
Stewardship Part IV

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Are you giving what's right, or what's left?

2 Corinthians 8-9

God is concerned with what is in our hearts, and a good heart has responsible character assigned to it. That is what being a good steward means. This is shown to us by our role in taking care of creation, the testimony of the Law, and the Psalms, to name a few. *Stewardship*, in Hebrew, means “house law and rule.” It means that the person who is hired is to manage the affairs for the owner. This means that the property, resources, money, and provisions are under the steward's control and responsibility. They belong to God, and are entrusted into our hands. Thus, all dimensions of management are under the word and theme of stewardship! So, all that we do in the affairs of our daily life is under stewardship too! Is God concerned with what is in your heart? Yes, He is, and being a good steward will show that you have a good heart!

Thus, as good stewards, we cannot be wasteful. Being a bad steward was under penalty of death in Biblical times. Fortunately, we are under grace, and Christ's atonement covers us from God's wrath when we mess up, but that does not mean we are to be careless. We are not to go around thinking all we need to do is think we are good, just as we cannot think we are good at our job or school, and be late all of the time, or slack off. We have to think carefully about the most prudent way to allocate and manage the gifts and resources He puts in our care! This is in response to what He has given to us--abundant grace and love, and His mercy and care. We must understand that being bad at stewardship is wasting what God has given, and even wastes our lives, and opportunities, too! We are just to have a good heart? If you are not responsible, chances are, no, you do not have a good heart.

- Stewardship is not worrying, but rather, trusting in Christ.
- Stewardship is not just focusing on our self-interests, but on His interests and on the interests of others as well.
- Stewardship means knowing that God is concerned with us personally--what we go through, deal with, and how we manage what He entrusts to us.
- Stewardship is focusing on God and not on the material things in and of themselves. We are always to view the material world with the perspective of being God's caretaker of it, not of its lust or greed.
- Stewardship is the attitude of gratitude, being thankful in all things, even when we do not feel gratitude or see it.
- Stewardship sees every purchase as an investment, from food and gas, to houses and cars.

Stewardship is about being in community, working together and complementing one another's gifts, and abilities, and with what we can offer. It is the way we use the gifts He has given us in order to benefit the people in our church and those around us.

Questions

Read Matthew 6: 25-34:

1. How is worry, and the ability to give, tied together?
2. What about our time? Do you always live in a rush? If so, does that please God? Does it leave time for important things, such as relationships and ministry?
3. What is Righteousness? What about the Body and Kingdom of God?
4. Read Ephesians 5:15-21
5. Write a list of the priorities in your life. Then, with the above verses in mind, ask yourself, "How do my priorities line up with God's?"
6. What can you do to line your up your priorities to be more like God's?
7. How can you do so more?
8. How are you using them for the Body and the glory of Christ?
9. How can you use them for the Body and for Christ's glory?
10. Why does our Lord so often cite the use of money as an illustration?
11. How does the abuse of money to oppress the poor dishonor our Lord? Do you believe that stewardship is a matter of the heart? Take a look at your checkbook; it will show where your loyalties, commitments, and interests abound!
12. How would you define ethics? How does this effect Stewardship?
13. How does what we chase become temporary and rotten? Have you considered that the things we think are important usually are not, such as trust in wealth, accomplishments, education, self, or...? Why would we place our trust in this stuff and not in the One who loves us?
14. If you are not responsible, chances are, no, you do not have a good heart. Do you agree? Why or why not? What are you going to do about this question?