

Managing

Most people go through life and never think and behave like a steward. Because they don't own the business where they work, they never own their responsibility as stewards. They punch in and punch out without taking any ownership. And so goes their life, drifting toward the end, without giving serious thought to how they will answer for the squander of the gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

Luke 19:11-15 TPT

11 At this time Jesus was getting close to entering Jerusalem. The crowds that followed him were convinced that God's kingdom realm would fully manifest when Jesus established it in Jerusalem. **12** So he told them this story to change their perspective: "Once there was a wealthy prince who left his province to travel to a distant land, where he would be crowned king and then return. **13** Before he departed he summoned his ten servants together and said, 'I am entrusting each of you with fifty thousand dollars to trade with while I am away. Invest it and put the money to work until I return.' **14** "Some of his countrymen despised the prince and sent a delegation after him to declare before the royals, 'We refuse to let this man rule over us! He will not be our king!' **15** "Nevertheless, he was crowned king and returned to his land. Then he summoned his ten servants to see how much each one had earned and what their profits came to.

Jesus is telling a story to communicate truth in a way that people could easily understand. In this story, Jesus is the Prince, who became King (Philippians 2:10-11).

Luke 19:16-26 TPT

16 "The first one came forward and said, 'Master, I took what you gave me and invested it, and it multiplied ten times.' **17** "Splendid! You have done well, my excellent servant. Because you have shown that you can be trusted in this small matter, I now grant you authority to rule over ten fortress cities.' **18** "The second

came and said, 'Master, what you left with me has multiplied five times.' **19** "His master said, 'I also grant you authority in my kingdom over five fortress cities.' **20** "Another came before the king and said, 'Master, here is the money you entrusted to me. I hid it for safekeeping. **21** You see, I live in fear of you, for everyone knows you are a strict master and impossible to please. You push us for a high return on all that you own, and you always want to gain from someone else's efforts.' **22** "The king said, 'You wicked servant! I will judge you using your own words. If what you said about me is true, that I am a harsh man, pushing you for a high return and wanting gain from others' efforts, **23** why didn't you at least put my money in the bank to earn some interest on what I entrusted to you?' **24** "The king said to his other servants, 'Take the money he has and give it to the faithful servant who multiplied my money ten times over.' **25** "But master,' the other servants objected, 'why give it to him? He already has so much!' **26** "Yes,' replied the king. 'But to all who have been faithful, even more will be given them. And for the ones who have nothing, even the little they seem to have will be taken from them.

How will you steward, or manage, the coming year?

Do our ideas on stewardship (and life) line up with the word of God?

Do we want to steward the gifts, talents, time, and treasure that God has given us in the coming year in the same way we did this past year?

Poor Stewardship

Poor Stewardship is the Result of Misunderstanding

This often happens from **secondhand information**. Much of our knowledge of God comes from someone else.

We have been given responsibility to manage what God has allotted to us.

Some believe that what they have **belongs to them**. This includes material things as well as our successes and accomplishments.

Psalms 24:1 NLT

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him.

Sometimes **we judge God** to be Someone He is not.

We don't understand Him as a Father. Therefore we see Him as boss or judge or lawgiver. He doesn't take advantage of us. He isn't mean nor unfair.

Success is not a gamble. Stewardship is not about luck. The people who succeeded were the ones who were good stewards.

Successful people are good stewards of something.

Sometimes we **downplay the value and importance of our role** as God's steward.

"There are nine other people so individual performance doesn't matter that much. It doesn't matter what I do; someone else will do it."

A steward leaves something better than when they found it.

Some believe that they can **sit on what they've been given** because profit doesn't matter to God.

The church exists to multiply and profit the Master. God has given us stewardship of *everything* not just "spiritual things."

Profit matters to God. Multiplication matters to God.

Fear Keeps is from Proper Stewardship

The fear of **losing** what we have stops us from **using** what we have.

If we succumb to the fear of losing what we have we believe that it belongs to us.

Fear blocks our ability to seeing beyond ourselves, our needs, our safety, and our comfort. We never reach a point where stewardship doesn't matter anymore.

Love and respect should drive us beyond fear and enables us to take risks to please someone else.

Having the Wrong Motives Leads to Poor Stewardship

The love of money actually motivates better stewardship. But this leads to dissatisfaction as money becomes the god to this person.

The good steward doesn't only bless others, they bless themselves too.

Ambition to please self rather than pleasing God pleases no one in the end.

In the parable, there was no reward mentioned when the stewardship was given. Two of the three tested did not need that as motivation to serve the master with their stewardship.

We can be bound by slothfulness. A sloth moves extremely slow. And a slug is similar.

According to the "Institute in Basic Life Principles" slothfulness can be defined as follows:

Slothfulness develops gradually as a person makes "little" decisions with the goal of maintaining comfort and taking the easy path. A sluggard's choices may include decisions to stay in bed a little longer, extend lunch and coffee breaks at work, or spend time in idle chatter. A slothful person may procrastinate or refuse to work in adverse conditions.

The sluggard is not a self-starter. To him, one day is as good as another. He assumes that what he does not do today can just as easily be done tomorrow. The sluggard does not understand the value of time or the meaning of seasons. His basic philosophy is to live for the moment and let the future take its own course.

A slothful person is lethargic in everything he does. Each job becomes a mountain in

his path instead of a door of opportunity. If he is visited by success, he does not recognize or value it. To the sluggard, success simply means more work. Thus, he allows opportunities to slip by and permits half-completed jobs to spoil. Even the maintenance of what he possesses or governs becomes a burden to him.

Slothful behavior is often completely rationalized in the mind of the sluggard. He declares he would work if only there were fewer obstacles in his path. Because he has convinced himself that he is merely waiting for more favorable working conditions, he stubbornly denies accusations of laziness. *“The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason”* (Proverbs 26:16).

Conclusion

We need to recognize God’s call to stewardship. We are not the owners of our time, talent, or treasure. We offer these things to the Lord as a living sacrifice and steward it in a way that blesses others and honors God.

We need to repent for poor stewardship. We must acknowledge the slothfulness in our life as it applies and repent of it.

We need to receive the help of the Holy Spirit. In Christ we can do all things, even what we can not do in our own strength or through our own willpower.

Being faithful in “very little” led to ruling with the Master over much. Stewardship is a work of preparation for reigning with Christ.