

STEWARD OF THE KING—WEEK 2

Exodus 20:10, Proverbs 22:29, Malachi 3:10

January 14, 2024

1. Introduction

a. Welcome—Guests

b. Mission & Vision

c. Series—Steward of the King: God’s Resources in Your Hands

i. God’s Resources

1. Psalm 24:1. The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

ii. In Your Hands

1. 1 Peter 4:10. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.

2. 1 Corinthians 4:7. What do you have that you did not receive? Nothing! Everything we have is a gift.

iii. God’s Resources in Your Hands = Time, Talent & Treasure

1. Series will cover stewardship using the three T’s from creation to consummation—Genesis to Revelation.

iv. Last week—Our stewardship should reflect God’s ownership

1. He owns by giving—out of freedom, love & generosity. Not by taking or keeping.

v. Today: Restoring stewardship in a fallen world: Part 1—OT

1. QUESTIONS

- a. Who has teachers who make you do stuff to learn? Who is working with a coach or trainer who makes you do stuff to improve your skills at work or in a hobby, or to get in shape? Who is a teacher or trainer?
2. In the OT, God trains his people in how to exercise their stewardship of the resources he puts in their hands.
3. **Galatians 3:24**. So the law was our guardian (aka schoolmaster; children’s escort & supervisor) until Christ came that we might be justified by faith.
4. Eventually, with the coming of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit, the training wheels would come off as God’s people grew up into the freedom of living by the Spirit. But they/we need the training wheels to learn to ride.

2. **Old Testament Training in How to Steward the Time God Gives Us**

- a. 4th Commandment—Keep the Sabbath
 - i. **Exodus 20:8-11**. “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. **9** Six days you shall labor and do all your work, **10** but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. **11** For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the

Sabbath day and made it holy.

ii. All work—paid & unpaid, work & home—complete in six days. The seventh day ... rest. For the Israelites, it was Friday sundown to Saturday sundown.

iii. Scazzero: 4 elements of Sabbath

1. Stop
2. Rest
3. Delight
4. Contemplate

iv. Challenges

1. STORY. Scazzero was frustrated that people don't actually take a Sabbath. His friend said, "they can't!"
2. Shame—afraid of facing who we really are without the distraction of productivity
 - a. Workaholism = earning our value vs. Sabbath = resting in God's love

3. Old Testament Training in How to Steward the Talents God Gives Us

a. **Proverbs 22:29.** Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings; they will not serve before officials of low rank.

i. EXAMPLE. The building of the tabernacle.

b. **Exodus 25:8-9.** "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.

- c. **Exodus 25:31-40.** “Make a lampstand of pure gold. Hammer out its base and shaft, and make its flowerlike cups, buds and blossoms of one piece with them. 32 Six branches are to extend from the sides of the lampstand—three on one side and three on the other.33 Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms are to be on one branch, three on the next branch, and the same for all six branches extending from the lampstand. 34 And on the lampstand there are to be four cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms. 35 One bud shall be under the first pair of branches extending from the lampstand, a second bud under the second pair, and a third bud under the third pair—six branches in all. 36 The buds and branches shall all be of one piece with the lampstand, hammered out of pure gold. 37 “Then make its seven lamps and set them up on it so that they light the space in front of it. 38 Its wick trimmers and trays are to be of pure gold. 39 A talent of pure gold is to be used for the lampstand and all these accessories. 40 See that you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.
- d. **Exodus 31:1-5.** Then the LORD said to Moses, **2** “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, **3** and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— **4** to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, **5** to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts.
- e. God gave detailed instructions, training his people in how to steward the talents he entrusted to them. But lest they get carried away and start finding their identity in their work, God reminded them that while they steward their talents, they’re still stewards of their time. i.e. “don’t forget the Sabbath!”
- i. **Exodus 31:14-15.** ““Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it is to be put to death; those who do any work on that day must be cut off from their people. For six days work is to be done, but the seventh day is a day of

sabbath rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day is to be put to death.

4. **Old Testament Training in How to Steward the Treasure God Gives Us**

a. Freewill Offerings (continuing the same story of the tabernacle)

- i. **Exodus 36:2-7.** Then Moses summoned Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the LORD had given ability and who was willing to come and do the work. **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. **4** So all the skilled workers who were doing all the work on the sanctuary left what they were doing **5** and said to Moses, “The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the LORD commanded to be done.” 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.
- ii. God called his people to generous giving for his work in the world. And they responded! This is better than Adam & Eve’s sin of taking forbidden fruit.

b. The Tithe

- i. David Jones, Every Good Thing. The Hebrew term for “tithe,” which literally means “tenth,” is used 41 times in the OT. In the OT, tithing was part of an economic system prescribed by God, which was part of a larger, theocratic (God-centered) political system.... In the governmental system prescribed by God, tithing was necessary for the healthy economic functioning of society, and all citizens of Israel were required to tithe. Perhaps

the best modern parallel to the OT tithe is property or income tax.

- ii. As with the freewill offering in Exodus, there are examples of the people responding well to this stewardship requirement.
 1. 2 Chronicles 31:4-5. He [King Hezekiah] ordered the people living in Jerusalem to give the portion due the priests and Levites so they could devote themselves to the Law of the LORD. As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, olive oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything.
- iii. And there are examples when they did not steward God's treasure well.
 1. Malachi 3:8-9. "Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' "In tithes and offerings. **9** You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me.
- iv. Jones—Three Tithes
 1. The Levitical Tithe (aka Firstfruits tithe) was given annually for the Levites (priests) since they had no land to grow crops, raise livestock and provide for themselves and their families.
 2. The Celebratory Tithe (aka Second tithe) was given annually to provide food for Israelites who traveled to Jerusalem for the three annual religious celebrations at the temple.

3. The Poor Tithe was given every three years to care for the poor.
4. Altogether, the three tithes added up to at least 20% a year and 30% every third year. Every seven years was a Sabbatical in which the land rested and no harvest was brought in, so there was no tithe every seven years. At the end of the day, the OT tithes averaged 20% of all the material gains someone brought in.
5. Tithing 20% of their income ... that's a lot! Evidently some thought it was too much so they didn't do it—they robbed God! And he caught them!
6. It *IS* a lot if we're thinking like a typical owner. Remember, we're conditioned to exercise ownership by keeping—protecting what is rightfully ours—and by taking—acquiring as much more as we can in order to provide security, achieve a certain lifestyle, or maybe just to get by.
7. But remember how God owns, and how he calls his people to steward.

**God owns by giving—
out of freedom (not for anything in return),
out of love (desire for the good of the recipient) &
out of generosity (more than necessary),**

**And he calls his people (those made in his
likeness) to steward his resources his way.**

8. For those who had the faith and conviction to steward God's treasure in God's way, he said this ...

a. **Malachi 3:10-12.** 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 there will not be room enough to store it. **11** I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the LORD Almighty. **12** “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty.

9. I think this challenge from God fits perfectly with what we’ve seen about how he exercises his ownership of everything. He WANTS to give it away! More and more of it. He clearly loves being generous, and he’s incentivizing generosity from his people.

5. Conclusion

- a. In the OT, God trains his people in how to exercise their stewardship of the resources he puts in their hands. These are the training wheels he uses to restore the stewardship he gave the first man and woman when he created the world.
- b. With the coming of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit indwelling his followers, he established a spiritual kingdom, not a physical kingdom like OT Israel (not yet). And these legal requirements of the OT law went away like training wheels when we learn to ride a bike on our own. The lessons of the schoolmaster gave way to the freedom of maturity which we find in the New Testament. In the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles which we’ll get to in the next two weeks.
- c. For now, as we observe the lessons of the schoolmaster, what do we learn? Are we teachable? Can we see the principles and patterns of the

OT and see how they train us to live in the ways of God as spiritually mature Christians, or are we just glad we're not in God's economics 101 anymore?

d. QUESTIONS

i. Who has had training in the past that didn't carry over into the present? You stopped doing the things your training required once it wasn't required anymore. How'd that go?

1. EXAMPLES. Exercise. Counseling. Math. Greek.
2. Often we fail to mature from student to steward of the learning we receive, and that's to our detriment.
3. On the other hand, sometimes we go beyond it. The NFL playoffs are filled with individuals who take their training upon themselves. Business leaders and world shapers are people who move from being students—doing what they were required to do—to stewards—investing the resources given them by building on the foundation of their learning.
4. Have you made that move spiritually? Will you?

6. Invitation

- a. Take time to pray.