

PURPOSE: INTRODUCE THE CONCEPT OF STEWARDSHIP FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE, EMPHASIZING ITS IMPORTANCE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND IN MANAGING HIS CREATION.

I. Understanding Stewardship

- Definition: Stewardship is the responsible management of everything God has entrusted to us—time, talents, treasure, and creation itself.

- Biblical Example:

Mat 25:14-30 (TPT)

14 “Again, **heaven’s kingdom** [*Kingdom of Heaven, Lesson on Stewardship - our relationship with the Kingdom is revealed by our stewardship of the Kingdom’s resources.*] realm is like the wealthy man who went on a long journey and summoned all his trusted servants and assigned his financial management over to them.

15 Before he left on his journey, he entrusted a bag of five thousand gold coins to one of his servants, to another a bag of two thousand gold coins, and to the third a bag of one thousand gold coins, each according to his **ability to manage**. [*not according the Love of the Master*]

Greater gifts are not a sign of greater love but a sign of greater ability to manage.

16 “The one entrusted with five thousand gold coins immediately went out and traded with the money, and he doubled his investment.

17 In the same way, the one who was entrusted with two thousand gold coins traded with the sum and likewise doubled his investment.

18 But the one who had been entrusted with one thousand gold coins dug a hole in the ground and buried his master’s money.

19 “After much time had passed, the master returned to settle accounts with his servants.

20 The one who was entrusted with five thousand gold coins came and brought ten thousand, saying, ‘See, I have doubled your money.’

21 “Commending his servant, the master replied, ‘You have done well, and proven yourself to be my loyal and trustworthy servant. Because you have been a faithful steward to manage a small sum, now I will put you in

charge of much, much more. You will experience the delight of your master, who will say to you, “Come celebrate with me!”

Stewardship of resources is the key to Kingdom promotion & increase.

22 “Then the one who had been entrusted with two thousand gold coins came in and said, ‘See, my master, I have doubled what you have entrusted to me.’

23 “Commending his servant, the master replied, ‘You have done well, and proven yourself to be my loyal and trustworthy servant. Because you were faithful to manage a small sum, now I will put you in charge of much, much more. You will experience the delight of your master, who will say to you, “Come celebrate with me!”’

24 “Then the one who had been entrusted with one thousand gold coins came to his master and said, ‘Look, sir. I know that you are a hard man to please and you’re a shrewd and ruthless businessman who grows rich on the backs of others.

He had a misconception of God and his misconception made him afraid.

25 **I was afraid** of you, so I went and hid your money and buried it in the ground. But here it is—take it, it’s yours.’

26 “Angered by what he heard, the master said to him, ‘You’re an untrustworthy and lazy servant! If you knew I was a shrewd and ruthless business man who always makes a profit, why didn’t you deposit my money in the bank?

27 Then I would have received it all back with interest when I returned.

28 But because **you were unfaithful**, I will take the one thousand gold coins and give them to the one who has ten thousand.

What did the servant say of himself? I was afraid. What did the Master say of him? You were unfaithful.

29 For the one who has will be given more, until he overflows with abundance. And the one with hardly anything, even what little he has will be taken from him.’

30 “Then the master said to his other servants, ‘Now, throw that good-for-nothing servant far away from me into the outer darkness, where there will be great misery and anguish!’”

God gave to each equally but not obviously.

The Master gave each of them equally but where was the equality?

Opportunity.

We don't all have the same talents, skill sets or resources and its easy to look at someone who is super talented (5,000) and feel that God is unfair cause He only gave you (1,000)

But the secret is that its not what you have but how you use it.

God gives to each of us opportunities and that is where the field is equal.

Notice somethings about this lesson on Stewardship.

The Master gave each of them something to steward. Each of us, all of us are stewards - we are all called to the life of a steward.

The Master did not tell them what to do, how to do it.

Bro Hagen used to tell us you can move as much on what God doesn't say as what He does.

*Most use the lack of God's instructions as an opt out.

There have been times, just a few, when I was going to do something, give something that God instructed me not to do or give

Most of the giving my wife and I do is not Divinely prompted. God doesn't always speak to us to do what we do we just do it.

Whatever God gives you no matter the quantity has the capacity for increase - if you use it.

*Chronic need to improve things.

Life is meant to be productive not passive, stagnant or lifeless.

Ever increasing, ever growing - always making things better.

"HOW did you ever do it? I can't see how anyone could do a thing like that."

We were in a curio shop. On the table there was a whole army of little figures that had been whittled out by hand.

What hours of work must have been spent on them.

This friend of mine stood there, and looking at them said, "How did you ever do it?"

The man smiled and said, "I just kept at it."

I went out of the door.

I walked the street and I heard those three words, "Kept at it, kept at it, kept at it."

How they rang through my soul.

That man had "Kept at it."

He had put life into it. He had made a success.

People were coming from all parts of the country to see the effect of that cultivated, trained genius.

All that man had done was to train his mind and hand, and then whittle his dreams out of wood, of soft stone and ivory."

He stewarded stone!

When talents are used they grow, the develop.

30 "Then the master said to his other servants, 'Now, throw that good-for-nothing servant far away from me into the outer darkness, where there will be great misery and anguish!'"

He had not actively caused harm or loss.

But God is a God of absolutes

There is no such thing as negative goodness.

If you are not actively doing good you are actively doing bad.

God judges us on productivity not activity.

Paul played two roles

1. Apostle preacher of grace
2. Tent maker

In which role did God love him more?

Mat 25:32 (NASB)

32 "And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, just as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;

1. Hungry - feed
2. Thirsty - gave drink
3. Stranger - invited me in

4. Naked - clothed me
5. Sick - visited me
6. Prison - came to me.

Both groups responded the same way - when did we see You

Both groups had the same opportunities - God always gives us opportunities.

How we respond to these opportunities is not small thing.

Stewards manage the Masters resources to achieve the Master's objectives.

Gal 6:10 (NAS95)

10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

God gives each of us ideas, dreams a concept but we are too quick to dismiss it, cast it aside - the risk is too great, my resources are too small, what if I fail what if I make a mistake.

God's Kingdom can survive your mistakes and His grace can cover your weakness.

Characteristics of a Good Steward: Faithfulness, wisdom, responsibility, and generosity

A wise steward see the opportunities, a wise steward takes the opportunity

Small opportunities are often the beginning of great enterprises.

Your destiny is not a matter of chance it is a matter of choice

Chose to steward what you have now and watch it grow in 2024.