

Week 3 - Compass & Character

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

The Compass of Stewardship

From the Beginning

- What does Genesis 1:26-28 say about humans?
 - (1) Created in the image of God
 - (2) Given dominion over the created beings
 - (2a) That dominion entails being fruitful and multiplying
 - (2b) Subduing the earth and exercising dominion over every living thing on the earth
- Cultural or Dominion Mandate in Genesis 2:15? “Work it and keep it”

After the Fall

- Eat anything, except from the fruit of the forbidden tree.
- Failed to take dominion over the snake’s temptation - the woman ate and gave it to the man.
- Mankind and creation were thrown into pain and futility, and exiled from the garden.
- What pain? Women in child birth, i.e. part of the mandate
- What futility? Men in working the ground, i.e. part of the mandate
- Our mandate was cursed, but that didn’t change our responsibility. God repeated the charge to Noah and his sons after the flood...”them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth”.

After the Cross

- Is the emphasis in the New Testament & the teachings of Christ mostly about creation?
- Mostly about the Gospel...and:
 - The Church
 - The Domains
 - The Gifts of God’s varied graces
- The command to steward this world was never removed, even after the fall. Rather after Jesus came, our stewardship actually expanded in scope. In the parable of the talents Jesus spoke about life stewardship regarding His kingdom, which was “not of this world” (John 18:36). The call to steward this kingdom means joining Jesus in this broadened mission.
- Read Eph 3:8-10 “To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, 10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”

- The word translated “plan” in verse 9 is oikonomia, the same word normally translated as “stewardship.” And just before Paul said this, Paul spoke of himself participating in “the stewardship of God’s grace which was given to me for you” (Eph. 3:2).
- The point is this: Christian stewardship in the new covenant era chiefly concerns our partnering with God to steward His plan for the redemption of the human race. In other words, it’s about being faithful stewards of the gospel. This happens through proclamation of the gospel, as well as adorning it with our good works in living as people who truly have been transformed (Matt. 28:18–20; Titus 2:10). When Christians choose to live like Christians, we are acting like stewards.

In Eternity

- Will there be work in heaven?
- Many believers are surprised to learn that we will still work in heaven. Ask a hundred Christians to describe what heaven will be like, and you will likely hear more descriptions of floating on clouds than furrowing fields. But the Bible indicates that we will have work to do in the eternal state. In fact, we’ll see in the coming chapters that part of the reward for faithful stewardship is more work in heaven.
- The final destination for God’s saints is not an ethereal spirit world, but a solid physical one—this earth, in fact, a restored creation. That’s why passages such as First Corinthians 15 make such a big deal about the resurrection of our physical bodies. We will again walk on this earth, but it will be in renewed bodies on a renewed earth (Rev. 21:1).⁵ But work will not be eliminated in that renewal. Work will be restored, not removed.

The Character of Stewardship

Matthew 25:16 “Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents.”

Stewards and Slaves

- The word “steward” is not used in the Parable of the Talents of Matthew 25. Instead, the 3 men are referred to as many as 6 times as servants or slaves - depending on your translation. In the ancient world, some stewards were employees or sons, but most often they were slaves.
- Once we make a profession of faith and call Jesus “Lord”, we forfeit all of our rights. We are slaves to Christ. 1 Cor 6:19-20, “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”
- What does this say about the Character of a GOOD Steward?
 - Not “entitled”
 - Trustworthy
 - Good work ethic
 - Skilled to manage the considerable estate of the Master
- For Christians, how should we view being a steward of the King of Kings?
 - An honor and privilege
 - Something we embrace wholeheartedly, with faith and trust toward him as a good Master and Father
- So, we’ve established that as Christians, we have a responsibility to steward
 - (1) The salvation He has granted to us personally
 - (2) The grace gifts He has given to us for use in all of our domains
 - (3) Also, there is an even higher purpose of being the MEANS by which God is bringing about his Kingdom at large, adding new people to His kingdom through salvation and storing up treasures in heaven.
 - Remember the word “plan” in English means administration or stewardship... Read Eph 1:7-10 “7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9

making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth in him.”

- In a very real way, we are part of God’s purpose and plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth in him!

Good and Bad Stewards

- Characteristics of a GOOD Steward
 - Diligence
 - The two stewards in the Parable of the Talents were industrious - they “immediately” went and traded. They did not delay - they obeyed right away.
 - The third servant (poor steward) said he was fearful, because he thought the Master to be a severe man. Something really interesting brought out in Well Done, is that diligent servants pay close attention to their Masters, and get to know what they like and don’t like. So, it is likely that this third servant had not taken the time to understand his Master’s expectations to proactively invest his talent - the first two didn’t hesitate to invest their talents - therefore, the sin of laziness could have been one of the reasons for his fear.
 - Who are some GOOD examples of obeying without delay from the Bible? Abraham. Noah, David, Nehemiah, Jesus. Paul.
 - Who are some BAD examples from the Bible, where someone didn’t obey right away, or all the way? Jonah. Moses. Peter walk on water. Ananias & Sapphira.
 - Integrity
 - This just means “being honest”. Both the parable of the ten minas and the parable of the talents start with the Master leaving on a journey. There is always a temptation to slack off when the boss is away.
 - Because our whole lives are a stewardship to God, we will respect him and be honest - even though He is omniscient! This means not slacking at our jobs, not being sneaky about wasting time, and not hiding when we make mistakes. Obey right away, all the way, with a happy heart. AND confess & repent right away, all the way, with a happy heart.
 - What are we teaching our children if we let them be dishonest?
 - Godliness
 - When you spend a lot of time with someone, you start to act like them - they rub off on you. When you spend time with God, you think and act more like God. A “godly” person is someone who images the character of God in their life. This is a crucial quality of a good steward.
 - 2 Peter 1:3-7, 2 Tim 3:1-5
- Characteristics of BAD Steward
 - Disloyalty
 - Was the Master only upset with the third servant because of WHAT he did with his talent? Is there also the element of WHY he buried it in the ground?
 - This servant had a wrong view of the Master, a low view of his character...”you reap where you did not sow and gather where you scattered no seed.”
 - The Parable of the Ten Minas makes the disloyalty of the faithless stewards even more clear...they HATED the Master and his rule over them. Luke 19:13-14...”13 Calling ten of his servants,he gave them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Engage in

business until I come.' 14 But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'"

- As stewards, our rights are limited by our lack of ownership. Instead, we manage assets for the owner's benefit, and we carry no sense of entitlement to the assets we manage. It's our job to find out what the owner wants done with his assets, then carry out his will. When we start focusing on what we think we deserve instead of what our master requires of us, we lose a proper perspective and enter spiritually dangerous territory.
- **Obstinace**
 - This renegade steward stubbornly refused to do what he was told. He knew what the master wanted him to do with the money, but he decided to stick it to him instead. He knew he couldn't simply steal the money, buy something for himself or give it away without facing severe consequences. So his rebellious heart did the next best thing - he stubbornly decided to not improve on the talent.
 - Ultimately, this obstinace is a lack of trust in the Master and his character. Christian stewardship is a matter of faith. And part of faith is believing that God will reward faithfulness. Heb 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."
- **Gutless**
 - Instead of taking responsibility for his actions, the poor steward made excuses, trying to shift the blame back on the Master himself!
 - A good steward does NOT make excuses when he fails to be faithful. He accepts responsibility, tells the truth, confesses his false motives and quickly repents - turning away from that sin.
 - We will inevitably fail in our task of stewardship. When we do, we must quickly ask for forgiveness. We will find that God is gracious toward the contrite, because James 4:6, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
 - Those who have known the grace of God have no cause to fear, no matter how great their failures.
- **Conclusion:** God does not apportion to all of us the same talents, but He has the same expectations for our character. He wants stewards who are diligent, have integrity, and are godly. But He opposes those who are disloyal, obstinate and gutless in their stewardship.

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." |