

STEWARDSHIP

TAKING CARE OF GOD'S BUSINESS

PART III



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



Tonight...

From The Garden To The Church
God's *Consistent Call* To Stewardship

Key Verses?

Genesis 2:15 (NIV)

*15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden
to work it and take care of it.*

1 Corinthians 4:2 (NLT)

2 Now, a person who is put in charge as a manager MUST BE FAITHFUL.



Introduction

Stewardship is not a new concept that was created by the modern church.

Stewardship did not begin with a capital campaign.

It did not begin with a building fund.

It did not begin with tithes and offerings.

And it certainly did not begin when churches started **TEACHING ABOUT MONEY**.

Stewardship is a biblical principle that stretches from **THE GARDEN TO THE CHURCH**.

The problem is that many believers today have **reduced stewardship** to one question:

“HOW MUCH MONEY AM I SUPPOSED TO GIVE?”

But **BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP** is much bigger than giving money...

Stewardship is understanding that **God is the Owner**, **WE ARE THE MANAGERS**,
and **everything placed in our hands** must be **MANAGED ACCORDING TO HIS INSTRUCTIONS**.

That includes **our money**, but it also includes our time, our gifts, our opportunities, our possessions, our influence,
our relationships, and every resource God places under our care.

The church today often **struggles with stewardship** because **we have been taught**
TO THINK LIKE OWNERS RATHER THAN STEWARDS.



Introduction

From Genesis to Revelation, **THE PRINCIPLE** remains the same:

God Entrusts ~ God placing something in our hands that **ultimately belongs to Him**.

We Manage ~ Faithfully **management** of what He has given us.

God Instructs ~ God gives **direction** for how those resources are to be handled

We Obey ~ **Follow God's instructions** even when they **challenge our preferences**

God Evaluates our Faithfulness ~ God looks at what He entrusted to us and **how faithfully we managed it**.

Tonight, we are going to **walk through Scripture** and examine what I call **THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNEY**.

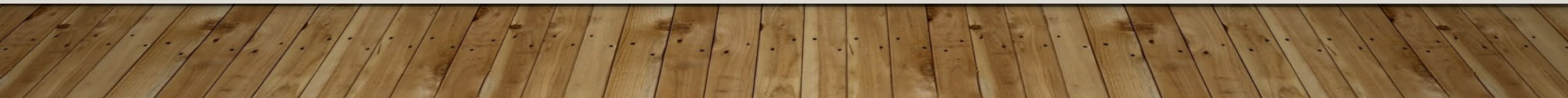
We are going to see that stewardship is a **Consistent Mandate** from Creation...

It is a **CONSISTENT BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE** that moves:

From the Garden...Through the Wilderness...Into the Promised Land...And ultimately into the Church.

And at every stage, the question remains the same:

CAN GOD TRUST US TO FAITHFULLY MANAGE WHAT HE PLACES IN OUR HANDS?



It Began With Management In The Garden

Genesis 2:15 (NIV)

15 The Lord God took the man and *put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.*

Before there was money to give, there was something to manage.

*Before God ever established a tithe, an offering, a temple, or a storehouse, God established **THE PRINCIPLE** that **WHATEVER** He places in our hands **COMES WITH RESPONSIBILITY**.*

GOD'S PROVISION IS BASED ON HAVING MANAGEMENT IN POSITION

Genesis 2:4-8 (NLT)

4 When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, 5 neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth.

*The Lord God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and **there were no people to cultivate the soil.***

6 Instead, springs came up from the ground and watered all the land. 7 **Then** the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.

8 Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and *there he placed the man he had made.*

*There was **potential in the ground**, but there was **not yet a manager in position to cultivate what God had created.***

*Adam did not **manufacture the resources***

Adam's responsibility was to faithfully manage what God had already provided.

STEWARDSHIP IS ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT GOD HAS PLACED UNDER YOUR CARE

It Began With Management In The Garden

Genesis 2:15 (NIV)

15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden *to work it and take care of it.*

God entrusts ~ We manage ~ God instructs ~ We obey ~ God evaluates our faithfulness

Genesis 2:16-17 (NLT)

16 But the Lord God warned him, “*You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden*

17 *except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.* If you eat its fruit, *you are sure to die.*”

There Is A Voice That Competes With The Instructions From God

The Voice says: “*God gave it to me, so I can do whatever I want with it.*”

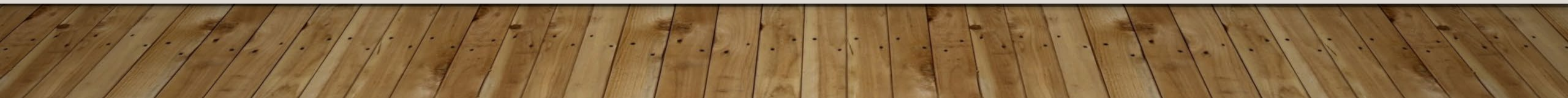
Management Required Restraint ~ God gave Adam access to abundance:

Just because I have access to it does not mean God has given me permission to consume all of it.

Stewardship did not begin with money ~ Stewardship began with management.

And before God ever asked humanity, “*WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ME?*”

He first established the principle: “*CAN I TRUST YOU TO MANAGE WHAT I GIVE YOU?*”



It Began With Management In The Garden

Genesis 3:17 (NLT)

17 And to the man he said, "Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you.

All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

MISMANAGEMENT CAN MAKE TOMORROW HARDER THAN IT HAD TO BE.

When we fail to manage properly today, we can create unnecessary difficulty for ourselves tomorrow.

Poor stewardship of money can create financial pressure.

Poor stewardship of health can create physical challenges.

Poor stewardship of relationships can create relational strain.

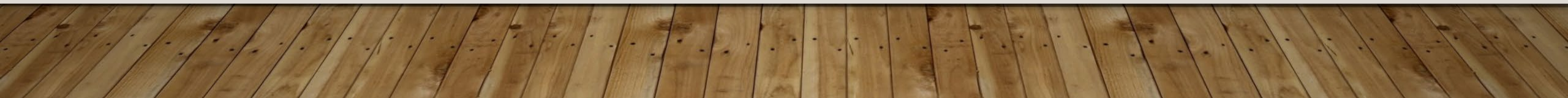
Poor stewardship of opportunities can cause doors to close.

Mismanagement Limited Their Access

Genesis 3:23 (NLT)

*23 So the Lord God banished them from the Garden of Eden,
and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground...*

HE LOST ACCESS TO SOMETHING HE HAD ONCE BEEN ALLOWED TO ENJOY.



In The Wilderness, There Is The Management of Provision

Exodus 16:4 (NLT)

4 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Look, *I'm going to rain down food from heaven for you. Each day* the people can go out and *pick up as much food as they need for that day.* *I will test them in this to see whether or not they will follow my instructions.*

When we leave the Garden and move into the wilderness, the scenery changes,

BUT THE STEWARDSHIP PRINCIPLE REMAINS THE SAME.

MANAGE WHAT GOD PROVIDES.

"How are you going to manage what I provided?"

GOD GAVE INSTRUCTIONS WITH THE PROVISION

Exodus 16:16-20 (NIV)

16 This is what the Lord has commanded: *'Each one is to gather as much as he needs.* Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.'" 17 The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. 18 And when they measured it by the omer, he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little. Each one gathered as much as he needed. 19 Then Moses said to them, *"No one is to keep any of it until morning."* 20 *However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell.* So Moses was angry with them.

God Provided ***INCREASE*** But It Came With ***INSTRUCTIONS***

In The Wilderness, There Is The Management of Provision

Exodus 12:35-36 (NLT)

35 And the people of Israel did as Moses had instructed; they asked the Egyptians *for clothing and articles of silver and gold*. 36 The Lord caused the Egyptians to look favorably on the Israelites, and they gave the Israelites whatever they asked for. *So they stripped the Egyptians of their wealth!*

So when Israel entered the wilderness, *THEY DID NOT ENTER EMPTY-HANDED.*

God is not going to *ask them* to give *what He had not first placed in their hands.*

GOD HAD GIVEN THEM PRINCIPLES and now he is preparing to *SHIFT THE MEANS OF PROVISIONS*

God Began Teaching Them How to Give From What He Had Given

Exodus 25:1-2, 8 (NIV)

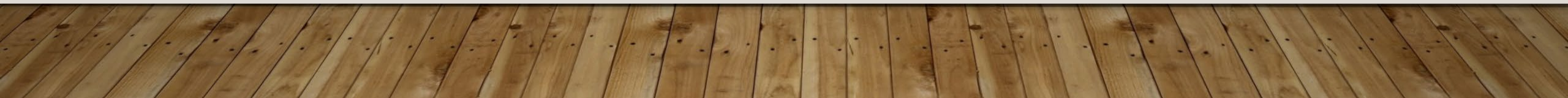
1 The Lord said to Moses, 2 "Tell the Israelites to *bring me an offering*. You are to receive *THE OFFERING FOR ME* from each man *whose heart prompts him to give*.

8 "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.

SO GOD WAS NOT ASKING FOR SOMETHING HE HAD NEVER PROVIDED.

Exodus 36:3, 6-7 (NIV)

3 They received from Moses all the offerings the Israelites had brought to carry out *the work of constructing the sanctuary*. *And the people continued to bring freewill offerings morning after morning*. 6 Then Moses gave an order and they sent this word throughout the camp: "No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." *And so the people were restrained from bringing more*, 7 because what they already had was *more than enough to do all the work*.



In The Wilderness, There Is The Management of Provision

Leviticus 27:30 (NIV)

30 "'A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, **BELONGS TO THE LORD**; it is holy to the Lord.

During this wilderness period, *God formally established instructions CONCERNING THE TITHE.*

There Is a Progression: *Provision → Offering → Tithing*

First, God taught them *how to manage His provision* through the manna.

Then God taught them *how to give willingly toward His purposes* through the building of the sanctuary.

Then, as Israel was *being formed into a covenant nation*, God established an *ongoing system of tithes and offerings.*

STEWARDSHIP BECAME SYSTEMATIC

Abraham Gave a tithe in Genesis 14.... Jacob gave a tithe in Genesis 28

God takes *the principle* and makes it *part of the organized life of His covenant people.*

The tithe taught consistent recognition of God's ownership ~ Same Principle From The Garden

GOD IS THE SOURCE, GOD IS THE OWNER, AND HIS PEOPLE ARE STEWARDS.

THE WILDERNESS WAS WHERE SLAVES LEARNED HOW TO BECOME STEWARDS

In The Promised Land, There Is The Management of Increase

Joshua 5:12 (NIV)

12 *The manna stopped* the day after they ate this food from the land; *there was no longer any manna* for the Israelites, *but that year they ate of the produce of Canaan.*

GOD CHANGED THE METHOD OF PROVISION

In the wilderness, God gave them manna to gather ~ In the Promised Land, God gave them land to cultivate

*The wilderness taught them HOW TO MANAGE DAILY PROVISION.
The Promised Land would teach them HOW TO MANAGE INCREASE.*

*They were leaving a place of daily dependence and entering a place of abundance.
And that created a new stewardship challenge.*

CAN YOU MANAGE ABUNDANCE AS FAITHFULLY AS YOU MANAGED SCARCITY?

Deuteronomy 8:11-14 (NIV)

11 *Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day.* 12 *Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, 13 and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, 14 then your heart will become proud and you will FORGET THE LORD YOUR GOD, who brought you out of Egypt...*

Deuteronomy 14:22 (NIV)

22 *Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year.*

The Tithe Was Put In Place Before They Received Major Increase

In The Promised Land, There Is The Management of Increase

THE STEWARDSHIP ISSUE IS CONSISTENT...

Can God trust me to honor the portion He says belongs to Him?

THERE IS INCREASE THAT COMES WITH INSTRUCTIONS

Joshua 6:19 (NIV)

19 *All* the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the Lord and *must go into his treasury.*

Joshua 7:19-21 (NLT)

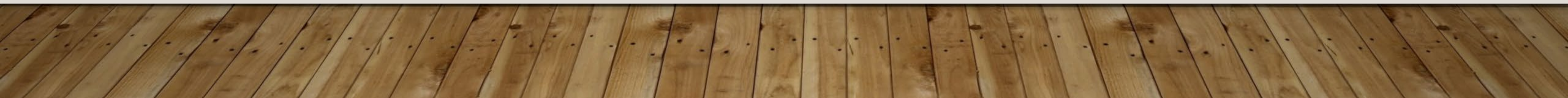
19 Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, by telling the truth. Make your confession and tell me what you have done. Don’t hide it from me.” 20 Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. 21 *Among the plunder I saw a beautiful robe from Babylon, 200 silver coins, and a bar of gold weighing more than a pound. I WANTED THEM SO MUCH THAT I TOOK THEM.*

Achan essentially said: *“BECAUSE I HAVE ACCESS TO IT, I CAN TAKE IT FOR MYSELF.”*

Access does not cancel God's instructions.

And once again, *MISMANAGEMENT HAD CONSEQUENCES.*

*The greater the blessing, the greater the responsibility to remember the Source
and FAITHFULLY MANAGE THE INCREASE.*



In The Promised Land, There Is The Management of Increase

*As The Increase Occurs, Now God Begins To **Be More Specific With The Instructions***

Proverbs 3:9–10

*“Honor the LORD with your possessions, **And with the firstfruits of all your increase;**
So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.”*

God does not say: *“Wait until everything else is taken care of and then give Me whatever is left.”*
God should not receive what is left after everything else has been handled.

*Malachi is calling the people back to **FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP.***

Malachi 3:7-10 (NIV)

*7 Ever since the time of your forefathers **you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them.**
Return to me, and I will return to you,”* says the Lord Almighty. *“But you ask, ‘**How are we to return?’**”*

*8 “Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ “**In tithes and offerings.***

*9 You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--**because you are robbing me.***

*10 **Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. TEST ME IN THIS,***” says the Lord Almighty, *“and **see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.***

Jesus Continues The Stewardship Principle Of Faithfulness

Luke 11:42 (NLT)

42 “What sorrow awaits you Pharisees! **For you are careful to tithe** even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, **but you ignore justice and the love of God.** **YOU SHOULD TITHE, YES,** **but do not neglect the more important things.**

THE NEW TESTAMENT DOES NOT ERASE STEWARDSHIP;

it expands it into **a whole-life commitment** marked by **faithfulness, generosity,** and **accountability**

Jesus Begins To Deal With The Hand and The Heart

Matthew 6:21 (NLT)

21 **Wherever your treasure is, **there** the desires of your heart will also be.**

JESUS TESTS YOUR FAITHFULNESS IN THE AREA OF YOUR MANAGEMENT OF POSSESSIONS

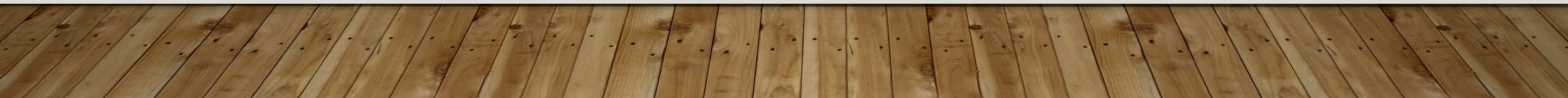
Luke 16:10-13 (NLT)

10 “If you are **faithful in little things**, you will be **faithful in large ones**. But if you are **dishonest in little things**, **you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities.**

11 And if you are **untrustworthy about worldly wealth**, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?

12 And if you are **not faithful with other people’s things**, **why should you be trusted with things of your own?**

13 “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. **YOU CANNOT SERVE BOTH GOD AND MONEY.**”



In Conclusion

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

Next Week... We Will Examine How It Continues In The Church

