

# LESSON ESSENTIALS

## CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

### LESSON 11: BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP

Though a steward is, for all intents and purposes, in charge of a particular property, he does not at any point in time own it. But he has been given charge of it none the less. We as Christians are in the same situation. Our talents, skills, our material possessions, the time that we have, the very air that we breathe all belong to God and we are just His stewards. How are we supposed to take care of all God's property? How should we handle our lives with this truth before us? Read on to find out.

What does Biblical stewardship mean? It means we as Christians are mere pilgrims in this world. We do not own anything, neither do we belong here. By default, everything that we have is given to us on lease by God and we are accountable to him for how we use it.

Christ owns everything on this planet, including us. First, He created us. Secondly he bought us - when we first sinned we became property of the Devil and Christ died for us to pay for our return. Finally, Jesus Christ has been made ruler of this world and the world to come. We do not rule our own life; we are merely stewards of all God has given us.

Before we get started with understanding the duties of a steward, it is best to begin with the understanding of who God is and how we are his stewards. Modern philosophies believe that that man is the Supreme Being on this planet, and all that he sees is his to take.

However, this is far from the truth. Man is not the measure of all things: God is. Even Christians sometimes read the first chapter of Genesis and think that the whole of the earth has been given to him. But God did not actually give Adam and Eve the garden, or anything in it. He commissioned them to be stewards; that they may take care of the Garden for Him. Steward, in the Greek, means 'manager of a household.' It is like the job of a care-taker. We may have other words for this position today such as 'administrator,' 'janitor,' or 'overseer'. One Biblical example of the role of steward is Joseph, who was Potiphar's 'steward' in Genesis 39:4-6.

What are we stewards of? What has God put us in charge of, as Christians? We have been given life, energy, talents, abilities, and opportunities. This allotment is different for each person, and we can use these gifts in different ways to serve God.

The first category we will talk about is our talents. God has freely given each one of us Spiritual gifts. Some of us have been placed in positions of power, and this is not because of our own effort, but purely because of God's grace. Even our talents in the areas of music, artistry, athletics, and academics belong to God as well.

We also have been given time. Our days on this earth have been numbered long before we were born, and each day we live is a gift from God. But the day is not ours to waste; it is given to us by God that we may efficiently manage it. We are commanded to use our time wisely (Psalm 90:12)

The third area is the management of treasure, or money. The world encourages us to accumulate as much wealth as possible, because happiness and security only comes from wealth. But the Bible teaches us otherwise. It points out that the security wealth provides is false, and that the best way to happiness is to desire what God desires, and to be content with whatever God has blessed us with.

Does this mean that whoever that has money is evil? Far from it! Actually, there are times when God blesses certain people with money so that they would be a blessing to the Kingdom of God. Church buildings can be built, missions can be funded, hospitals and schools built, and medicine given all with the money God has given charitable people. While money itself isn't evil, the Bible says that love of money is the 'root of all kinds of evil' (1 Timothy 6:10). Money makes an excellent slave when we use money effectively for the glory of the Kingdom of God. On the other hand, money is a bad master. If our goal in life is to accumulate money, and not build

the Kingdom of God, then we lose our sense of happiness and accomplishment, and most importantly, our relationship with Christ.

So, how should we become good stewards? What should we do in order to use God's gifts in the most efficient way possible?

1. The first thing we should do is invest our whole life for God's eternal purposes. Media, friends, and society tend to move the compass point of our lives to other possible goals and ambitions, but our main goal for our life is to be for the glory of God. The Bible talks about a parable where a merchant found a pearl of great value. And so that he may have the pearl, he sold everything he had to purchase it. The Kingdom of God is like that pearl, and is worth everything. We should be ready to sacrifice anything, friends, family, our interests and likes, and things we sometimes hold most dear for the extension of the Kingdom of God.
2. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 says "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." God does not give the same amount of talents or treasures to everyone. Now, some of us may tend to get jealous of what the other person has, and begin to covet the other's gifts. But we have been given our own gifts, and are supposed to make use of it. We are also a part of God's purpose.
3. The third step to become wise stewards is to try and be faithful and obedient. Matthew 25:20-23 talks about the unfaithful servant, who buried his talent in the ground. One of the key priorities is that we are obedient to God's word, using what He's given us and following His instructions no matter what.
4. We should also be prepared to give account of what we've done to God. As mentioned before, we will all one day be judged. So whatever we do, we should always think about that particular day of Judgment, and ask ourselves if God would be satisfied with what we've done for Him.

We are called to manage our talents, our time and our money for the glory of God; because after all everything that we have belongs to him and we are just stewards who are accountable for how we use His gifts to us.

## IN REVIEW

- A steward manages another's property but is not the owner. Christ owns everything in this world, which includes us as well. The reason is that He is the Creator and our Redeemer. God appointed Christ as Lord over everything.
- The three major areas of Biblical stewardship are: Talents, Time, and Treasure.
- Five important steps that help us become wise stewards:
  1. We need to invest our whole life for God's eternal purpose.
  2. We need to manage our time properly.
  3. We need to be obedient and faithful to God at all times.
  4. We need to expect fruitfulness.
  5. We need to be prepared to give an account of what we have done for God.

## HAVE YOUR SAY

- What are the Gifts God has given you?
- Are you using all the time you have for God's glory?
- What would you do to be a better steward?

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