

Week 2 - Charge & Content

Review

- The definition of biblical stewardship?
What you do with the life God has entrusted to you.
- 6 domains of stewardship? NOTE: I replaced "Recreational" with "Societal". Recreational can be covered under Physical.
 - (1) Spiritual
 - (2) Physical
 - (3) Relational
 - (4) Financial
 - (5) Vocational
 - (6) Societal
- Our anchor Bible passage for this study? Matthew 25:14-30

Opening Comments

4 Principles of Manhood (example of using "principles" for guidance)

- (1) Reject Passivity
- (2) Accept Responsibility
- (3) Lead Courageously
- (4) Expect a Greater Reward

The Charge of Stewardship

Investing Faithfully

- What does the Parable of the Talents say about this?
- Where are you most challenged with this?

Warnings to keep watch

What are we watching for and why?

- What? Watching for the signs of Christ's return.
From Matthew 24:42... "Be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming"
- Why? So, we'll know when Christ will return? No, it can't be that.
 - Matthew 24:36... "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only."
 - The reality is that even the strongest of Christians will be tempted to follow the way of the world. If we are not vigilantly watching our life and doctrine, we are not being good stewards.
1 Co 10:12, He 2:1, 1 Pe 2:11, 1 Pe 5:8, Eph 4:11-14

The Content of Stewardship

Matt 25:14 - "Who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them..."

- What are these possessions?
- Is it just money? Why or why not?

Three conclusions about what these talents were meant to illustrate.

- (1) First, remembering that the master represents Jesus, and the servants represent His disciples, we should note that the talents are something that rightly belong to Jesus and that He has entrusted to our care (Mt. 25:14–15).
- (2) Second, the talents are something that we can invest and make a return on for Him (Mt. 25:16–28).
- (3) Third, the talents can be taken back by the master and given to another (Mt 25:28).
- Reagan Rose, in his book *Well Done*, argues that the talents in the parable **represent the portion of Jesus' slowly expanding kingdom that has uniquely been entrusted to each of Christ's followers.**

Some logical categories of things we know we have that can be used to further build Christ's kingdom:

- Natural gifts, like our minds, bodies, personalities, etc.
- Spiritual gifts, like speaking, serving and equipping the church.
- Experiences, like our families, upbringing, education, work, relationships, good and bad circumstances that shape our lives.
- Other notable things like time, wealth and influence.

Discussion about Domains

Spiritual

- **Principle:** God desires faithful devotion and spiritual maturity.
- Let's say the spiritual realm includes our minds & spirits.
 - What are some ways that we can be good stewards of those?
 - Worship, sacraments, scripture, the gospel, prayer, discipleship, fellowship
- What are some scriptures that come to mind?
 - Jn 15:4-5 "Abide in me..."
 - 1 Tim 4:7-8 "Train yourself for godliness..."
 - Mt 22:37 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart..."
 - Eph 4:29: Instructs, "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up."
 - Prov 21:23: Notes, "Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble."
 - Ro 12:2 "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."
- What are some challenges you face to this stewardship?
 - Impure thoughts or content
 - Selfishness, covetousness, envy, jealousy
 - Harsh, hurtful or evil speech
 - Anxiety, worry, lack of trust
 - Mental distractions from pursuing spiritual growth

Physical

- **Principle:** Our bodies belong to God and are to be used for His purposes.
- Let's say the physical realm includes our bodies, health, energy, and recreation/rest.
 - What are some ways that we can be good stewards of those?
 - Exercise, diet, sleep, health maintenance, purity, intimacy in marriage, situation-appropriate human contact (firm, gentle, violent)
- What are some scriptures that come to mind?
 - 1 Cor 6:19-20 "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit...use to honor God"

- Ro 6:13: Instructs believers not to offer their bodies to sin, but rather to "present yourselves to God... and your members to God as instruments for righteousness."
- Ro 12:1 "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice..."
- Mk 6:31 "Come away by yourselves... and rest a while."
- Ro 12:1 "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."
- 1 Cor 10:31: Advises that "whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."
- What are some challenges you face to this stewardship?
 - Laziness in lack of exercise, lack of self-control in eating
 - Lack of self-control with sexual sin
 - Not getting enough sleep or rest
 - Taking foolish risks with sports or recreation
 - Physical distractions from the spiritual or other domains

Alternative Reading, from *Well Done* (Reagan Rose, 2023) + more...

Our Call to Responsibility

"We are not responsible" could be the tag line for our century. We live in an age that hates responsibility. Ours is a world of finger-pointing, buck-passing, and blame-shifting. Much of modern society has become expert contestants in the blame game. Look at the fruit our responsibility-averse culture has born: skyrocketing abortion rates, rampant divorce, epidemic levels of fatherlessness, alcoholism, drug addiction, and worse.

Here is one societal example, or domino effect, of poor stewardship, from the realm of socioeconomics.

- Americans have been sowing seeds of rampant individualism, unchecked hedonism and early retirement for decades.
- These have resulted in lower rates of marriage and fewer children, to the point that the American fertility rate dropped below "replacement rate", or 2.1 babies per 2 adults, back in 1972, with a steady decline since then. In 2010, the fertility rate was 1.9, in 2018 it was 1.7 and since 2024 it has remained at 1.6.
- Combine this with an increased number of adults aging out of the workforce, early retirement, and a plummeting labor participation rate (able bodied laborers who choose not to work because of their own wealth or because of government welfare) and you get what is referred to as a demographic drought - or labor shortage.
- All of this means that our Western culture is rapidly heading toward economic doom.
- Ah, but, we can just open the borders and let in millions of unvetted immigrants to solve the problem...what could possibly go wrong with that?

Do you see how a simple lack of responsibility and a lack of stewardship leads to disaster? These are the consequences of sin. This is the principle of sowing and reaping. This is what a society that has turned its back on God and biblical truth can and should expect.

But our disdain for accountability drives us to more respectable diversions as well: endless entertainment binges, perpetual escape into fantasy worlds, video game addiction, or the most common (and most acceptable) addiction: hiding from our responsibilities by burying our faces in our phones and social media.

Indeed, we live in irresponsible times. But despite what the world around us does, we Christians are called to be people who take responsibility for our actions. The Christian life begins with taking responsibility. When we come to the heavenly courtroom, we approach the bench with a plea of guilty. Repentance requires us to own our sin. "Yes, I did do that. Yes, I do deserve the consequences." But the

wonder of the gospel is that, if you have put your faith in Jesus Christ, the court rejects your guilty plea. For another person has already stepped forward to take the responsibility for your sin. Christ is your substitute.

The greatest joy we can obtain for ourselves and the highest honor we can give to God in the Christian life is still a matter of taking responsibility. And that is what life stewardship is all about.

The Size, Type and Distribution of our Talents

SIZE

These talents are not talents like those we think of today. We use the term “talent” to refer to an individual’s unique skill or ability. But in the ancient world, a talent was a unit of weight. The Hebrew word for talent is *kikkar*. But our English word “talent” comes from the Latin equivalent of the Greek *talanton* which means “a weight, something weighed.” Scholars’ opinions differ on how much a talent weighed. Perhaps the definition differed through time and from region to region. The talents referred to in our parable, however, were probably Greek talents. These talents weighed somewhere between sixty-six and eighty-two pounds. Most likely the talents in this story were talents of gold. So we’re talking about around seventy-five pounds of gold. That’s a lot of gold. Just a single talent of gold would have been a massive amount of money; equal to about twenty years wages for a laborer.

So, SIZE = BIG....enormous even. Extremely significant.

TYPE

But here again is where the parable of the talents is so helpful. The master in the story does not entrust any one disciple with his entire estate. Instead, he apportions differing amounts among them. The talents in the parable represent that unique calling God has given you. Each believer’s stewardship will be unique to that person. And while we are not asked to carry the weight of the entire kingdom, this is still no small task.

Stewardship of these talents, then, is not just a matter of your money. It’s about everything. This certainly includes your physical resources such as your home, cars, and property. But it also includes non-physical things such as your unique opportunities, your spiritual gifts, your abilities, and your influence. All these belong to the Master. All are on loan to you with the expectation that you will improve them and make a good return for His kingdom.

DISTRIBUTION

The most striking thing about this parable is not that the master entrusted his stewards with so much, but that there is such a variance in what he entrusted to each one. “To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability” (Matt. 25:15). After all, the Master owns everything, and can distribute any way he wants.

God gives no little gifts. What you have been entrusted with is of inestimable value. And just because it is not the same as what another has been given does not excuse you from employing it wisely. When we are tempted to despise the smallness of the gifts God has given to us, we would do well to remember this: Our talents are a responsibility. A larger bank account is a larger responsibility. A great gift for speaking is a talent that must not be squandered. A unique set of experiences provides you with a unique skill set that must be used wisely. When you recognize that all that you have really belongs to God, you can humbly decide to make the most of whatever gift He gives you, trusting that the Master knows best how to delegate authority over His own estate.

God not only entrusts us differently in terms of amount, but He also gives different types of gifts. The parable does not say this directly, it only speaks of different numbers of talents. But if the talents

represent all that God entrusts to His people, we can safely observe that talents differ not only in amount but also in kind.

God's people differ in their giftings of intellect, physical prowess, opportunities, upbringing, and spiritual giftings. But these differences should never be the cause of jealousy or division within the church. Paul deals with this at length regarding differing spiritual gifts in First Corinthians 12–14. No matter what we've been entrusted with, our response should be the same: "I will be faithful." Because as we will see, when you are faithful over a little He will set you over much (Matt. 25:21).

THE 6 DOMAINS OF BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP

— Every area of life entrusted by God. Everything we do for His glory. —



Domains of Biblical “Whole-Life” Stewardship

Domain	Description	Verse 1	Verse 2	Verse 3
Spiritual	Renew minds & refresh spirits through worship, word, prayer and fellowship. Principle: God desires faithful devotion and spiritual maturity.	Jn 15:4-5 "Abide in me..."	1 Tim 4:7-8 "Train yourself for godliness..."	Mt 22:37 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart..."
Physical	Steward bodies, health, energy, and rest as gifts from God. Principle: Our bodies belong to God and are to be used for His purposes.	1 Cor 6:19-20 "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit..."	Ro 12:1 "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice..."	Mk 6:31 "Come away by yourselves... and rest a while."
Relational	Cultivate & nurture relationships by loving, serving, encouraging & caring for others. Principle: God says to love our neighbors as an expression of our love for Him.	Lev 19:18 "Love your neighbor as yourself."	Jn 13:34-35 "Love one another as I have loved you."	Ro 12:10 "Outdo one another in showing honor."
Financial	Use money, possessions, and resources for God's glory and the good of others. Principle: God owns everything; we are managers of what He entrusts to us.	Ps 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it."	Mt 25:14-30 Parable of the Talents	1 Tim 6:17-19 "Be rich in good works, generous and ready to share."
Vocational	Engage in work that uses gifts, talents, and calling to serve God and others. Principle: Every legitimate vocation can glorify God.	Gen 2:15 "Work it and keep it."	Col 3:23-24 "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord."	Eph 2:10 "Created in Christ Jesus for good works."
Societal	Steward influence in society through citizenship, community involvement, righteous justice, compassionate service, creation care, and seeking the common good. Principle: God's people are called to bless their communities and steward His creation.	Jer 29:7 "Seek the welfare of the city..."	Micah 6:8 "Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God."	Mt 5:13-16 "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world."