

# STEWARDSHIP

## A way of Life

Key verse:

**Matthew 25:**

**14-30**

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# Key Points:

- The master does not give each servant the same amount of talents.
- Important variable: what each servant does with what he's been
- Resource + work + time = Profit
- The servant went to work **not the money**
- **Faithful service**
  - Leads to increased responsibility
  - Eternal joy
  - Being in the "inner circle" of the master
- **Unfaithful service**
  - Led to condemnation
  - Removal of one's stewardship
  - Eternity of weeping in darkness
  - Away from the master

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- Definition

**Stewardship** is about faithfully developing and using our gifts, talents and resources within the amount of time God has allotted to us.

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### Time

- We all have 24 hours available to
  - ✓ build relationships
  - ✓ Make plans, goals, and visions
  - ✓ Cultivate our walk with God
  - ✓ Develop new skills
  - ✓ Live lives of adventure
  - ✓ Watch a lot of TV, etc.
- the amount of time available to us is not different
- What is different is the manner in which we exercise our gifts and talents within the available time.
  - ✓ We can waste time;
  - ✓ We can spend time; or
  - ✓ We can invest our time wisely.



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In every stewardship relationship, two parties involved:

➤ the master - God

- Gives the resources on the basis of ability
- will one day ask for an accounting

GOD - The Master / Creator

- Gave us our personalities, talents, desires
- Knows the name of each of us
- Knows, better than we do, what is in us
- Intends for us to do something with it
- Gives gifts that relates to His intentions for our lives
- Gave a calling to each of us

➤ the steward (US)

- entrusted with the resources and
- must eventually answer for how they were invested

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### Fundamental principle of Biblical Stewardship

- We own nothing.
- God owns everything; It's all God's
- We are simply managers.
- Our life is a trust given to us by God

“You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth” (Deuteronomy 8:17-18).

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### Implications of Biblical stewardship

**First implication** - since God owns it all, he holds the rights that come with ownership

- Since we only have what we have been allowed to have, then we operate primarily in the realm of responsibilities.
- God has rights; we have responsibilities.
- God has entrusted us with certain resources, gifts and abilities.
- These things rightfully belong to him.
- Our responsibility is to live by that trust by managing these things well, according to his design and desire.

**Second implication** - God owns everything and expects us to manage things according to his plan and purpose

- Every decision is a spiritual decision. Whether it's buying a new car or going to the movies, how we use our time and money matters a great deal to God.
- God demands to be in the loop on every investment, purchase and decision.

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### Ownership & Advantages

- ✓ God has no needs, and
- ✓ He did not create the universe because he was lonely or bored; the created order is the overflow of the fountain of LOVE.
- ✓ “You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).
  - ✓ Jesus owns us both by virtue of creation and of redemption.
  - ✓ He is the source of both our biological and spiritual lives.
- ✓ The creator has the rights of ownership.
- ✓ As stewards, we participate in a world that derives its being and sustenance from the infinite, personal Creator.

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### **The “Cultural Mandate”**

- God has entrusted to us the dignity and responsibility of being stewards of the resources and creatures of this planet.
- The first “Great Commission” in the Bible, also known as “The Cultural Mandate.” This is God’s idea for the human race:
  - a call to establish human society all over the world.
  - We are not to be subject to creation;
- we are to hold dominion over it.
- God’s world is incomplete without humanity in its proper place.

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### WHAT DO WE USE OUR RESOURCES FOR

- We who are children of light must use our power, resources and abilities to prepare for eternity. We do that in at least two ways. :
  - **Primarily**, we use our resources and abilities to make investments into eternal things - Matthew 6:19-21, 33
  - **Secondly**, we spread God's message, using whatever resources and skills we have so that others can prepare for the future as well. In this way we leverage the temporal resources of this world for the eternal treasures.
- As the children of light (Ephesians 5:8)
  - Do not lack sophistication be perceptive
  - Do not feel we should not use secular abilities or procedures in the work of the kingdom. But Jesus said, "Be as shrewd as serpents and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). We ought to be impressive examples of perceptiveness to this world.
- This "shrewd (perceptive) use of resources" must also include our money especially those who have been entrusted with so much of it.

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### Summary

- Biblical stewardship touches every area of our lives.
- It requires a basic commitment to present ourselves completely to God as his servants, with no strings attached.
- The real issue of stewardship is whether we are administering our affairs and possessions as if they are ours or as if they are God's.
- Our lives are shaped by the decisions we make, and there is no greater choice offered to us than surrender to the one who created us and knows us better than we know ourselves.
- The ultimate question, then, is this: *Am I the lord of my life, or is Christ the Lord of my life?*
- Our answer to this question will determine how we manage the time, abilities, money, truth and relationships God has placed under our care.
- A wise steward will treat things according to their true value, treasure the things God declares to be important and hold with a loose grip the things that God says will not matter in the end.

# STEWARDSHIP- A way of Life

- ***“I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all. But whatever I have placed in God’s hands, that I still possess.” — MARTIN LUTHER (1483-1546),***
- ***“One of the greatest missing teachings in the American church today is the reminder to men and women that nothing we have belongs to us.” — GORDON MACDONALD, PASTOR AND TEACHER***
- ***“Stewardship is the act of organizing your life so that God can spend you.” — LYNN A. MILLER, AUTHOR***