

BEING A GOOD STEWARD

In the Word of God, we are instructed to be good stewards (***1 Peter 4:10***). Webster's Dictionary defines a steward as one to whose care is committed the management of a household. One who acts as a supervisor of finances or property for another. One of your duties as a new believer is to support the church with your talents, finances and prayers.

Jesus spoke of a steward who was responsible for what was entrusted to him. To this steward, his master said, "...Give an account of your stewardship..." (***Luke 16:2***). We are responsible to be a good and faithful steward of basically three things: (1) *our time* (2) *our talents* and (3) *our treasure*. We are not our own (***1 Cor. 6:19***), and each of us shall give an account of himself to God (***Romans 14:12***).

A. Our Time

As good stewards of God, we are responsible for our time. The most precious commodity that each one of us has is time. Time must not be squandered. Each one of us has been given 24 hours a day. Our success or failure in life depends on how we use our time. We are told by the Apostle Paul to, "*redeem the time...*" (***Eph.5:15-16***). This involves knowing what we want to do and how we are going to do it.

1. Goals and Priorities

Managing your time requires self-discipline. This means that you need to have both short-term and long-term goals. If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there. The faster you travel, the sooner you will get nowhere. When you aim at nothing, you will hit the target. If you don't know where you are going, you will waste valuable time wandering about meaninglessly, and will result in a wasted life. Take time to pray about your objectives in life.

2. Schedules

Time can be abused, wasted, and slept away; or it may be redeemed, conserved, and used wisely for self-improvement, spiritual growth, and the service of others. When you organize your life by a schedule, it sets you free from worry, guilt and the frustration of not doing the important things you need to do daily. There should be a time for prayer and Bible reading. Learn to plan months ahead. This will help you know what you are going to do and when you are going to do it. It will save you untold confusion and frustration.

3. Activities

The *good* things in life are often the enemies of the *best* things in life. You should arrange your activities to do the *best* things with your time. Some questions you can ask yourself are: (1) *will this count ten years from now?* (2) *Will this count in eternity?* (3) *Is this helping me reach my goals?* A very helpful tool I like to use is

a “to do” list. Every night you should do a list of “to do” things for the following day in order of importance. As you pray, you will probably add some things to this list rather than forgetting them. “To do” lists can be expanded to long-term goals as well.

B. Our Talents

In Matthew 25:14-30 Jesus gave us a parable illustrating the importance of using our talents. We all have something to offer. A beautiful lesson to learn from this parable is that they were not commended for their exploits but for their obedience and faithfulness in using their talents. The man with one talent maybe buried his talent because he felt inferior to his fellow servants. But he was lazy, and misjudged the Lord by thinking He was a hard man, making unjust demands upon his servants. In God’s eyes, success is not measured by how famous or important we are or how much money or material goods we have, but whether we have been obedient in using our talents to fulfill His will in our lives.

We serve the Lord out of love and gratitude, not by force (*Hebrews 12:28*). Make a list of things you can do and the abilities you possess. Find out about opportunities to serve in the local Church, and make yourself available in these areas in which you feel capable. If you have musical talents, a passion for children, youth or any other gifting, put it to use for the Lord. Expect to be used in small things first. In time, an opportunity will present itself and you will be used.

C. Our Treasure

About half of the parables Jesus talks about in the Bible refer to money. In *Matthew 6:21* Jesus talks about our treasures. How people handle money is a pretty good indication of their relationship with God. It has been said that when Jesus saves a man, He saves his pocketbook too. If Jesus is Lord of all, then He is Master of the purse as well. Whenever you give money, give it as unto the Lord, not as though you are giving it to a man. Let's look at some reasons why we should give of our finances to God

1. Because We Love Him

This should be the only reason we need to give to the Lord of the finances that He has blessed us with. God loved us so much that He gave (*John 3:16*).

2. To Reach the Lost

Our giving helps to reach precious souls with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Salvation is free, but to take the message of salvation to others costs money. The ministers are only able to do their work full time if we support them with our finances (*Romans 10:13-15*).

God has ordained that His ministers be supported by His people (*Matthew 10:10, I Cor. 9:7-14*). *Hebrews 7:4-10* declares that, “here men receive tithes...” In the

book of *Galatians 6:6*, Paul explains that the teachers of divine things should receive ministerial support from those being instructed. We must give according to our blessing and God will bless us according to our giving.

3. **Because We Love Our Church Family**

We give because we love our church family and want to do our part as responsible members to support it. Remember it takes money to pay the rent, utilities, advertising, maintenance etc. to keep the House of the Lord looking nice so God's people can enjoy it.

4. **Because It Is Commanded By God**

Anytime someone starts talking about money and tithes, people get defensive. However, this is a divine principle that God established in His kingdom to bless His people. You reap whatever you sow. So if you sow money into good soil (*good ministry, or a good cause*), you will reap abundantly. The Lord Jesus commanded us to give, and said it would result in blessings for us, in proportion to what we give (*Luke 6:38*). We are to give our tithe (*10% of income*) and offerings (*any money we give besides the tithe*) to the Lord (*Malachi 3:8-10*). We should give it cheerfully, not out of necessity (*2 Corinthians 8:12, 9:7*).

D. **Our Family**

The Word of God has a lot to say about the home and the relationship among family members. The way you handle your family relationships will affect your walk with God. The enemy will seek to bring strife and confusion into the home of a Christian family. Most problems in marriage relationships are of a spiritual nature, and therefore can only be fixed using spiritual principles. You cannot fix these problems using psychology or worldly remedies. Christ must be included in the equation.

The word of God has clear and powerful teaching to help build solid spiritual lives and homes. God has laid clear-cut lines of authority and responsibility in the family. It is vital to recognize this structure of Divine Order to achieve well being and happiness in the family life.

1. **Divine Order for the Family**

There is a divine order of authority, which is spoken of in the Bible. Jesus spoke on the subject of authority many times, so did the apostle Paul in several of his epistles. The principles of Divine Order are outlined below and should be studied carefully. Jesus Christ is the head of the husband, and Lord of the family (*I Corinthians 11:3*). The husband lives under the authority of Christ and is responsible to Christ for the leadership and care of the family. He needs to love and honor his wife, protect her and provide for her needs.

The wife lives under the authority of her husband and needs to submit, respect and reverence him (*Ephesians 5:24-33*). The children live under the authority of both parents and are commanded to honor and obey them in everything (*Colossians 3:20*). Any change from this will only bring forth a dysfunctional family for which there is no cure-except a return to God's original order.

2. Submission

Submission is one of the most beautiful and powerful concepts in the New Testament. To be submissive means to yield humble and intelligent obedience to an ordained power of authority. God did not have a grudge against women when He gave this commandment. He established it for the protection of women and the harmony of the home. God never forces anyone to submit, but He honors only those who choose freely this role.

3. Respect and Reverence

The fullest definition of this word can be found in the Amplified New Testament: "Let the wife see that she respects and reverences her husband-that she notices him, regards him, honors him, prefers him, venerates and esteems him; and that she defers to him, praises him, and loves and admires him exceedingly."

4. Love and Honor

The husband is explicitly commanded to love and honor his wife. Please note in Ephesians 5 that the husband is told three times to love his wife. Although the scriptures place great emphasis on the submission of the wife, they also put equally strong emphasis on the fact that the husband must love his wife. There will be times when the husband feels anything but affection for her. However, love is not primarily a feeling, but a choice for the other's highest good. The husband must get his emotions under control and do what is right. He must learn to forgive and show Christ-likeness love. Without it, his prayers will be hindered and his marriage doomed to failure.