earning at work those times. "Sorry," she said. "I've got work."

Jordan scooped up her books and headed off across campus. As she approached her next class, her phone rang. Jordan checked her caller ID and answered.

"Hey, Mom."

"Hi, sweetie, how are you?" her mother chirped.

Jordan checked the time on her screen. "Fine. Busy. Almost to class."

"I'll make it quick," her mother promised. "You know I volunteer at that women's shelter? Well, the food is kind of terrible, and I was thinking, since you're studying nutrition . . . would you be willing to create a new menu for the shelter? Meals that are nutritious and taste really good, but aren't too expensive."

Jordan beamed. It sounded like a great challenge.

"That would be fun!" she began. Then she considered just how much time it would take and quickly backtracked. "But, um, I'm really busy with class. And work. I can't."

"Oh." Jordan's mother sounded disappointed. "I see."

Jordan took a deep breath. She'd have time for other things after she finished saving up for her brand-new shiny car.

As she drove to work that evening for her extra shift, her phone rang once again.

This time it is was Jordan's younger sister, Libby, who had been having a difficult time adjusting to high school.

"Lib," Jordan asked. "What's up?"

"Hey, your fall break is the same time as mine, right?" Libby said, her voice strained. "I really need a break. Like a real break. Can you take me camping in the mountains?"

Jordan's family had gone camping every fall when the girls were younger. She loved the crisp evenings around the campfire, talking late into the night. But she couldn't imagine taking that time off work right now.

"I gotta work, Libby," she pointed out.

"It's only for a couple days," Libby begged.

Jordan sighed. "Sorry. Just got to the Pizza Palace." Jordan ended the call and drove around to park. But as she pulled in beside Mr. Potter's car, her eyes widened.

***"I've enjoyed this car,"
Mr. Potter admitted, "but it's
hardly treasure in heaven."***

The passenger side of the red sports car was bashed in, and the front fender had been torn off.

Jordan hurried inside to find Mr. Potter sliding an extra-large bacon-and-mushroom pizza out of the brick oven.

"Mr. Potter!" she exclaimed. "Are you okay?"

Her boss nodded. "Thank the Lord, yes. Happened while I was pulling out in the theatre parking lot. I'm fine."

"But your beautiful car!" Jordan said. "You can get it fixed, right?"

Mr. Potter slid the pizza onto a tray and smiled ruefully. "Ah, there's the rub. The other driver didn't have insurance. So I'd have to pay quite a lot. I think it's time for me to let the convertible go and get something more sensible." He smiled at Jordan. "Like your little car."

Jordan gapes. "But that's not fair! Aren't you angry?"

"I've enjoyed this car," Mr. Potter admitted, "but it's hardly treasure in heaven."

"Treasure in heaven?" Jordan wondered.

"One of my favorite verses," Mr. Potter explained. "Goes something like this: 'Don't gather . . . riches on earth. Moths and rats can destroy them. Thieves can break in and steal them. Instead, gather . . . riches in heaven. . . . Your heart will be where your riches are.'"

"That's in the Bible?" Jordan asked.

"Sure is," Mr. Potter said. "Just means that when you focus on possessions, well, they can get beat up. Makes more sense to spend your time on what really matters."

Jordan thought for a moment. "Like . . . people instead of stuff?" she mused.

"That's the ticket," Mr. Potter agreed. "Speaking of which, we've got a family waiting on this."

Mr. Potter handed Jordan the pizza. She grabbed the tray and started to head for the dining room. Then she stopped. "Would it be okay if I stop taking all those extra shifts?" she asked.

Mr. Potter nodded. "As long as I know ahead of time."

"Thanks," Jordan said.

"Any particular reason?"

Jordan smiled. "Just some things I want to do. Starting with a camping trip next weekend."

Mr. Potter smiled and Jordan felt a weight lift from her chest. It would be fun to get a new car some day. But right now she had more important things to do with her time and money.



Let's
Talk!

If someone followed you around for a few days, they would start to see patterns—things about the way you use your time, stuff, and money that show what really matters to you.

Maybe you love to get a good night's sleep. Or you always make sure you've got time to play your favorite video game. What do you think your life shows about what matters to you? If you're not sure, ask your parent (or kid!). Now, what do you think matters most to God? Hint: *Jesus makes it super simple when He summarizes it like this: Love God, and love others.* Together, brainstorm ways that you could better use your time, stuff, and money to show love to God and to others. Then pick one specific thing to do this week. Together, ask God to continue to make you good stewards of all that He's given you.