

Stewards: Work, Time, Money (Part 3)

Sunday, September 10th, 2017

Every faculty you have, your power of thinking or of moving your limbs from moment to moment, is given you by God. If you devoted every moment of your whole life exclusively to His service, you could not give Him anything that was not in a sense His own already.

– C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Steward (verb): manage or look after another's property

FOUR PRINCIPLES OF STEWARDSHIP:

1. The principle of OWNERSHIP.

The psalmist begins the 24th Psalm with,

Psalm 24:1 (NIV)

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

In the beginning of Genesis, God creates everything and puts Adam in the Garden to work it and to take care of it. It is clear that man was created to work and that *work is the stewardship of all of the creation that God has given him.*

This is the fundamental principle of biblical stewardship. God owns everything, we are simply managers or administrators acting on his behalf.

Therefore, stewardship expresses our obedience regarding the administration of everything God has placed under our control, which is all encompassing.

“Stewardship is the commitment of one’s self and possessions to God’s service, recognizing that we do not have the right of control over our property or ourselves.”

Echoing **Deuteronomy 8:17 (NIV)**, we might say: “*My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.*” But **Deuteronomy 8:18** counsels us to think otherwise:

Remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.

2. The principle of RESPONSIBILITY.

Although God “*richly provides us with everything to enjoy,*” we must be reminded that nothing is really ours. Nothing really belongs to us; God owns everything. While we can often be found complaining about our rights, The Bible constantly reminds us of our responsibilities. Owners have rights; stewards have responsibilities.

We are called as God’s stewards to manage that which belongs to God. While God has graciously entrusted us with the care, development, and enjoyment of everything he owns as his stewards, we are responsible to manage his holdings well and according to his desires and purposes.

3. The principle of ACCOUNTABILITY.

A steward is one who manages the possessions of another. We are all stewards of the resources, abilities and opportunities that God has entrusted to our care, and one day each one of us will be called to give an account for how we have managed what the Master has given us.

This is the proverb taught by the Parable of the Talents. God has entrusted authority over the creation to us and we are not allowed to rule over it as we see fit. We are called to exercise our dominion under the watchful eye of the Creator managing his creation in accord with the principles he has established.

Like the servants in the Parable of the Talents, we will be called to give an account of how we have administered everything we have been given, including our time, money, abilities, information, wisdom, relationships, authority and, as I spoke of last week, the revelation we’ve received from the Lord.

We will all give account to the rightful owner as to how well we managed the things he has entrusted to us.

Romans 14:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹for it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”

¹²So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

4. The principle of REWARD.

In **Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV)** Paul writes:

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

The Bible shows us in the parables of the Kingdom that faithful stewards who do the master's will with the master's resources can expect to be rewarded incompletely in this life, but fully in the next one.

As Christians in the 21st century, we need to embrace this larger biblical view of stewardship, which goes beyond church budgets or building projects, though important; it connects everything we do with what God is doing in the world.

God has called us to be faithful stewards of all He's given us by using the opportunities presented to glorify him, serve others and advance His Kingdom.