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## Stewardship Part II

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### Looking to God and not to Self

*The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it*  
(Psalm 24:1)

The word, *stewardship*, simply means to manage someone else's property. For the Christian, as Scripture proclaims everything belongs to God, we manage the property of our Lord. Since everything belongs to Christ, we need to have the attitude and view that our things are His things, our stuff is His stuff, that all we could have now, all we have lost, all we will have, is His, including our very bodies and spiritual gifts. We are mere lessees of the property, money, relationships, talents, time, and even our lives. That means all that we are and all that we have are not really ours to begin with. They belong to God. So, the duty of the Christian is to learn how to become responsible stewards of our Lord's resources entrusted into our care. It means to manage everything to the best of our abilities for His glory (1 Cor. 4:2).

Some Christians will have a big problem with what I am trying to get across here. Perhaps their will, pride, and assumptions have clouded their thinking. All we need to do is carefully and honestly examine what God's Word has to say!

The distinction that the material world is not for the Christian is an old heresy called *Gnosticism*. The material world is God's too, and we are the stewards, the caretakers, of it. So, how we allocate the resources that God places in our care is a prime Christian duty that has no separation from the spiritual depth of Biblical character and maturity. All the areas in our life of work, learning, relationships, spiritual gifts, and resources will come through our obedience or our laziness--to God's glory or to waste.

Try to see it like this: we are on a playground that God owns, building equipment for the furtherance of the kingdom. At the same time, the storms of the devil and our complacency cause a hindrance and breakdown to the work. With spiritual strength we can fend off the devil, but it takes diligence, and a will surrendered to God to build the park and play the game.

- Stewardship honors God with all of the relationships and resources in our life! Thus, we are able to give Him gratitude for what He did for us and recognize His sovereignty, which is His control and ownership of all things. In this way we can honor Him with our worship as well as with our material goods and abilities.
- Stewardship is a priority! We need to take what we have and put it to the right use.
- Stewardship is exercising the gifts He gives, not letting them waste away. We are to find them and put them to use with joy. To do otherwise is a big waste and a travesty.

- Stewardship is being His faithful servant. It is the understanding of who we are in Him and being grateful for that. In addition, it is being willing to put forth the effort to please Him, even though we do not have to.
- Stewardship is recognizing that we belong to Him as a human being in His grace, that the church is not the building, but the body that gathers for worship and leaves for ministry! Those who just dwell in a building end up doing nothing there.
- Stewardship is being wise to the ways of the world, so we do not fall prey to it.

### **Questions**

**Read each of these verses:** 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; Ephesians 5:15-16

1. What does Paul have to say?
2. What does stewardship mean in these verses?
3. How is Stewardship is a reflection of our spiritual condition?
4. Why should we should never separate money and finances from our spiritual life?
5. How does Stewardship help you to recognize that you belong to Christ?
6. Do you see that being trustworthy, dependable, and honest is a matter of how you have or have not grown in Him?
7. The measuring stick that God uses to measure you is not against one another—what someone else has done, but rather what you are capable of. So, how can this motivate you to take the opportunities He has given and make the most of them?
8. How have you misjudged yourself and the opportunities He has given?
9. Have you realized that when we negate our training, we will be unprepared and ill-equipped to do much of anything for His glory? How does this make you feel?
10. How does fear destroy your opportunity to be productive?
11. How can you do a better job at making Stewardship a priority?
12. How will your Stewardship honor God with all of your relationships and resources in your life?