

A People of the Book
A Topical Study

A Study of

Stewardship

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Understanding Stewardship

Introduction

In the next several weeks we will focus our attention upon the subject of stewardship. Our goal will be to seek to understand the biblical principle of stewardship as it relates to us as Christians. As Christians, we need to see that the concept of stewardship must become an integral part of our everyday life. We are stewards of Christ & as stewards we must be faithful to our calling.

1. What is stewardship?

- a. **Definition** – the word describes the responsible activity or obligation of a servant for his master.
- b. **Task** – to manage the affairs of the master – attend the receipts & expenditures; portion out to each in the household what should be coming to them.
- c. **Anglo-Saxon word** = equivalent of a “house warden”
- d. **Idea** - One who takes great care of that which is entrusted to them & gives it out faithfully as directed.

2. Christians are spoken of as stewards for Jesus

- a. 1 Cor.4:1,2 – Paul saw himself as a steward of the mystery of God
 - 1) **Context** – people exalting one minister above another - division
 - 2) **Thought** – see ministers for what they are
 - a) **Word means an *under-rower*** – slaves that pulled the oars on ocean going vessels
 - b) **Their task** – to serve the master of the ship & him only
 - c) **Ministers are stewards** - slaves that serve their master Jesus – in charge of others who also serve their master Jesus
 - d) The minister does not deal with perishable things such as money and possessions, but with the eternal things of God Himself, the eternal truths that God wants proclaimed to the world.
 - e) As stewards they must be faithful – not required to be eloquent or great administrators or even counselors – just faithful
- b. Titus 1:7 – Elders are seen as stewards of the affairs of God
 - 1) The bishop or elder is the steward of God’s church and God’s people.
 - a) He does not own the church, nor are they his possession.
 - b) He is in charge of their provision & education, of their nourishment and growth, of their behavior and duties.
 - 2) He must see that the household of God is cared for & looked after & that their energies and lives are directed to the will of the Master.
 - 3) Above all else, the steward must do the will of the Master; carry out His word without any deviation whatsoever.
 - a) This is what is meant by being “blameless as a steward of God.”
 - b) The steward exists solely for the Master—solely to see that the word of God is done.

- c. 1 Pet.4:10 – Christians are stewards of the manifold grace of God
- 1) As stewards we are in charge of the grace & gifts God has given us
 - a) No one else can look after or use the gift you have.
 - b) If it is to be used, the believer has to use it.
 - 2) Realize the awesome responsibility that has been placed into our hands.
 - a) No one can exercise the gift of the believer except the believer.
 - b) The only energy and effort that can arouse and use the gift is the believer's own energy and effort.
 - c) If we fail to exercise and use our gift, then the gift lies dormant and is never used. We fail in his task. Our mission upon earth is unfulfilled.
 - d) We must then face God as a failure in life. We failed to use the gift God had given us, failed to complete our task and mission upon earth.

3. Our responsibilities as stewards

a. Being aware that God owns everything

- 1) 2 Chron.29:11 – everything in heaven & earth is yours
- 2) Everything we have is what God has allowed us to enjoy & care for
- 3) Everything we have comes to us with an undeniable responsibility
- 4) Real happiness comes only when we acknowledge God & wisely manage His resources.

b. Responsibly manage whatever God has given us

- 1) **Our role** = manage the resources given us in a way that maximizes God's investment in us.
- 2) **Make the most of every opportunity.** Like the 5 talent man & the two talent man – bring about an increase
- 3) 1 Pet.4:10,11

c. Always remembering we are accountable before God

- 1) We will be required to give an accounting
- 2) Lk.16:9-13
 - a) We are being told to use our wealth to help others.
 - b) By so helping, we will gain friends and influence them for Christ. Then when we find ourselves without resources in this life, he will more likely be helped by those whom we have helped. Also we gain an abundant welcome in heaven.
 - c) Unfaithfulness in using our gifts & trusts disqualifies us from receiving the true riches
 - d) It is impossible to serve both God & possessions

4. Our motivations to be faithful stewards

a. God is the creator & absolute owner of all – Gen.1:1; Deut.10:14

- 1) Rom.1:18-20 – God's wrath comes on all who refuse to accept this
- 2) Man has been given the responsibility to care for God's creation
Gen.1:28-30

- 3) Christians are called upon to implement God's rule upon the earth
Mt.6:10; Mt.28:20,21 (pray for & teach that it may be so)

b. Our redemption is also a great motivator

- 1) Eph.2:1-10 – He loved us though we are undeserving
a) Our very nature is to be objects of His wrath
b) God's love for us motivated Him to raise us up with Jesus
c) We were created to accomplish good works & glorify God
- 2) 2 Cor.5:14,15 – Christ's love for us compels us
a) He died for all
b) Now we are to live for Him not for self

c. The joy we receive being in Christ

- 1) 2 Cor.8:2 – incredible joy overcame their extreme poverty
2) Phil.4:1 – Paul saw his labor among the Philippians' as his joy & crown
3) Jesus taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive
(blessed = happy or favored)

d. The more faithful stewards we are the more God enriches us spiritually

- 1) Lk.16:9-13
2) 1 Tim.6:17-19

Examples Of Stewardship

Introduction

As we seek to understand the biblical principle of stewardship we need to see stewardship in action. Last week we focused upon understanding stewardship & it's place in Christianity. We are stewards of God & as stewards we are required to be faithful to our calling. In this lesson we will seek to see stewardship in action.

1. In the Old Testament

- a. **God** – in creating & sustaining the world
 - 1) Gen.1:1 – in beginning God created the heavens & the earth
 - 2) Ps.19:1-6 – heavens declare His glory
 - 3) Ps.24:1,2 – earth is the Lord's
 - 4) **Notice** – He didn't just create it & walk away – continued to care for it
- b. **Abraham** – giving the tithe to Melchizedek
 - 1) Gen.14:17-20
 - 2) Was so thankful for the prayer of blessing he gave a 10th
- c. **Jacob's vow** – give God a 10th of all if cares for him
 - 1) Gen.28:20-22
 - 2) The tithe belongs to God – Lev.27:30-33
 - 3) Deut.14:22,23 – one reason we give it is so we learn to revere the Lord
 - 4) Mal.3:6-12 – receiving from The Lord contingent upon our giving
- d. **Freewill offerings of the Israelites**
 - 1) Ex.25:1,2 – requested by God for the Tabernacle
 - 2) Ex.35:1-36:7 – people gave so much asked to stop giving
- e. **David** – refused to give what cost him nothing
 - 1) 2 Sam.24:24
 - 2) Knows he has a responsibility – willing to sacrifice to give to God
- f. **What God is looking for from man**
 - 1) Ps.50:1-15 – gratefulness & fulfilling their vows
 - 2) Ps.51:16,17 – broken spirit; broken & contrite heart
 - 3) 1 Sam.15:22,23 – obedience

2. The teachings of Jesus

- a. Lk.12:15-21
 - 1) **Watch out for greed**
 - a) Eccles.5:10,11 – man never satisfied by wealth
 - b) Eccles.6:7 – appetite never satisfied
 - c) Prov.21:25,26 – man wants something for nothing
 - 2) **Life not consist in abundance of possessions**
 - a) Lk.9:25 – what profit – gain whole world & lose soul?
 - b) Eccles.5:15-17 – man leaves all behind in death
 - 3) **Rich fool**
 - a) Self-centered & trusted his destiny to his wealth
 - b) Jesus not criticize his wealth, just his attitude toward his wealth

- b. Lk.18:18-30
 - 1) Rich man stood in his own way concerning his salvation
 - 2) Trusted in & worshiped his wealth & was unable to accept Jesus
- c. Mt.19:21
 - 1) Through our giving to the poor we lay up treasure in heaven (Mk.10:21)
 - 2) Lk.12:32,33 – treasure that will never be exhausted
- d. Lk.16:1-15
 - 1) Material possessions are to be used for good
 - 2) Those faithful to trust given greater responsibilities
- e. Lk.16:19-31
 - 1) Rich man not see need for stewardship – did nothing
 - 2) Not condemned for his wealth, just his use of his wealth
- f. Mk.12:41-44
 - 1) She gave out of her poverty
 - 2) Jesus noticed what left over, not just what gave – determined amount

3. The early church

- a. Acts 2:44,45 – spontaneously shared
- b. Acts 4:32-35 – none claimed possessions as theirs – shared, no greed
- c. Acts 4:36,37 – Barnabas sold land for needy
- d. Acts 5:1-11 – Ananias & Sapphira selfishness cost them their lives
- e. 2 Cor.8 & 9 – example of churches in Macedonia (extreme poverty)
 - 1) God desires willing cheerful givers
 - 2) What reap is determined by what we sow
 - 3) God able to provide abundantly so can give abundantly

Stewardship And The Great Commission

Introduction

Stewardship – taking responsibility to complete the tasks given us affects every aspect of the Christian life. Last week we saw several examples of stewardship from both the Old Testament & the teachings of Jesus. In this lesson our focus will be stewardship as it relates to fulfilling the great commission.

1. The charge

- a. Mt.28:18-20 – go make disciples of all the nations
- b. Mk.16:15,16 – preach the gospel to all creation
- c. Lk.24:47 – repentance & forgiveness of sin preached to all the nations
- d. Acts 1:8 – be My witnesses to the ends of the earth
- e. Jesus fully intended that His message (the gospel) would continually be preached to all nations & every human being.

2. How is this to be fulfilled?

a. Personal

- 1) Mt.28:19 – go = “as you are going”
- 2) Whenever & wherever you might go – focus on spreading the gospel

b. Corporate

- 1) Rom.10:13-17
 - a) Whosoever – anyone & everyone regardless of race, nationality, background or family – all welcome
 - b) Call upon the name of the Lord– cry out to; appeal to
 - (1) It means that a person surrenders and dedicates himself to serve Jesus Christ throughout life—in everything and through everything, no matter the cost.
 - (2) Person believes & accepts Jesus as Lord – the one who can save them
- 2) **Questions in the text**
 - a) How are they to call upon Him unless they believe?
 - b) How can they believe in one they never heard about?
 - c) How can they hear without someone preaching to them?
 - d) How can they preach unless someone is sent?
- 3) **Someone must go with the message – someone must be sent**
 - a) Only way people will totally submit to Jesus is if someone takes the time & energy to carry the gospel to them
 - b) Without the messenger – never believe or even know to respond
- 4) **Who goes? Who sends them?**
 - a) Unless we accept the responsibility – not done
 - b) Jesus expects His disciples to take on that responsibility
- 5) **How are they sent?**
 - a) Generous contributions of believers
 - b) III Jn.5-8 – not seek help from pagans; believers help them

- c) Titus 3:12-14 – see they have everything they need
- d) Rom.15:17-24 – have you assist me on my journey
- e) Phil.1:3-6 – partnership with Paul in sharing the gospel

3. Paul argues for the support of those who spread the gospel – our obligation

a. 1 Cor.9:1-18

- 1) The right to food, support for their families & needed livelihood
- 2) Illustrations
 - a) Soldiers supported by their country
 - b) Farmers eat of the crops
 - c) Herdsmen supported by their flocks
 - d) Even scripture supports this – Deut.25:4
 Note the question: “Does God take care of oxen?” Yes, he has provided in His Word for oxen. Men are to feed the oxen, for the oxen serve men. If God expects men to take care of the beasts who serve them, how much more does He expect men to take care of the ministers who labor for their spiritual welfare?
- 3) Those who sow spiritual seed are to be supported materially
 - a) Paul not insist so as to not hinder the gospel
 - b) Temple workers supported by worshipers
 - c) Lord’s command – those who preach be supported by believers

b. 1 Tim.5:17,18

- 1) The word “honor” (time) means more than just esteem and respect. It means to pay and bestow what is due; he is due compensation, some pay, some wage for his labor.
- 2) Double pay - means adequate, ample, sufficient, and generous financial support. The oxen were never muzzled. He was allowed to eat as much grain as he wished, for he was considered to have earned all the grain he wished. So it is to be with the minister of God. He is worthy of his labor.

4. Teachings of Jesus on this matter

a. Matt.10:5-13 – the 12 apostles

- 1) Freely give your message of hope – take care of needs
- 2) Take nothing to support you – expect live from labor

b. Lk.10:1-7 – the 72 others

- 1) Pray for more workers
- 2) Take nothing to support self - Worker deserves his wages

5. Stewardship & every good work

a. 2 Cor.9:8-11

- 1) God wants us to abound in every good work
- 2) When do – God multiplies harvest so can be even more generous

- 3) *God is able* to make all grace abound and overflow toward us. God is able to *pay us back* what we give.
- 4) Truth: the believer receives so that he can give.
 - a) This means that no believer has an excuse for hoarding and *keeping back* more than he needs. God did not give it to him to *keep back*.
 - b) God gives it to the believer to meet the desperate needs of the world.
 - c) The believer is only a channel through which God sends His blessings to the world.
 - d) To keep back more than what one needs is stealing—not only stealing from the desperate of the world, but stealing from God.

b. Stewardship is required to meet congregational needs

- 1) Facilities, maintenance & construction, furnishings
- 2) Services needed – heat, cooling, lights etc
- 3) Christian education
 - a) Mt.28:20 – teaching all Jesus taught
 - b) Eph.4:11-14 – preparing God’s people for works of service

c. Stewardship is required in handling benevolence

- 1) James 1:27 – religion that God accepts
 - a) Is personal = keep oneself from being polluted by world
 - b) Is meeting needs = visiting widows & orphans in distress
Visit = go to see & relieve; look upon to help
Distress = burdens & troubles
- 2) 1 Jn.3:16-20
 - a) Our obligation is to others
 - b) If blessed with material things are to share them
 - c) Our love for others is to be seen in actions not just words
- 3) Ought to use most efficient means possible – so help more

Finding The Right Balance In Stewardship

Introduction

The idea around stewardship is assuming responsibility, fulfilling our obligations concerning the charge that has been given to us. God expects us to renounce all that we have as disciples of Jesus, yet at the same time He wants us to fulfill our obligations to our families, our employers & our governments. How can we find the right balance so that we can faithfully fulfill these obligations to ourselves as well as the needs of those around us & also make sure the gospel is spread to the entire world? In this lesson we will seek to answer some of these questions.

1. Stewardship verses legalism

a. Mt.23:23,24

- 1) Jesus condemns the Scribes & Pharisees in their approach to the Law
 - a) Saw the Law as binding – must be followed to the letter
 - b) No room for negligence even in the smallest detail
 - c) Tithing even the smallest of seeds
- 2) Focus was their duty – in externals – rituals, ceremonies, works
 - a) Yet forgot the internal matters of the heart
 - b) Tithing the smallest thing was more important than even justice, mercy & faithfulness
 - c) Prided themselves on obedience to the details – earn points
- 3) To Jesus what was in the heart was far more important
 - a) Exercising justice & mercy toward others
 - b) Faithfulness to God was internal as well as external
 - c) These were the weightier matters of the Law
- 4) Proverb - strain at a gnat & swallow a camel
 - a) Wine was strained through linen to catch gnats & other impurities before drinking
 - b) Done to avoid violating the Law regarding purity
Lev.11:20-23; 17:10-14

b. As Christians we are to walk in God's wisdom, not legalism

1) Mk.2:23-3:6; Mt.12:1-14

- a) Pharisees see disciples as violating the Law
 - 1) Are gathering grain & eating as they walk
 - 2) Saw this as work – direct violation
- b) Jesus knew - some things need to take precedence
 - 1) Disciples had missed breakfast & were hungry
 - 2) Their need took precedence over the rule
 - 3) Used David as an example
- c) The Sabbath was to serve man's needs
 - 1) Man needed rest – a day of rest & time to focus on God
 - 2) Sabbath was to be used to meet the greatest needs of man not to become his master
 - 3) Could be temporarily interrupted

2) Gal.3:1-5,10

- a) Galatians were foolishly exalting the Law
- b) Christianity becoming rules, rituals & ceremonies = external
- c) To do so causes one to be cursed – must be perfect

c. **Stewardship requires preparation**1) 2 Cor.9:1-5a) **Background**

- (1) Acts 11:27-30 – famine predicted in Judea
- (2) 2 Cor.8:8-12 – had made a commitment to help

b) **Have had a year to prepare to give – vs.2**

- (1) 1 Cor.16:1,2 – so no collections be made when I come
- (2) Paul now urging them to fulfill commitment made
- (3) Like our budget = projected needs for the year
(each week set aside so needs met when needed)

2) **Application**a) **Need prepare self to give as God desires**

- 1) 2 Cor.9:7 – cheerfully
- 2) **Meaning** = hilarious, absolutely no reservations

b) **To accomplish this** - heart & circumstances must be right

- 1) Love God with all heart, soul, mind & strength
- 2) Financial responsibilities must be met (allow generosity)

c) 2 Cor.9:6-15 - What give is a personal decision

- 1) Not to coerce others – give because their obligation
- 2) God wants us excited to give, do it in a cheerful manner
- 3) God's law of generosity – reap what we sow

2. **Is the tithe binding today?**a. **OT teaching**

- 1) Deut.27:30,31 – tithe belongs to God (so learn to fear God)
- 2) Mal.3:6-10 – condemned self when not a priority
- 3) Num.18:21-24 – was the Levites inheritance
- 4) Deut.14:28,29 – every 3rd year given to the poor
- 5) Even Abraham & Jacob gave God the tithe (before the Law)

b. **NT teaching**

- 1) No mention of tithing yet Christians were expected to give
 - a) Acts 2:44-46 – gave gladly to all that had need
 - b) Acts 4:32-35 – shared everything & cared for all the needy
- 2) Are free from the Law's demands
 - a) Rom.6:14-16 – not under Law, under grace
 - b) **Notice** – not mean free from Law's principles
 - c) One obey is one we serve – sin or righteousness
 - d) Focus needs be – we still want to do what is right
- 3) Jesus willingly gave up everything for our benefit
 - a) We ought be willing to give for the benefit of others
 - b) 1 Jn.3:16-20 – how we know we belong to the truth

Stewardship And The Church

Introduction

Christians are recipients of God's grace & are entrusted with God's kingdom here on earth. God expects us to be an active part of His kingdom by edifying, admonishing & helping to mature one another spiritually. God wants us to do more than offer lip service in stewardship, He is looking for results.

1. Our focus must be serving God & mankind, not exalting ourselves

a. Rom.12:1,2

1) Questions

- a) What right does God have to ask us for a full life commitment?
- b) What makes offering our bodies as a living sacrifice an act of worship?

2) Examine text

- a) "Therefore" – connects what has been said to what is about to be said (based upon all the previous information you must)
- b) Present your body to God as a living sacrifice
 - (1) Rom.6:11-13 – do not allow sin to reign (offer parts to)
 - (2) 2 Cor.10:3-5 – every thought under control of Jesus
 - (3) 1 Cor.6:19,20 – body is a temple of the Holy Spirit
- c) "Living sacrifice" – constant continuous sacrifice
 - (1) Not just occasionally
 - (2) Are to dedicate self to live for God continually
 - (3) Sacrifice our desires to live holy & righteous
- d) Why is this important?
 - (1) It is acceptable to God – well pleasing; extremely satisfying; God takes great joy in such a sacrifice
 - (2) It is our reasonable service = rational, intelligent & logical (after all that God has done to save us)

b. Phil.2:1-4

1) **Philippian church was a strong church, full of vision & planning as they worked out strategies to spread the gospel**

- a) In a strong church, there is always the danger of differences of opinion: differences in vision, desires, concern, emphasis, and interest.
- b) There are always different ideas as to which ministry or project should be undertaken and supported and a host of other differences.
- c) The point is this: the more strength and activity a church has, the more attention it must give to unity. Why? Because a strong church has more minds and bodies working, and where more people are working more differences are bound to arise. Consequently, the members must give more attention to unity.

2) **Seven character traits that help hold Christians together**

- a) Encouragement from our unity with Jesus – Jn.14:18
- b) Comfort from Christ's love – Jn.13:34,35
- c) Fellowship in Christ's Spirit – Eph.4:3
- d) Tenderness & compassion toward others – 1 Pet.3:8
- e) Being like-minded – 1 Cor.1:10
- f) Having the same love – 1 Jn.3:16
- g) Being one in spirit & purpose – Acts 2:42-47

3) **Paul's admonition**

- a) Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit
 - 1) In humility consider others better than yourself
 - 2) Rom.12:3-6 – soberly consider each is gifted – important
- b) Look out for the interest of others, not just yourself
 - 1) Mt.25:34-40 – doing for others = doing for Jesus
 - 2) Gal.6:1,2 – bear one another's burdens

c. 1 Cor.1:31-2:5

- 1) Our only boasting should be in Jesus
- 2) Paul very careful about this – so faith be in Jesus not Paul
- 3) Gal.5:26 – guard against conceit, envy & provoking one another

2. **We are fellow-workers; therefore all pettiness & jealousy must be discarded**

a. 1 Cor.3:1-22

- 1) **Corinthian church was carnal** – jealousy & quarrelling among them
 - a) Acting like children fighting for control & attention
 - b) Putting one teacher above another – better & more important
- 2) **Teachers are only God's servants** – assigned with a task
 - a) Some plant the seed
 - b) Others water what has been sown
 - c) God is the one who makes it grow, not the worker
 - d) Each are God's fellow-workers
- 3) **Only one foundation** – must be careful how we build
 - a) Foundation is Jesus
 - b) Make sure you use quality materials
 - c) This is God's temple – destroy it & God will destroy you

b. Phil1:27

- 1) **Are always to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel**
 - a) Lifestyle matters – don't bring reproach on Jesus
 - b) Titus 2:10 – make gospel attractive by lifestyle
 - c) Titus 2:4,5 – live so not malign word of God
- 2) **Stand together** – one spirit as one man
 - a) The point is this: the world may be split and divided, arguing & differing, fussing & feuding, fighting & divorcing, warring & killing, seeking & grasping; but the church is not to live that way.
 - b) The church is to be unified; one in spirit, mind, heart & purpose.

3. We are divine instruments to be used in God's kingdom

a. 1 Cor.6:19,20

1) **Body is a temple of the Holy Spirit**

- a) He is in us
- b) Was given to us by God

2) **We are not our own**

- a) Were bought with a price
- b) Goal to be glorifying God with our body

b. 1 Pet.2:9,10

1) **What we are**

- a) A chosen people
- b) A royal priesthood
- c) A holy nation
- d) A people belonging to God

2) **Our function**

- a) Declare the praises of the one who called us out of darkness
- b) We are to broadly proclaim God's excellencies & great qualities

c. **Eph.2:8-10**

- 1) Are saved by God's grace – God's workmanship
- 2) Created for good works

4. God is looking for more than lip service from His people

a. **Scriptures**

- 1) Lk.6:46 – why call Me Lord – if not willing to do as I say?
- 2) Mt.7:21-23 – only enter kingdom if doing the will of the Father
- 3) Mt.15:8,9 – worship is vain if it's only lip service

d. **We are not a social club** - called to just play church

- 1) We are His kingdom – goal = His will done on earth
- 2) Focus time, talents, energies & possessions on that goal

A People of the Book

Where Truth and Love Abound



Our Service Schedule

Sunday:	10:00 a.m.	Bible Study (classes for all ages)
	11:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.	Worship
Wednesday:	7:00 p.m.	Bible Study (classes for all ages)

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