
Stewardship Part VI

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What is ours is not really to begin with?

Stewardship means we must take care of His world carefully, honestly, diligently, and faithfully in the character as revealed in His Word. It means remembering that God gives us everything, including Himself. So, how do we manage all of this with Biblical precepts and principles? One good way to view stewardship is to see what He gives us as a loan. We are to manage it with the attitude of giving back to God, of honoring Him, just like the Parable of the Talents teaches (Matthew 25:14-30)!

One of the key principles I want to get across to you is the difference in what we have, and what God has. We basically have nothing; we own nothing, we earn nothing, we gain nothing. God is the true owner of all things; He is the One who owns it all. Consider this. When you die, will there be a trailer with all of your stuff following you to the pearly gates? The answer is, no! After all, your eternal reward is far, vastly superior to what you have here. Even if you were Bill Gates, with billions of dollars, and were able to take it all with you, once you got to Heaven, you would not want to even look at it, much less keep it. As it would just be like rotting stinky junk! Would you rather pick a nonworking rusted car from a junkyard, or have a brand new luxury car? What God has for you is far better than what you would want to take! All you would end up bringing is trash (Deuteronomy 8:18; Psalm 24:1; Haggai 2:8; 1 Corinthians 6:16-20)!

The Egyptians believed that they could take it with them, but if you go to the Museums in Cairo you will see all of their grand stuff still there, here on earth! We have to see life as a training ground for eternity; we are given property, material possessions, gifts, abilities, and most importantly, relationships. It is what we do with these, what we learn from them, and what we impart to others that will become the true treasure. It is not the deed, title or pink slip; it is not the bank statement, or our brokerage account that matters. It is what we do with what is temporarily given to us that is important. That is where the treasure is earned, and learned. God is the owner; we are the managers. Let us use and manage His goods wisely, to prepare us for what is still to come (Psalm 49:16-17; Matthew 16:27; 25:21-23; Luke 19:12-19; 1 Corinthians 6:3; 2 Corinthians 4:16- 5:10; Revelation 20:6).

When we give, we are giving what is not really ours to begin with. It is not ours to keep, nor is it something we would even want to bring with us to eternity. *We give what we cannot keep to gain what we cannot lose!* This is authentic stewardship in action, and the real practicing of our faith. It is the practicing of our faith that is inseparable to the exercise of what we are given. These two combine synergistically to build our maturity, and our standing before our Lord. You cannot build your faith while ignoring your responsibility, just as you cannot build your faith by just focusing on material goods, even if you are doing it faithfully. Material things are not wrong to have when viewed rightly. It is when we think of them as important that is considered stupid in God's eyes (Proverbs 23:5; Matthew 6:19-21; 19:21-30).

Questions

1. How do our desires about money become contrary to God's call and precepts? Why will they lead us to destruction? What can you do about it?
2. Have you seen in others or experienced for yourself the lesson that when we just live to acquire material positions we end up with nothing of real consequence? How so?
3. How can you seek Him, His perspective, and His wisdom to give you greater understanding, skills, trust, hope, security, and opportunities?

Read Proverbs 20:10; 22:7; Luke 12:15; 16: 10-11; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 6:10

4. Why is money important to you?
5. Why and how is it important to the Lord?
6. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15: What are the principles of giving cited here?

Read Mark 12: 41-44; Romans 12:10; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 3 John 2:

7. What does it mean to you that God considers you His temple?
8. With this information in mind, how are you going to respond to Him, and with the time, treasures, and talent in your life?
9. How can you take better control and care of your body?

Read Psalm 50: 14-15; Proverbs 22:9, 28:13; Job 36:11; Isaiah. 48:17; Luke 6:38; Philippians 4:19

10. What are God's promises regarding stewardship?
11. Spend quality time in surrendered prayer; that is, pray with your will and desires set aside so you can listen to God and His wonderful plan for you!
12. Prayerfully decide on how you plan to implement God's desires and call to be a better steward of all the relationships, time, talent, money, and resources in your life!