

Start here: Stewardship

Psalm 24:1

Announcements:

- 1) Women's Coffee Talk @ 3pm (cancelled)
- 2) Help in AWANA's
- 3) Family night for AWANA's
- 4) Help in Distance Learning

We are in week 5 of our 7 week series, "7 Weeks to a Better Body." We have talked about the church, what and who the church is and its role. We heard from retired Pastor Mike Miller, "Do you love God? Prove it!" If you love God, you will love others. We looked at what, who, and how we are to worship. Last week we heard from Jim Roe, one of our elders, "Do you love God? Serve Him." We are all called to serve Him. This week we will look at a Biblical principle that is very closely tied to serving God: Stewardship. When we understand

It would be real easy to talk about tithes and offerings as part of a series like "7 weeks to a better Body", because there is a financial side to the gathering of the church. There are bills, salaries, maintenance, ministries, and more that the church must be responsible to and that comes through people of God giving to the work of God.

However, the topic of tithes and offerings on its own is a narrow view of a greater topic that is much more important to a healthy church...and that topic is 'Stewardship'. A healthy Biblical worldview of being a steward includes all of our resources—time, treasures, and our talents—and our very life.

What is Biblical Stewardship?

In scripture, a steward is someone who manages.

In ancient times, it was common for the wealthy to hire a steward of the house to care for the house. His role was to care for the money, keep up on the maintenance, make sure there was food, make decisions, manage the property, care for the grounds, and more. A prime example of this in scripture is when Potiphar took on Joseph in Genesis 39.

The Bible has a lot to say about managing and gives us a framework to understand who the managers are to be.

Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning *God* created...”
-right off the bat we see who owns everything.

Genesis 1:26-28 “Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.” So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

—Did you catch that? How we steward [manage, care for, deal with] the things of this world reflects who God is. “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us”. God reigns over us and all of creation. We too are to reign over creation as stewards of what God has made.

Genesis 2:15 “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to *work it and keep it.*”

- A. ‘To work it’ connotes serving it, being responsible to it, cultivating it.
- B. ‘Keeping it’ connotes caring for it, preserving it, observing it, not exploiting or abusing it
- C. There is a balance here that we have a hard time finding in our world today. There are extremes—you have those that want to save certain parts of creation at the cost of human life and progress and you have those that are willing to get rid of parts of creation to make humans’ life easier or just so we can have what we want.

This wasn’t such a chore before sin entered the world. In the world economy God created, we weren’t fighting against sin. We were effective. There wasn’t a burden in work. We didn’t have the struggles that cause us to sweat, fret, and compete. Work was fully satisfying, beautifying, and complete. *Man we messed things up and made it harder on ourselves! If only we would obey God.*

The principle we must start with: “*The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*” *Psalms 24*

Psalm 89:11 is like it as well, “The heavens are Yours, and the earth is Yours; everything in the world is Yours—You created it all.”

If we can wrap our heads and hearts around this concept, it will shape not just how you serve, but why. It will shape not just how we use our time, but also how we view it. It will shape not just how we use our talents, who are talents are to be used for and what they can accomplish. It will shape not just how we use our treasures, but what our treasures can be used for.

Stewardship is a worldview. It is an everyday mindset. It is not a compartmentalized concept that we use just ‘for church’ or when it fits our agenda. It’s a way of worship—everyday. It’s an underlying principle of serving and understanding our role as humans. It’s a role that comes with promise and reward.

We are told God will never leave us, nor forsake us. We are told God will supply all our needs according to His bountiful riches [Eph 3]. We are told we don’t have to worry. He cares about the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, how much more does he care about humanity? [Matt 6] We are told that ‘we will reap what we sow’. We are told that we

Listen to a quote from C. S. Lewis in Mere Christianity:

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.

Why and how are we to steward?

To bring God glory and honor through the command and blessing He has given us. That is the essence of worship—to glory and honor, to give greater value. How we steward reveals what we worship and our intensity of worship.

If I believe I own what I have, i earned it, to some degree it is getting some of my worship, maybe all of my worship and I can very easily end up making myself out to be the god of my castle.

If I believe that God has given it to me to steward and use, and I use it to bring Him glory and honor, then I am going to give God greater value than the stuff I am stewarding. I will put my trust in God instead of those things and my abilities, because I believe that God gave me the talent to use the stuff I have been given to use, and when moth and rust destroy it, my faith won't be shaken. My treasure won't be found in those things, but in heaven. I will trust that God has something greater in store and give Him time to reveal it.

1 Chronicles 29:11 “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. *We adore you* as the one who is over all things.

You can also answer the question of “How are we to steward?” with this answer also: to bring God glory and honor. We use our time in a way that brings God glory and honors Him. We use our treasures in a way that bring God glory and honors Him. We use our talents in a way that brings God glory and honors Him.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10 that we have freedom to use and consume what God has created. He says in verse 26, “For the earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it.” But!, he makes it clear that just because it is of God’s creation, it doesn’t mean it is good for you OR the people around you it may cause to stumble or confuse. verse 23 and 24 tells us, “You say, “I am allowed to do anything” —but not everything is good for you. You say, “I am allowed to do anything” —but not everything is beneficial. Don’t be concerned for your own good but for the good of others.”

Part of our stewardship must involve our conscience, our level of maturity in Christ, and even the conscience and maturity level in Christ of those around us.

The concept of ‘How we are to steward’ is found in verse 31, “So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” But, we must remember the context that gives us depth to understanding what this means. How we steward the things of this world has a vertical truth [between me and God] and a horizontal impact [between me and you].

Hebrews 13:5 “Don’t love money, be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, “I will never fail you, I will never abandon you.”

Do you trust that God is enough? That He in Himself is truly satisfying? Do you trust that He will provide? Do you trust that He will care for your needs...not felt needs, but true needs?

Looking at the opposite of a Biblical truth often times gives us an even greater understanding. Here are a couple opposites of stewardship:

- a) Greed—the idea of never being satisfied; having to gain more giving a false sense of gratification and satisfaction, power, and self sufficiency and safety. Greed is a result of discontent and selfishness. It’s trust in self and things, instead of God and His provision and His will.
- b) Comparison—or really covetousness. Yearning or wanting what someone else has. The comparison game is the opposite of stewardship because it is really saying to the ‘owner’ [God], I don’t trust that you have given me what you know to be the best for me to have. You have shortchanged me and like them better.
- c) Laziness—this is different than rest. We are to and need to have moments of rest. Laziness is anything from giving a partial effort to no effort. It’s doing a ‘good’ enough job to get by. At that point we are working to please man [or the self] instead of ‘doing it all to the glory of God’.
- d) Busyness-being to busy is also the opposite of stewardship. Being to busy can take away the opportunity to work on matters of our faith that need to be worked on, but we are too busy ‘doing’ things. Sometimes we do this with our kids. We get them involved in so many things, they learn to be busy instead of disciplined.
- e) Vices—vices are immoral or wicked behaviors. All sin to some degree is a vice. All sin is sin against God and an affront to His holiness. Our sin takes away from our testimony of who God is. It takes away from revealing a true image of God, to revealing a distorted image of God—intentionally or not. Because of being born with a sin nature and living in this world, we still have a problem, we are still pulled towards sin, towards vices. When we give into our vices, we in turn become poor stewards of the gospel, our testimony, and image bearers.

Luke 12:48 says, “to whom much is given, much will be required”.

Matthew 16:27 says, “For the Son of Man will come with his angels in the

glory of his Father and will judge all people according to their deeds.” 2 Corinthians 5:10 even says, “For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.”

This isn’t speaking about being good enough for salvation or losing salvation. This is speaking after our salvation has already been accepted or not accepted in this life. This is speaking after death. You and I will still be judged for what we did or did not do with the opportunities we had and according to if it was for God’s glory or for personal gain.

It is easy to assume that only wealthy people have been “given much,” but, in truth, we have all been given much ([1 Corinthians 4:7](#)). We have been granted the abundant grace of God ([Ephesians 1:3–10](#); [3:16–21](#); [Romans 5:8–11](#); [8:14–17](#)), the Word of God, and the [gifts of the Holy Spirit](#) ([John 14:16–21](#); [16:13](#); [Romans 12:6](#)). “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms” ([1 Peter 4:10](#)).

We should also not assume that the less we know about God and His gifts, the less we’ll have to do. As evident in Jesus’ parable, we are held responsible to know our master’s will. God has plainly shown us what He requires ([Micah 6:8](#)).

God gives us resources such as finances and time, talents such as culinary skills or musical ability, and spiritual gifts such as encouragement or teaching. We should ask God for wisdom on how to use those resources and commit ourselves to expending them according to His will so that He may be glorified. In regards to spiritual gifts, Paul said, “We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully” ([Romans 12:6–8](#)). This is simply responsible stewardship.

Here are 4 principles of stewardship:

- 1) Principle of ‘I own nothing’
 - 1) It’s all God’s, I am the steward
- 2) Principle of Responsibility

- 1) In scripture we have rights, but for every right, there is a corresponding responsibility
 - 2) We have a family: they are God's creation. We are to care for, provide, protect, nurture, point to Jesus
 - 3) We have a job: given to us by God. We do our best, be on time, work for the benefit of the company with integrity, as to the Lord
 - 4) We are part of the church: we have fellowship, but we have a role to play with gifting given by God that we are to use for the purpose of building up the church, bringing the gospel message to everyone
 - 5) Relationships: we are given friendship and family, bring forgiveness, create opportunity for emotional health and well-being, support
 - 6) the Gospel: we are to be salt and light. We have been given the gospel, we are to go and share the gospel
- 3) Principle of Accountability
- 1) We all have been given time, treasures, and talents and the accountability level is high
 - 2) We are required to use them for God's benefit and purpose
 - 3) In the parable of the Talents in Matthew 25, the servant who used the talents for the benefit and furthering of the master was rewarded, but the one who did nothing with what little he was given, even that was taken away.
 - 1) Don't use excuses like "I wasn't sure what my gifts were." "I didn't know enough." or "I'll fully invest myself into God later when I am more able." There is accountability and you will be judged for what you did or did not do.
- 4) Principle of Reward
- 1) We will obtain rewards for doing good works in Christ's name, for persevering under persecution, caring for the needy, taking care of our family, treating enemies kindly, and generous (key) generous giving.
 - 2) By the way, your salvation is not a reward. You did nothing to earn it. It was a free gift of a very benevolent, loving God.
 - 3) There is a great quote by Randy Alcorn, "Belief determines our eternal destination...where we'll be. Behavior determines our eternal rewards...what we'll have."

Biblical stewardship connects us with more than a budget, tithing, and finances; it connects everything we do with what God is doing in the world. Do we manage our lives in a way that brings glory and honor to God? If so, then we will look to our talents, time, and our treasure to be

used for God's glory and honor. We will use them with the purpose to bring His kingdom into the hearts of those around us.

This issue of Stewardship is a spiritual issue. How we steward our time, treasures, and talents reveals our depth of trust and worship to God. Being a good steward is about the owners benefit: it's being about the owners purpose, the owners honor, and furthering the owners kingdom.

Some questions to leave with you:

Does your 'stuff' keep you from serving God in an area He wants you to, better said, has prepared for you to serve in?

Are you so busy with life you have to squeeze God in?

The inner essence of worship is the treasuring of God as infinitely valuable above everything. The outer forms of worship are the acts that show how much we treasure God. Therefore all of life is meant to be worship because God said whether you eat or drink or whatever you do – all of life – do it all to show how valuable the glory of God is to you (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Money and things are a big part of life, and therefore God intends them to be a big part of worship – since all of life is to be worship. So the way you worship with your money and your possessions is to get them and use them and lose them in a way that shows how much you treasure God – not money. John Piper

—and that is the concept of all things we are to steward

This week I encourage you to look at 3 of Jesus's parables that speak of our stewardship.

Luke 16:1-18, the Shrewd Manager

Luke 19:11-27, the Parable of the 10 pieces of silver, and a similar parable in Matthew 25:14-30. These two parables gives us an understanding of good versus bad stewardship.