

Stewardship

It's about the Heart!

My story

Webster defines a steward as “one who manages another’s property.”

In Jesus' time, the steward was a manager of a household. The steward wasn't the one who owned the assets, but was an administrator of the owner's property.

We are all stewards of things that we have as well as the gifts and abilities that God has given us.

1 Tim 1:7 (NIV) – “For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.”

Psalms 24:1 (NIV) - “The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”

Heart of Gratitude.

James 1:17 – “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

Areas of Stewardship

1) The job we have

2) The gifts and abilities that we have

3) Friendships

Acts 17:26 (NIV84) – “From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live (27) God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.” God put us right where we live for a reason.

Be a giver not a consumer

Prov 18:24 (NKJV) says, “A man who has friends must himself be friendly”

4) The family that he has planted us into.

Psalms 68:6 (NIV) says “God sets the lonely in families”

Good Parenting Stewardship

1) Obedience

I Sam 13:23 (NKJV) says, “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft”. Don't be a party to helping them walking in a rebellious way.

2) Teach your children to keep their commitments.

Proverbs 20:25 (NIV) “It is a trap to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider one's vows.”

Eccl 5:4 says (NIV), “When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow.”

- You are being a good steward of your children's hearts to teach them the lesson of commitment.

3) Train your children in delayed gratification.

Marshmallow experiment.

Ultimately, the lessons we teach our kids should train them to have a right heart before the Lord. We want them to follow God's Word even when it takes time to wait for God's best for their lives.

We want them to grasp the importance of delayed gratification in areas like sexual purity and handling money.

We want them to learn to work hard for a time to save up to buy things instead of always relying on going into debt to get them.

Oswald Chambers

In Psalm 27, David wrote of his waiting on God during a time of great trouble when there was no solution in sight. Instead of giving in to despair, he maintained his confidence that he would "see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (v.13).

We live in a world that worships the immediate. When it seems there is no sign of our deepest longings being fulfilled, the psalmist urges us to cling to the eternal God. "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord!" (v.14). (NKJV)

4) Train your children to relate to adults well

5) Train your children to handle money wisely

Giving, Saving, and Spending. The tithes went into the giving category.

Parenting Summary

The heart behind all of this is that we are wanting to be good stewards of our kids that they can also be a blessing to others. We want to help them establish good habits as kids that will continue into adulthood. This is the best time to train them in many areas. In many ways, their lives and hearts are like clay that God has given us the ability to mold and shape. What better shape to mold them into than to the mold of godly principles. It will give them a great start on life and help them avoid many of the pitfalls of those who grew up without being trained by godly principles or taught to apply God's Word to their lives.

Areas of Stewardship (Cont)

5) The finances or wealth

Prov 3:9 - Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;

1Ti 6:10 (NIV) "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." You see, it was the love of money and the eagerness to get it that has caused some to wander from the faith and pierce themselves with many griefs. It wasn't the money itself.

Proverbs 17:23 says "The wicked accept bribes in secret to pervert the course of justice." So money can be useful if our hearts are in the right place and have the right perspective on it. If we have God's perspective (who is the "giver of every good and perfect gift" according to James 1:17), we can do great things with it.

The following verses sort of gives the heart behind what God is looking for in a good steward.

Luke 16:10-12 (NIV) - Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?

What can we glean from this passage about how God views what he has given His servants?

My uncle Harvey: He was a good example to me of someone who was faithful with a little that ended up be in charge of much.

We should also work as unto the Lord whether or not our employers are watching us.

Eph 6:5-8 (ESV) - Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

So you can see that God is looking for faithful people who can be trusted in the little things so that he can trust us with true riches.

Matthew Henry - A man once stole his wallet. In reflecting on the incident, Henry said, "1.) I am thankful that he never robbed me before. 2), I am thankful that although he took my wallet, he did not take my life. 3) Although he took all I had, it was not much. And 4), I am glad that it was I who was robbed, not I who did the robbing." Matthew Henry knew how to make lemonade out of a lemon — how to be grateful despite a bad experience. That is how mature people react in tough times. They learn to be grateful even for small blessings. They choose to be governed by their principles and not by their feelings.

The following verses in Luke 16 indicate a warning about an imbalanced view towards money.

Luke 16:10-13 (NIV): "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight.

You see He knows our hearts and knows if money has become an idol in our lives.

What are some signs that money is an idol? (They are just signs that point to things in the heart.)

- 1) It causes you to disobey God. You are driven to make more money at all cost even if it is through dishonest or immoral means.
- 2) Thinking about money gives you greater joy than your walk with Christ.
- 3) It is what you like to talk about most. You make a big deal to others about what things cost. Others tell you that you make too big a deal about the price of things and what they cost you.
- 4) Money is what you think about the most in your day. Your mind is caught up dreaming about getting rich. You think, "If I can just get out of debt, I'll be happy."
- 5) You are not tithing or giving to the church or to missions or you are giving very little or begrudgingly.
- 6) You give to people and good causes very sparingly or not at all.
- 7) You are consumed by trying to find a job that makes more money. You are never satisfied with the job you currently have.
- 8) Working overtime and making money takes you away from fellowship and church all of the time.
- 9) Thinking about money gives you the most excitement about your future.
- 10) Money is what you fear losing the most.
- 11) It is what you look to to bring satisfaction and comfort into your life.

- Ask God to change heart
- Ask God for a right mindset
- Begin walking in the truth of God's Word in these areas.

Prov 23:7 (NKJV), "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." You need to choose your thoughts and don't be guided by your feelings. Be guided by the truth. It will change your heart.

What heart should we have? 1Ti 6:6-8 But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

Don't make your life goal to be rich. 1Ti 6:9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

Make it your life goal to use what you have been given to glorify God.

In Colossians 3:23-24 it says:

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

The Bible shows us in the parables of the Kingdom that faithful stewards who do the master's will with what He has given them, can expect to be rewarded partially in this life, but fully in the next. We all should long to hear the master say what he exclaims in Matthew 25:21: "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"