STEWARDSHIP

TAKING CARE OF GOD'S BUSINESS

PART V

What Is Stewardship?

Most people, when they hear the word "STEWARDSHIP", think about money ~ tithes, offerings, and campaigns

STEWARDSHIP is faithfully managing whatever God gives us…
opportunities, interests, skills, employment, power, family, talents, spiritual gifts, land, money, etc.
FOR HIS GLORY.

Principles From First Two Weeks

Stewardship Begins With What You Already Possess

Stewardship Is Trusting That God's Insight Leads To Increase

Stewardship Includes Prioritizing The Assignment Over The Abundance

Stewardship Prepares With An Expectation Of Increase

Week Three

The Stewardship Journey Is Consistent

It Began With Management In The Garden

In The Wilderness, There Is The Management of Provision

In The Promised Land, There Is The Management of Increase

Jesus Continues The Stewardship Principle Of Faithfulness

Last Week

WHAT DOES THE WAY I HANDLE WHAT IS IN MY HAND REVEAL ABOUT WHO HAS AUTHORITY OVER MY HEART

The Heart Of Contentment

The Heart Of Surrender

The Heart Of Compassion

The Heart Of Responsibility

The Heart Of Worship

Tonight…

The Journey Continues

Stewardship In The Church

Key Verses?

Acts 2:44-45 (NIV)

44 All the believers were together and had everything in common.
45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

Acts 4:32 (NIV)

32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed
that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

Acts 4:34-35 (NLT)

34 There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them
35 and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

Introduction

In The Gospels **Jesus Taught Stewardship**
In Acts, The Church Practiced Stewardship
It Is One Thing **To Know It**.... It Is Another Thing **To Practice It**

Up Until Now We Have Examined The Principles That Were Established

Management In The Garden ~ Take Care Of God's Possessions
In The Wilderness ~ Be Faithful Over The Manna and The Money
In The Wilderness ~ The Principle Of The Free Will Offering And The Tithe
In The Promised Land ~ Bring The First Fruit ~ Bring The Tithe Into The Storehouse

Jesus Says To Those In The Temple
Matthew 23:23 (NLT)
23 "For you are careful **TO TITHE** even the tiniest income from your herb gardens,
but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith.
YOU SHOULD TITHE, YES, **BUT** do not neglect the more important things.

The Early Church Did Not Abandon The Stewardship Principles... They Put Them Into Practice
In The New Testament Church, They Understood That All That God Had **Entrusted To Them** Could Be Used To
1) Advance The Kingdom
2) Support Ministry
3) Meet The Needs Of The People

We Can't Expect The Original Purpose Without Personal Participation

Acts 2:44-45 (NLT)

44 And **all the believers met together** in one place and **SHARED EVERYTHING THEY HAD**.
45 **THEY SOLD THEIR PROPERTY AND POSSESSIONS** and **shared the money with those in need.**

Today We Hear This Consistently ~ "The Church Ought To Help PEOPLE"
This Is The Original Intent Of The Early Believers
Today… We Want Acts 2 Results without Acts 2 Responsibility

They Were Able To Fulfill Their Purpose Because Of Those Who Were Personally Participating
PARTICIPATION MADE THE PURPOSE POSSIBLE
They Understood… **We** Are The Church… **We** Will Do Something
The Need Was Shared and So Was The Responsibility
The Money Didn't Come From The Budget…It Came From The Believers

What God Has Placed In Your Hand Is Not Just Provision For You and Your Personal Enjoyment
It Is Provision He Intends To Move **THROUGH YOU** To Meet Needs

Understand The Practice Of The Scripture and The Principle Of The Scripture
The Practice Was Selling Their Property
The Principle Was Generous Participation

We Must Be Willing To Release The Seed To Meet Any Need

Personal Participation Requires The Proper Perspective

Acts 4:32-35 (NIV)

32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own,
BUT THEY SHARED EVERYTHING THEY HAD.
34 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them,
brought the money from the sales 35 and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

Acts 2 shows us their practice ~ Acts 4 shows us their perspective
They Understood Possession vs. Stewardship
GOD IS THE OWNER; I AM A MANAGER
Old Testament Principle ~ New Testament Practice

WHY WAS THERE NO LACK AMONG THEM

They Had The Resources and They Were Willing To Release Them
Visible Demonstration

Acts 4:36-37 (NIV)

36 Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement),
37 sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

The Proper Perspective Enables Us To Participate In Kingdom Practice

Personal Participation Requires The Proper Perspective

Acts 5:1-11 (NIV)

1 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, **ALSO SOLD A PIECE OF PROPERTY.**
2 With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself,
but brought **THE REST** and put it at the apostles' feet.
3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit
and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?
4 Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal?
WHAT MADE YOU THINK OF DOING SUCH A THING? YOU HAVE NOT LIED TO MEN BUT TO GOD."
5 When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened.
6 Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.
7 About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.
8 Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price."
9 Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord?
Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."
10 At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead,
carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

3 Key Principles

1. God Is Concerned About The Heart Behind The Giving
2. Stewardship Requires Integrity
3. God Will Accept A Portion, But Not Pretending

As The Church Begins To Expand Into New Cities and Cultures,
Paul Begins To Give Believers Institutional Practices Concerning Giving

The Early Church Was Meeting Needs…. Now Paul Expresses Giving As A Lifestyle
He Does Not Lower The Standard, He Gives It Structure

Giving Is Planned and Prioritized

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 (NIV)

1 Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do.
2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

Key Principles

1. *"On First Day of Week" ~ Establishes A Consistent Pattern*
2. *"Each One Of You" ~ Establishes A Personal Responsibility*
3. *"Set Aside A Sum" ~ Establishes An Intentional Preparation*
4. *"In Keeping With His Income" ~ Establishes Proportional Participation*

2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV)

7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give,
not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Stewardship Is Not Just About Those Who Give
***But** Also About Those Who Manage What Has Been Given*

Paul Also Addresses Those Who Are Trusted To Handle Them

1 Corinthians 16:1-3 (NIV)

1 Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do.
*2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. 3 Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction **TO THE MEN YOU APPROVE** and send them with your gift to Jerusalem.*

2 Corinthians 8:20-21 (NLT)

*20 We are traveling together **TO GUARD AGAINST ANY CRITICISM***
for the way we are handling this generous gift.
*21 **We are careful to be honorable before the Lord**,*
BUT WE ALSO WANT EVERYONE ELSE TO SEE THAT WE ARE HONORABLE.

1 Timothy 3:1-5 (NIV)

*1 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on **being an overseer**, he desires a noble task.*
*2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, **not a lover of money**. 4 He must **manage** his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect.*
*5 (If anyone does not know how to **manage** his own family, HOW CAN HE TAKE CARE OF GOD'S CHURCH?)*

In Conclusion

We Can't Expect The Original Purpose Without Personal Participation

Personal Participation Requires The Proper Perspective

As The Church Expanded Giving Was Planned and Prioritized

We Must Maintain Integrity With What God Entrusts