PART SIX

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

I. GOD FREES, EMPOWERS, AND CHALLENGES US. God has given us all that we have (as well as all that we will have), including the freedom to decide (free will) how we will respond to this generosity. Will we operate from a theology of scarcity or abundance? Will we hoard or share? We will be burdened by these gifts or freed and empowered by them? Consider how you are responding to the following:

A. God Gives a New Covenant. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (John 3:16). Have you accepted God’s ultimate gift?

B. God Challenges. “But God said to him, ‘you fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’” (Luke 12:20). Have you responded to God’s challenge by helping feed and care for God’s people?

C. God Commissions. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit…” (Matthew 28:19). Have you personalized and responded to God’s call to action?

II. LIVING AS EASTER AND PENTECOST PEOPLE. Christian stewardship is a lifestyle, not a series of well-intentioned acts of generosity and kindness. Since non-Christians also act with generosity and kindness, what makes Christian stewardship different? As Christian stewards, we acknowledge God as creator, owner and perfect gift-giver; we gladly accept God’s gifts, especially the ultimate gift of eternal life through Jesus’ death and resurrection. Once accepted we use these gifts to care for each other and for God’s world.
Now what? **Demonstrate your stewardship by weaving together gifts of time, talent, treasure, body, mind, and spirit as you travel your lifelong stewardship journey.** When you do, your progress should be obvious and reflected in the way you live your life. Remember that your stewardship journey takes a lifetime to complete and is unique to you in many ways. Common to each journey, however, is that all of us will stumble and fall from time to time. When this happens, God will forgive us, pick us up, and give us needed support from family and other Christians. Your journey begins by recognizing and accepting God’s gifts and by striving to live your life as a person who truly believes in the life-saving Easter story and the purpose-filled Pentecost story. Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How did Jesus’ birth, life, death, and resurrection change our relationship to God?

2. Does Jesus’ death and resurrection change Old Testament giving laws? Why or why not?

3. Are you living and giving as an Easter and Pentecost person?

4. Ready for a little self-assessment exercise? Complete the exercise in **Appendix 1**.