



Building a Life of Christian Stewardship

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Lesson One: What is Stewardship?

- Stewardship is our acknowledgment that God is the Owner and Provider of all the basic goods of life, material, physical, and spiritual.
- Christian stewardship is a way of life – living always as if this life were the transient thing that is in the eyes of God and His eternity.
- Christian stewardship is not the church's method for raising money, although it is often confused in this way in the minds of people. Actually, Christian stewardship is God's way of raising Christians! Churches that curtail their work because of a limited budget are like hospitals running half-time because there is an epidemic!

The Word Steward and the Principle of Human Stewardship

- The dictionary says a steward is one who manages the estate or affairs of another. The word steward translated comes from the Greek word, *oikonomos*.
- The first questions a person must face when addressing his or her personal stewardship issues are: what shall I do with my life and where and in what shall I invest it.
- Human beings are stewards in every aspect of their lives. There are definitions for Christian stewardship, and it is important to remember that stewardship is the Christian law of life. It does not primarily refer to property and money, though it includes these.

The word steward or stewardship is found in the Scriptures about twenty-one times. It is used to translate several Hebrew and Greek words.

1. Abraham said, "Lord God, what wilt thou give me seeing I go childless, and the steward (son of acquisition) of my house is this Eliezer?" (Genesis 15:2).
2. And they came near the steward (one over a household) of Joseph's house (Genesis 43:19).
3. And he commanded the steward (one over a house), of his house (Genesis 44:1).
4. Joseph said unto his steward (one over a house), up, follow after the men (Genesis 44:4).
5. He was in Tizah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward (which is over his house) in Tizah (Kings 16:9)
6. David assembled all the princes . . . and the stewards (heads, chiefs, captains) over all the substance and Possessions of the king (I Chronicles 28:1).
7. The lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward (one who is committed); Call the laborers (Matthew 20:8).
8. Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward (one whom a thing is committed) Luke 8:3).
9. Who then is that faithful and wise steward (house manager), whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season (Luke 12:42).
- 10-16. He said also unto his disciples, there was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. ²And he called him, and said unto him, how is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. ³Then the steward said within himself, what shall I do? For my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. ⁴I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. ⁸And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light (Luke 16:1-4, 8)
17. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministries of Christ, and stewards (house managers) of the mysteries of God (I Corinthians 4:1).
18. Moreover it is required in stewards (house managers), that a man be found faithful" (I Corinthians 4:2).
19. A bishop must be blameless, as the stewards (house manager) of God (Titus 1:7).
20. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards (house managers) of the manifold grace of God (I Peter 4:10).
21. In Genesis 43:16 the word is translated "ruler -- meaning the same
22. In Daniel 1:11 the English word "steward" is not found in the text but it is in the margin – meaning the same.

Lesson Two: Stewardship of Our Time

Planning Your Time

1. Sleep
2. Work
3. Recreation
 - A. Play – amusements
 - B. Physical Exercise
 - C. Clubs, societies, etc.
4. Self –improvement
 - A. Reading – study – lectures
 - B. Music
 - C. Art
5. Family and Social Intercourse (including meals)
6. Worship and Religious Cultivation
 - A. Public service and worship
 - B. Private Bible Reading
 - C. Private Prayer
7. Service
 - A. Religious (church work)
 - B. Community (social work)
 - C. Politics

Objective: to become wise stewards of all that God has created us to be individually

Memory verse: Galatians 2:20

Read: Romans 12

Bible Study: Psalm 90:12

Question: What should be our prayer concerning the use of time that God gives us?

Right Attitude About Time

1. What do good stewards do (Ephesians 5:16)
2. Why is proper use of our time so important today? (James 4:14)

3. What does God demand of us concerning the stewardship of our time? (Psalm 62:8)
4. What does Christ admonish us to do as stewards of time until He comes again? (Mark 13:33-37)

5. If we are wise stewards and heed the commands of our Master, how will we use our time? (Ephesians 5:15, 16)

Right Relationship with God

1. As wise stewards concerned over the use of our time, what will we want to understand? (Ephesians 5:17).
2. What is necessary in order to fully know the will of God concerning our stewardship duties? (Ephesians 5:18)
3. The Holy Spirit will enable the faithful steward to perform the duties of stewardship by giving what to the steward? (Acts 1:8)
4. He will perform these duties in the name of whom? (Colossians 3:17)
5. What then will be our attitude as we utilize the time over which God has made us stewards? (Ephesians 5:19, 20)
6. How would you describe such a useful and joyous life? (John 10:10b)

Most Important Use of Time

1. As wise stewards who know and are obedient to the will of God, we can be sure we will spend much of our time doing what? (Mark 16:15)
2. What does God say about a soul winner? (Proverbs 11:30)
3. Of what value is only one soul, according to Christ?
4. What then is the greatest thing believers can do for one another?
5. What happens in God's presence when one repents and receives Christ? (Luke 15:7, 10)
6. How did Paul feel about those whom he had won to Christ? (I Thessalonians 2:19, 20)

Life Application

1. How many hours are there in a week?
2. Why is it that some may accomplish more than others in the same amount of time?

Lesson Three: Stewardship of Our Bodies

Objective: to surrender our bodies to Christ from the heart

Memory verse: Psalm 139:23-24

Read: Psalm 5; Galatians 5; Ephesians 5

Bible Study: Hebrews 10:1-10

The Spirit and the Body

1. Every person is to be renewed in the spirit of his or her mind if that person is to be converted to Christ. How was that conversion made possible? (Hebrews 10:1-10)
2. What do you learn about the body of the Christian from Romans 8:8-9 and Romans 12:1?
3. Express, in your own words, the additional reasons given in I Corinthians 6:19-20 for being a good steward of your body.

The Parts of the Body

1. The Tongue
 - A. Why is it so important to be a good steward of the tongue? (James 3:2-6). What should you know concerning its use? (Matthew 12:36)
2. The Heart
 - A. What must we understand about the heart (Jeremiah 17:9)
 - B. Therefore, what should a steward of God continually pray? (Psalm 139:23, 24)
 - C. What should be done about sin? (I John 1:9)
 - D. What condition of the heart does God require? (Psalm 51:17)
3. The Mind
 - A. What is your responsibility to being a steward of your mind (I Peter 1:13).
 - B. Whose mind and which qualities thereof should you have? (Philippians 2:5-8; I Corinthians 2:12-16)
 - C. What is the result of keeping your mind stayed on the Lord? (Isaiah 26:3)
 - D. How can you keep your mind on Him? (Philippians 4:6, 7; Proverbs 4:20-22)

Sexual Expression

1. What do the sins spoken against in I Corinthians 6:9-10; 13-18, mainly involve?
2. God considered David a man after His own heart, yet David's great sin was what? (II Samuel 11:14-15, 26-27)
3. What is God's stern judgment against misusers and abusers of sex? (I Corinthians 6:9-11)
4. Why is it especially tragic if a Christian becomes involved in the misuse of sex? I Corinthians 6:15-18)
5. How serious is sexual lust, according to Christ? (Matthew 5:28)
6. How can the application of the following verses enable one to overcome sexual lust? (Philippians 4:8; Psalm 119:11; I Corinthians 10:13; Romans 6:14)

Life Application

1. How can the stewardship of each part of the body affect the other parts? How can stewardship of each part affect the body as a whole?
2. How would you apply I Thessalonians 5:22 to:
 - A. The use of the tongue?
 - B. The desires of the heart?
 - C. The control of the mind?
 - D. Your conduct with members of the opposite sex?

Lesson four: STEWARDSHIP OF OUR GIFTS LESSON

Objective: To recognize our talents and abilities and to surrender them to God for His use and glory.

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 4:10

Read: 1 Corinthians 12

God created humankind with a great variety of talents. The Christian Church is comprised of people endowed with different gifts and abilities. All that the Christian possesses should be dedicated fully to God to be used as He directs.

The lesson scripture refers to the Church as the Body of Christ. Christ is its Head (1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 5:23). Just as your body has many specialized parts, each having its own function, so the Church comprised of many individuals, each having a special function to perform, and a contribution to make to the rest of the body.

Every Christian possesses both natural and spiritual gifts (abilities and talents). For they come to us at physical birth. Spiritual gifts are special abilities imparted by the Holy Spirit to Christians. These enable Christians to minister to others on behalf of Christ.

A. Natural Gifts

1. What talents and natural abilities do you possess?
2. How did you acquire them?
3. According to 1 Corinthians 4:6-7 what should your attitude be about natural gifts?
4. How would you apply Colossians 3:17 to the stewardship of your natural gifts?

B. Spiritual Gifts

1. Major passages on spiritual gifts found in the Bible are: Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Ephesians 4:4-16; and 1 Peter 4:10-11. From these passages, make a composite list of these spiritual gifts (combine any two that might be identical). After each gift you list, give a brief definition of that gift. (You may wish to consult a concordance or a Bible dictionary).

Spiritual Gift	Definitions
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. List any other spiritual gifts you can think of that might be included. Why do think so?
3. What are some reasons God has given gifted persons to the church? (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)
4. Why will two people not exercise the same gift in the same manner? (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)
5. Though some spiritual gifts seem to be of greater value than others (1 Corinthians 12:28-31), what idea does Paul stress in keeping Christians from personal pride because of the gifts they possess? (Romans 12:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-26; 1 Corinthians 13; Ephesians 4:11-16)
6. List the principle concerning what your attitude and responsibilities are to be toward your spiritual gifts. (Romans 12:3-8)

LIFE APPLICATION

- Realize that you have at least one spiritual gift, and probably more (1 Corinthians 12:11).
- To find out what your spiritual gifts are, pray that God will make them known to you. Determine which of your activities the Lord seems to bless and inquire of other mature Christians who likely know well what your spiritual gifts might be. Make a list of what you believe may be your spiritual gifts.
- Seek to develop your gifts in the power of the Holy Spirit, according to the scriptural exhortations. Realize that you may have other gifts of which you are not personally aware, so exercise various gifts.
- Take spiritual responsibility. Be aware that you are accountable to God for stewardship of your spiritual gifts.

Lesson five: STEWARDSHIP OF OUR POSSESSIONS LESSON

Objective: To surrender all our material wealth to God and to Give in joy and gratitude.
Memory Verses: Luke 16:13
Read: 2 Corinthians 9; Mathew 6:19-34; 25:14-30; Luke 12:15-21

A. Money-The Old Standard

1. What did God command those under the Law of Moses to do? (Malachi 3; 8-10)
2. What would you say the “storehouse” is? (Deuteronomy 16:11,12; 5:5, 6)
3. How much is a tithe? (Hebrew 7:2)

B. Money-The New Standard

1. As believers in Christ, we are under grace, rather than Law. Whereas the Law in itself did not provide eternal life for those who attempted to keep it (Galatians 2:16; 3:21-22), we have received life by the favor of God, though we do not deserve it and could not possibly earn it. Therefore, do we have a higher or lower motivation and standard for stewardship of our possessions than those under the Law?
2. How did Jesus regard a person’s responsibility in this area? (Matthew 23:33)
3. In 2 Corinthians 8-9, Paul attempts to encourage the Corinthian church to give financially to help the needy Christians. He first pointed then to the example of the Macedonian church. What did the Macedonians do before they gave their money to God? (2 Corinthians 8:5)
 - a. In light of this, what do you think God is most interested in?
 - b. Therefore, why is giving money an important part of our Christian life, according to 2 Corinthians 8:7?
 - c. Who is the great example of giving? (2 Corinthians 8:9)
 - d. In what sense does one who “sows” (or gives) sparingly reap sparingly? (2 Corinthians 9:6)
 - e. What kind of giver does God love? (2 Corinthians 9:7)

C. Other Possessions

1. To whom do you and your possessions belong? (1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20)
2. What should be your motive in the use of whatever you possess? (1 Corinthians 10:31)

LIFE APPLICATION

1. Consider your income and possessions. What should you keep for yourself as God's steward?
2. Ask yourself, "Is my heart's attitude one of joy and gratefulness as I give?"

RECAP

1. Define the meaning of "Christian stewardship" in your own words.
2. Why are we referred to as Christian stewards?
3. Summarize your responsibilities as a steward of God as you now understand them.
4. List several things over which you exercise that stewardship.
5. What is the most important thing for you to realize about your attitude toward stewardship?
6. In what particular area of your life have you seen improvement in your Christian stewardship?

Lesson Six Tithing

1. The Tithe belongs to God (Leviticus 27:30-32)
2. Tithes are to be taken to the place that God designates (Deuteronomy 12:1-28; 14:22-27).
3. God promises to bless those who tithe (Malachi 3:10-12).
4. Tithing involves more than money (Deuteronomy 14:22, 23).
5. Jesus commends tithing while emphasizing the importance of positive, spiritual attitudes (Matthew 23:23)
6. Tithing is not the limit for Christian givers (John 3:16; Mark 12:41-44)
7. Tithing can be misused through spiritual pride (Luke 18:10-14)
8. References: Genesis 14:40; Genesis 28:22; Leviticus 27:30; II Chronicles 31:5; Nehemiah 10:30; Nehemiah 13:12; Nehemiah 12:44.
9. Is the storehouse “always the church?” Yes! (I Corinthians 9:14, Deuteronomy 25:4; I Timothy 5:11). The tithe is to be entrusted to the church so that the church may make the proper decisions as to its use.