
Stewardship Part III

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Is Stewardship Important?

In the last two studies, we looked at what God calls us to concerning Stewardship. We learned that everything belongs to Him, and that we are the caretakers of His property. As Christians who take the Bible seriously, we also need to take to heart the seriousness of being a wise steward. Stewardship is an act of worship and gratitude by the Believer, in response to His grace. In so doing, we acknowledge God's power and authority over our lives. This leads us to realization of and response to His love, by caring about what He brings into our lives. This includes everything--our relationships, spiritual gifts, time, material goods, our monies, and even our very being. This act of stewardship is in response to the marvelous gift of His amazing, wondrous Grace given to us. We begin by being thankful, and our thankfulness leads to the care of everything in our lives. Thus, our gratitude for what we have leads us to faithfully take care of the business of life. Gratitude is also worship, and our response to God for first loving us.

In my experiences and observations, I have observed, with sadness, that most people in evangelical circles do not see stewardship as important. A common response to the subject of stewardship is that all we need to have is a good heart, or be sincere in our faith. Our money, and how we manage life is irrelevant. But, is this true? Is God only concerned with our heart? If so, what does that mean? Well, when you read the Bible, you can see that it has a totally different definition of stewardship than what is popular in the church today!

Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:8-15

- Christ gave up His position and gave of Himself to save us. The widow gave what she had of herself through sacrifice (Mark 12: 41-44). The size of the gift is relative to what we are able to do. We are never to give what we do not have and expect God to put it back in our account. This is the action of the fool in Proverbs.
- Stewardship does not abuse the giver! You do not need to give beyond your ability to do so! The giver is not to abuse stewardship through false promises or by what he does not have, even if he has good intentions. Nor, should we ever give for the sole purpose that God will bless us! Our giving is a response, not a tool to get!
- Stewardship is a regular, normal, and daily endeavor!

Read Matt. 25:14-30: What is the meaning of unfaithfulness?

- Stewardship is the wise use of our materialistic goods and abilities, as well as with our time. Wasting time, in the eyes of the Puritans, was a sin, and that notion did not originate with them, but with God's Word.

- Stewardship is being neither reckless or hiding from our duty by playing it safe.
- Stewardship is recognizing that we, as Christians, as well as everything in creation, belongs to God.
- Stewardship is proportionate to what we are able to give. The poor person's small gift is just as important as the rich person's big gift! Sometimes, we cannot give as much as we would like to, due to economic realities, job loss, business not good, sickness, etc., so, we give honestly and efficiently whatever we can.
- Stewardship is the giving of ourselves and our resources with joy and gratitude for what we have been given. Stewardship is not something that results from a forced obligation or a bad attitude. Giving should always be cheerful! If it is not, then you are not really giving--are you?
- Stewardship is the comfort of knowing that everything comes from God. He gives us our clarity and the vision and character of what to be and do. We can trust in Him, and not in our materialistic goods.

Questions

Read Psalm 24:1; Acts 20:35; 2 Cor. 9:7; James 1:17

1. How can you make your life count for His glory?
2. Do you see stewardship as important? Why would some Christians think it is not?
3. How would is recognizing that we, as Christians, as well as everything in creation, belongs to God help with your attitude about Stewardship?
4. Do you believe that when we refuse to use what God gives us, we are being sinful? How so? Remember, this is not trivial, as it blocks His work from developing within us and through us to others!
5. What are the standards for stewardship we are to have?
6. Do you believe it is each Christian's responsibility to find, develop, and exercise the talents and *gifts* given to him or her? If so, what is in the way from this happening in you and in others?
7. What happens when we allow our fear to take us over?
8. How can you take comfort that God only gives us the opportunities to match the abilities He has given us? How would this help you eradicate your fear?

9. What do you need to do to allow Christ to let your confidence be who you are in Him, and not in how others respond to you? How would this help you learn and be confident in witnessing?
10. What do you believe God has given you? What have you done with it? Where do you invest what He gives you? How do you make it count for His glory?
11. What can your church do to inspire and teach its people to have a better attitude about Stewardship?
12. How we serve and represent Him will also be a factor in our Judgment (not salvation but, rather, rewards). How does this motivate you to grow further? Or, does it scare you? What now will you do about stewardship?

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