

WHY A SERIES ON STEWARDSHIP

Since the Lord is the owner of *all* our possessions, time and talent, we can only be His stewards. “In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:33). Stewardship is an integral part of discipleship. In this series, we will explore the elements of stewardship so that we may mature as his disciples.

We are stewards: A steward is one who manages another’s property, a supervisor or overseer. The Bible tells us the following about our roles as stewards.

- ❖ Rather than being the “power and the kingdom and the glory,” we are simply managers of what belongs to God. “And let them rule [supervise] over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all creatures that move along the ground” (Genesis 1:26). “You made him ruler over the works of your hands, you put everything under his feet” (Psalm 8:6).
- ❖ We are given everything that we have. We do not deserve or earn what we are given. “Naked I came from my mother’s womb” (Job 1:21); “all our righteous acts are like filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6); “For it is by grace you have been saved...not by works” (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- ❖ We are only here temporarily as tenants, “...the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants” (Leviticus 25:23); “...they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth” (Hebrews 11:13).
- ❖ We are here to serve God and the body, not ourselves. “The Holy Spirit displays God’s power through each of us as a means of helping the entire church” (1 Corinthians 12:7, Living Bible; Romans 12:1, 3-5; Ephesians 4:11-13).

Modern Examples: Employees in the military, government or corporate sectors who manage property, but don’t own it. Your *banker*. How would you feel if your banker took some of your savings to buy a new car, and then asked you if he could pay it back later? Or invested it in a high-risk enterprise? He would be a poor steward of your money.

We are to be faithful: The prime obligation of a steward is to be faithful, “Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:2).

- ❖ **Faithfulness may start in small ways**, “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much” (Luke 16:10). “Small things are small things, but faithfulness with a small thing is a big thing” – Hudson Taylor.
- ❖ **We must be found faithful with whatever is given to our charge**. “So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?” (Luke 16:11-12).
- ❖ **Our reward for faithfulness in small ways is greater responsibilities and God’s blessings**, “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been

faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matt 25:23).

Some Benefits of Faithfulness

- ❖ Faithfulness builds character. You can tell more about a person's character by examining his checkbook or Day Timer or Palm Pilot than by listening to him talk.
- ❖ Faithfulness leads to contentment. God's part + faithfulness on our part = contentment.
- ❖ Faithfulness leads us to a closer relationship with Jesus.

We are held accountable: God is going to hold us accountable for how we handle all of our resources – not just how we handle the 10% of our income we give.

- ❖ **We have all been given varying levels of responsibilities, but all have a proportionate level of accountability.** "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked" (Luke 12:48).
- ❖ **We will all stand in judgment.** "So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). "So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one must receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:9-10).

Would you manage your life better if you knew for a fact that an angel would appear at the end of each month, asking for an accounting of how you "managed" 'God's Resources' that month?

Acknowledge the Lord's ownership every time you purchase an item, or schedule your time, or are given an opportunity to serve. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

In conclusion, **stewardship is a spiritual activity.** How we handle our time, talent and treasure impacts our relationship with the Lord. Satan knows that if he can get us to spend our time on trivial pursuits and devote our talents to the accumulation of possessions, then our focus will shift away from the Lord. Consider what we have covered here...and determine whether your life reflects a full comprehension of "**God's Part,**" and "**Our Part.**"