

I. Intro

A. Text: **1 Cor. 4:1-5**

¹ Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. ³ But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. ⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. (1 Cor. 4:1-5)

B. Where Do We Hurt the Most?

1. Finances

C. America is one of the richest nations in the world, yet financial bondage.

1. Freedom that is ill-managed is not freedom at all; but bondage.

2. America has the resources to fill all its internal needs. Yet, consumerism has robbed us of our peace.

D. Just walked out of the season to be jolly (Peace on earth and goodwill toward man).

1. No peace here.

2. The national economy is certain to take a turn up or down with the inauguration of president-elect Donald Trump's administration.

a. Things may get better.

b. It'll take time to fully recover

3. Recovery may take an incredible amount of time, but financial peace can take place in almost a moment.

E. Disclaimer: We will talk about money.

1. Acknowledge that finances is probably the biggest area where the church has been abusive in our culture.

2. Irresponsible to talk about sowing, tithing, sacrificial giving without first talking about stewardship.

* Let's talk about financial peace from a Biblical standpoint.

II. Body

A. Stewardship is BIG!

¹ *Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. (1 Cor. 4:1)*

1. Paul: When people think about us, ... stewards of the mysteries of God.
 - a. Thought we were talking money? Why the talk about stewarding the mysteries of God?
 - b. When we understand stewardship, it's simple to understand God's call on our lives in every area.

Steward (oikonomos #3623): *a servant who has been entrusted with someone else's affairs, estate or finances. A person who manages the affairs of someone else's house.*

2. Peter: I pray that you see yourself as stewards of the grace of God.
 - a. **1 Pet. 4:10**: ¹⁰ *As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*
3. Stewardship encompasses all of the Christian life.

B. God is looking for stewards: **Managers**, not **owners**. (1 Cor. 4:1, Ps. 24:1)

1. **God owns a business called everything! (Ps. 24:1)**

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." (Ps. 24:1 KJV)

- a. In your care, temporarily
 - i. We simply manage it, enjoy it, grow it.

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- ii. God's delegation of authority in no way diminishes His authority.
 - iii. It's still His

b. Creation validates ownership.

- i. He made it all. There was nothing that was made that did not come from his express thought, foreknowledge and resources.
- ii. He made it all. It all belongs to Him.

2. Most of our problems in finances come from this disorder called "mistaken ownership"

- a. Our perception often gets distorted just like this woman.
- b. Bent out of shape trying to defend something that doesn't even belong to us.
 - i. Ruin their lives over perceived financial rights
 - ii. Inheritance squabbles.

*God called us to enjoy the freedom associated with managing the King's estate!

- c. When we suffer from a bad case of mistaken ownership, that leads to a thing called bondage.
 - i. We actually lose our freedom.
 - ii. We lose our peace.
 - iii. We lose our purpose.

3. As believers, our tendency is to divide the sacred from the secular. We acknowledge that God owns some things, but we draw a line and mark out areas to keep God out.

- a. God, you own the church building, but the house belongs to me.
- b. God, you own my prayer time, study time and service times'; but my private time belongs to me.

* Major problems when we draw a line and decide that the concept of stewardship (managing God's resources), only works in churchy areas.

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4. Stewardship is the snapshot of the Christian life: “My life is not my own”
 - a. In everything, we steward with joy. Grateful that it was entrusted to us for a season.
 - i. We manage our mouths/ tongues...
 - ii. We manage our earthly vessels...
 - iii. We manage our bedrooms....
 - iv. We manage our computers, personal phones and social media accounts....

² *Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. (1 Cor. 4:2)*

C. Stewards are responsible and accountable. (1 Cor. 4:2, Gen. 2:15)

⁷ *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.* ⁸ *The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.* ⁹ *And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 2:7-9)*

1. In His infinite wisdom, God placed His earthly image bearer inside the garden
 - a. Keep, manage, tend and care for what belonged to God.

¹⁵ *The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend to keep it. (Gen. 2:15)*

- b. From the beginning... Tend and to Keep = To cultivate and to watch over.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (Gen. 2:15 – NIV)

- c. Nothing wrong with working what God entrusted you with.
 - d. Work what you got, right where you're at!

*Man was delegated authority to rule and to have dominion over the earth. But it was never intended for man to rule outside of the covering, wisdom and protection of God.

*Note: When God delegates authority, it never diminishes His authority.

2. God's custom was to come down in the cool of the day and commune with man.
 - a. The thought of stewarding was always designed for relationship with God, not independence from God.
 - b. God would come down and check to see how Adam and Eve were managing His resources.

*Biblical principle that stewards are responsible and accountable to the one who owns the wealth.

³ But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. (1 Cor. 4:3-4)

D. Unbelievable peace attached to stewarding in **dependence** and **obedience**. (1 Cor. 4:3-4)

1. I know nothing against myself. My conscience is clear.
 - a. I'm not in control. God's got me.
2. Dependence
 - a. **Prov. 10:22**: *The blessing of the LORD makes one rich, And He adds no sorrow with it.*
 - b. **Deut. 8:18**: *'And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth...*
 - c. Teenage/ Young Adult Kids in the House
3. Obedience
 - a. God's passion is the expansion of His kingdom; not our personal fulfillment.
 - b. Personal enjoyment with financial resources is not a bad thing
 - i. **1 Tim. 6:17**: *Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust*

in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

- c. Our enjoying is partly based on bringing Him joy.
- d. Driving over the speed limit Example.

⁵Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. (1 Cor. 4:4-5)

E. Faithful stewards can expect a loving reward. (1 Cor. 4:5, Col. 3:23-24)

²³And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. (Col. 3:23-24)

- 1. Heart's Desire: Bring increase and joy to the heart of Jesus
 - a. *"Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many... Enter into the joy of the Lord" (Matt. 25:21)*

III. Conclusion

- A. Is God concerned about how you do with money?
 - 1. God is concerned about every part of you.
- B. He's literally given you the Kingdom (including all the money, talents and resources you need to work your portion of the Kingdom)
 - 1. Astounding that an infinitely wealthy King... The King of Kings would entrust you to manage the riches of His Kingdom.
 - a. Knowing that He's coming back to take an account and He demands increase.
 - b. Knowing full well that we are terrible managers.
 - i. Terrible leaders.
- C. That's the good news: He knows that we are terrible at managing, yet He appoints us to it in our weakness.

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1. His plan was always for us to find the freedom to manage His resources through dependence on Him.
 2. Money is just one of them.
 3. We have peace in that He knows us, knows our weaknesses, yet calls us to a higher level.
 - a. Based on His provision