STEWARDSHIP

TAKING CARE OF GOD'S BUSINESS

PART VI

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

Week Four

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

Last Week….

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

Tonight…

How We Should Give

"God is not just concerned with what we give….
He is concerned with how we give, why we give,
and the heart from which we give."

Key Verse?

2 Corinthians 9:7 (NLT)

7 You must each decide in your heart how much to give.
And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure.
"For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."

Giving Should Be Purposeful and Pressure-Free
When It's Done Purposeful and Pressure-Free
YOU CAN DO IT CHEERFULLY…

Introduction

We live in a culture that says, "give what you feel led to give, when you feel like giving it."
God has not left us to determine how/when we should give.
He has already ESTABLISHED PRINCIPLES throughout Scripture
that teach us how to give in a manner that honors Him.

One of the challenges within the church today is that
we often approach giving from the perspective of personal preference rather than biblical principles.
WE DECIDE when we want to give, how much we want to give,
what we want to give, and sometimes even whether we want to give.

But here's what we must understand….
Scripture shows that from the beginning… God has never let worshipers set the terms of worship/giving.

Genesis 4:3-7 (NLT)

3 When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the Lord.
4 Abel also brought a gift—the best of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The Lord accepted Abel and his gift,
5 but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.
6 "Why are you so angry?" the Lord asked Cain. "Why do you look so dejected?
7 You will be accepted IF YOU DO WHAT IS RIGHT. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out!
Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you….

ARE WE GIVING THE WAY GOD HAS INSTRUCTED US TO GIVE?

Give Ourselves First

2 Corinthians 8:3-5 (NIV)

3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,
4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.
5 And they did not do as we expected, BUT THEY GAVE THEMSELVES FIRST TO THE LORD
and then to us in keeping with God's will.

NOTICE THE ORDER… They didn't begin by giving their money.
They began by **GIVING THEMSELVES**…God Desires **THE GIVER** Before He Desires **THE GIFT**

The foundational question is, **"HOW MUCH OF MYSELF HAVE I SURRENDERED TO GOD?"**
"When God has our hearts, He has AUTHORITY over everything we possess."

Paul teaches us that our first offering to God is not **financial.**

Romans 12:1 (NIV)

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, **to offer your bodies as living sacrifices**,
holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

"God doesn't want our money as A SUBSTITUTE FOR OUR SURRENDER.
He wants our giving to be AN EXPRESSION OF OUR SURRENDER."

WHEN THE ORDER IS NOT CORRECT…GIVING BECOMES MECHANICAL AND TRANSACTIONAL

Give Cheerfully

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.

God Is Concerned With Our Attitude, Not Just Our Action and Amount
It is possible to do the right thing with the wrong attitude

You can give an offering and be upset about having to give it!
God is not only examining what we give; He is examining how we feel about giving it.

Our ATTITUDE toward giving is often influenced by our perspective on what we possess.
The Wrong Perspective: "Look at what I have to give up!" Giving is viewed as a loss.
The Right Perspective: "Look at what God has blessed me to be able to give!" Giving is viewed as a privilege.

We should never confuse someone being pressured to give
with someone being persuaded by the Word of God to give.

Cheerful Giving Is Produced By Gratitude ~ It Is More Thoughtful Than Transactional

- *When I Think About What He Gave For Me To Live ~ John 3:16*
- *When I Think About The Sacrifice For Me To Be Free ~ Romans 5:8*

DOES YOUR GRATITUDE MATCH YOUR GENEROSITY

Give Sacrificially

Mark 12:41-44 (NIV)

41 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts.
42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny.
43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth;
but she, out of her poverty, put in everything--all she had to live on."

Sacrificial Giving Is Measured by What It Costs, Not Just What Is Given

From a financial perspective, her offering was insignificant compared to what the wealthy individuals had given.
BUT JESUS EVALUATED THEIR GIVING DIFFERENTLY.

People often measure giving BY THE AMOUNT OF THE CONTRIBUTION,
but JESUS DREW ATTENTION TO THE COST OF THE SACRIFICE.
He knew their circumstances ~ He knew their resources ~ He knew what remained after they gave.

SACRIFICIAL GIVING CHALLENGES OUR COMFORT

2 Samuel 24:24 (NLT)

24 But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on buying it, for I will not present burnt offerings to the Lord my God that have cost me nothing." So David paid him fifty pieces of silver for the threshing floor and the oxen.

HEAVEN MONITORS WHAT IS RELEASED AND WHAT REMAINS

Give Initially

Proverbs 3:9-10 (NKJV)

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

GIVING INITIALLY Establishes **God's Priority in Our Lives**
First Part of Our Day ~ First Part Of Our Attention ~ First Part Of Our Strength

In an agricultural society, the firstfruits represented the earliest portion of the harvest.
INSTEAD OF WAITING UNTIL everything had been gathered, consumed, and distributed,
God's people were instructed to honor Him **WITH THE FIRST PORTION**.

Here is the principle ~ **God was not to receive merely what remained after everything else had been satisfied.**
They honored God at the beginning rather than waiting until they could see the end.

GIVING INITIALLY DEMONSTRATES FAITH IN GOD'S PROVISION

Exodus 23:19 (NIV)

19 "Bring **the best of the firstfruits** of your soil TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD YOUR GOD.

Malachi 1:8 (NLT) ~ Where Is My Honor?

8 When you give blind animals as sacrifices, isn't that wrong? And isn't it wrong to offer animals
that are crippled and diseased? Try giving gifts like that to your governor, and SEE HOW PLEASED HE IS!"

1 Corinthians 16:2 (NLT)

2 On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned.

Maybe....You Don't Need A Change of Income ~ You Need A Change of Order
And When The Order Changes, God Changes The Outcome

Give Willingly

1 Chronicles 29:9 (NKJV)

9 Then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly,
because with a loyal heart they had offered willingly to the Lord…

Willing Giving Is Motivated BY DESIRE, Not Demand

God **DESIRES** that our giving be motivated by a willing heart rather than an unwilling obligation.

DAVID PRESENTS THE OPPORTUNITY, **but the people must decide** whether they are **willing to participate**.

WILLING GIVING REVEALS THE CONDITION OF THE HEART

Exodus 35:21-23 (NLT)

21 All whose hearts were stirred and whose spirits were moved came and brought their sacred offerings to the Lord.
They brought all the materials needed for the Tabernacle, for the performance of its rituals, and for the sacred garments.
22 Both men and women came, **all whose hearts were willing**. They brought **to the Lord** their offerings of gold—
brooches, earrings, rings from their fingers, and necklaces.
They presented gold objects of every kind as a special offering to the Lord.
23 All those who owned the following items willingly brought them…

2 Corinthians 8:12 (NIV)

12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

Most People ARE ABLE To Do More…They Are NOT WILLING

Give Accordingly

Deuteronomy 16:17 (NKJV)

17 Every man shall give as he is able, **according to the blessing of the Lord your God** which He has given you.

God Establishes THE STANDARD Based on What He Has Given Us

God does not expect us **TO COMPETE** with one another in giving.
He calls us TO BE FAITHFUL with what He has given us.
At The Red Sea ~ He Asked Moses…What Do You Have In Your Hand
The Widow In Debt ~ He Asked What Do You Have In The House
The Multitude of 5,000 ~ He Asked Them What Do You Have In The Crowd…
God Has Never Required A Resource He Had Not **Already Provided First**

1 Corinthians 16:2 (NIV)

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.

2 Corinthians 8:12 (NKJV)

12) For if there is first a willing mind,
it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have."

Luke 12:48: "For unto whomsoever **much is given**, of him shall be **much required**."

DOES MY GENEROSITY MIRROR WHAT I HAVE RECEIVED?

Give Expectantly

Luke 6:38 (NKJV)

38 Give, **and it will be given to you**: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. **For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.“**

Can You Imagine A Farmer Standing In A Field…Scattering Seed… And Not Expecting A Harvest?

Giving And Expectation Cannot Be Separated

We Give With *Expectation*… Not *Entitlement*

We don’t give to get from God….We give because we trust God.

When We *Give Expectantly*, We Are Simply ***Taking God At His Word***

God, I Trust You… Now *I Wait With Hope Of What You Promised*

GIVING IS A DISCIPLINE AND A DECLARATION

Discipline of Obedience ~ It Trains The Heart *To Release* What We Desire To Hold On To

Declaration Of Trust ~ It Declares That *I Believe In A Divine System* That God Himself Has Established

OUR EXPECTATIONS MUST BE ADJUSTABLE

Acts 3:3-6 (NLT)

3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, *he asked them for some money*. 4 Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, “Look at us!” 5 The lame man looked at them eagerly, *expecting some money*.
6 But Peter said, “*I DON’T HAVE ANY SILVER OR GOLD* ***FOR YOU***. *But I’ll give you what I have*.
In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, *GET UP AND WALK*!”

In Conclusion

ARE WE GIVING THE WAY GOD HAS INSTRUCTED US TO GIVE?

- *Give Ourselves First*
- *Give Cheerfully*
- *Give Sacrificially*
- *Give Initially*
- *Give Willingly*
- *Give Accordingly*
- *Give Expectantly*