

IGNITE INSTITUTE | HOW TO GROW

CLASS 6: STEWARDSHIP

“Faithfully using everything God has entrusted to us to reflect His glory.”

Stewardship of Life

As a Christian, you recognize that God has ultimate authority. But don't be confused; his authority is not limited to your heart or life. The Bible makes it clear that God is the Creator, Sustainer, and ultimate Owner of all things (Colossians 1:15-17; Psalm 24:1). Since that is true, you can look to the breath, talents, gifts and resources that you enjoy, and recognize that all of these have been given to you by the Owner himself. Faithful *Stewardship of Life*, then, is using all the gifts God has given to you in order to further glorify him in this world.

Please take some time to work your way through the material provided below, carefully reading any Bible passages and answering any questions along the way.

RECOGNIZING GOD AS THE OWNER

The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein... (Psalm 24:1)

Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. (Deuteronomy 10:14)

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. (Colossians 1:16)

RECOGNIZING GOD AS THE PROVIDER

What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (Matthew 6:25-26)

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (James 1:17)

STEWARDING WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO YOU

Take a moment to write down some resources and gifts God has given to you that you are commanded to steward wisely. Please be specific.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 8. _____ |

Thank God that he has been so good to give you these gifts! There is no doubt that the list of God's blessings on your life is longer than you even know. For simplicity's sake, consider what faithful stewardship looks like for the following three categories: time, talent and treasure.

Category 1: Time

So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. (Psalm 90:12)

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. (Colossians 4:5-6)

Q: How could you steward your *time* more faithfully in an effort to reflect God's glory?

Category 2: Talents

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 4:10-11)

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

Q: What *talents* (i.e. gifts, abilities) has God given to you? How can you steward them to reflect God's glory?

Category 3: Treasure

Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name. 'But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. (1 Chronicles 29:12-14)

We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord. (2 Corinthians 8:2-3)

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Q: What does it look like for you to steward your *treasures* in way that reflects God's glory?

OUR THEOLOGY OF GIVING

God desires his people to be good stewards of the lives that he has given to them. Stewardship of life involves faithfully using all of the resources God has given to us—including our finances—to reflect his glory. Psalm 24:1 says “The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it”. The way we live our lives and give of our finances reflect what we really believe in regard to the following biblical principles:

1. Giving declares the high view of who God is, the generous Creator and Sustainer of all things. (Psalm 24:1-2, James 1:17, Deuteronomy 8:17-20, 2 Corinthians 8:9)
2. Giving is an act of worship, demonstrating both our dependence upon God and our trust in his provision for us. (Genesis 4:1-7, Genesis, 14:16-20, Philippians 4:19-20)
3. Giving is both an act of obedience and an opportunity to participate in God’s redemptive mission, locally and globally. (Philippians 4:15-16)
4. Giving enables us to store up treasures in heaven, experiencing the blessings of God both now and in the resurrection. (Philippians 4:17, Matthew 6:19-20, Matthew 19:27-29, 1 Timothy 6:17-19)

Let’s be a people so consumed with the glory of God that we do not try to skirt through this life giving the least amount excusable; rather, let us be the same type of people as Paul wrote about in 2 Corinthians 8:2-3, “*We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord.*”

Q1: If you are not practicing faithful stewardship of your finances, what is holding you back from being generous with your income?

Q2: If you are practicing faithful stewardship of your finances, how has your faith been strengthened or challenged as a result?