Stewardship

"But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

Heart Island is tucked away among the Thousand Islands in the St. Lawrence River on the Canadian-American border. The island is home to Boldt Castle. The 120-room stone castle is a monument to George Boldt’s love for his wife, Louise. George Boldt made his fortune in the hotel business. He owned New York’s elegant Waldorf Astoria Hotel. When he decided to build a castle as a gift to his wife, money would be no object. Soon the plans were drawn, and construction began on a castle truly fit for a queen.

Before the castle was completed, tragedy struck. Mrs. Boldt suddenly died. The news was devastating to her husband. He ordered all work on the building to cease. He never returned to the island, and he let the castle fall into disrepair. The castle was only significant to him if his wife could enjoy it. Love is a strong motivator. When you love someone, you plan ways to convey that love. True love holds nothing back. You give up yourself to express that love.

When you fall in love with Jesus, you surrender your life to Him. As you mature in your love, you continually discover new ways to demonstrate your love. Gently and sweetly, Jesus brings to your attention areas in your life where self still reigns. Then comes the pain of surrender. But whenever you surrender self and ask instead, "What can I do for You?" you find that your love brings new and deeper commitments. Love, the primary motivator, enables you to grow in your walk with God. That’s what good stewardship is all about.

Preview

The Bible portrays God as loving humanity so much that He has withheld nothing to provide for our present and eternal happiness. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). In comparison to this gift, what could we ever give? Christ was a gift, not of what He had—even though He had everything—but of Himself. Selflessness is true stewardship. Selfishness comes naturally to our hearts. But He has provided for this too. Listen to His promise: "A new heart will I give you—a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 26, 27).

God asks every individual to put Him first. When we do, He takes responsibility for our needs. When He has first place in our lives, we can watch the miracles take place right before our eyes. He loves to pour out His blessings on His children.

Points to Ponder

1. When we give all, are we giving what belongs to us?
   No, all we are and have belongs to God. He accepts our surrender and then puts us back in charge of it, making us stewards of all we are and all we possess.

2.
2. What are the basic gifts God gives to every person?
   He has given everyone a body, abilities, time, and material possessions, plus the earth around us.
   God demonstrates the divine principle of giving in all nature. Many plants produce thousands of seeds. They
   may be as large as the forty-pound coconut that grows on an island in the Indian Ocean. Or they may be as
   tiny as the Epiphytic orchid, which measures some thirty-five million seeds to an ounce. All produce in great
   abundance.
   Who can count each little parachute seed on a dandelion or a milkweed? In a watermelon, pumpkin, or
   cucumber, God packs hundreds of seeds. How thoughtful of God always to make more than enough so that
   you can enjoy the delicious seeds of corn on the cob!

Nuts & Bolts
1. A selfish person resents giving.
   How can you show him that God is really reclaiming that which already belongs to Him?
   Psalm 24:1: "The earth is the ______________ and the fulness ______________; the
   ______________and they that ______________ therein."

2. What's a good answer when someone says, "It's nobody's business what I do with my body"?
   Luke 10:27: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy ______________, and with all thy
   ______________, and with all thy ______________, and with all thy ______________.

3. How can I know that God wants me to use my talents and abilities to His glory?
   The Lord commends His faithful servants in Matthew 25:23: "Well done, good and
   ______________ servant; thou hast been ______________ over a ______________ things, I will make
   thee ______________ over ______________ things: enter thou into the ______________ of thy Lord."

4. Because time is God's gift, each moment is precious. Not only are we to give God one seventh of our time,
   the Sabbath, we should also make wise use of all the rest of our time.
   Colossians 3:23: "Whatever ye ______________, do it ______________, as to the
   ______________ and not to ______________." 

5. Why should Christians be concerned with being good stewards?
   1 Corinthians 6:19, 20: "What? know ye not that your ______________ is the ______________
   ______________; and ye are not your ______________? For ye are ______________ with a
   ______________; therefore ______________ God in your ______________ and in your ______________ which are ______________.

6. What portion of our income belongs to God?
   Genesis 28:22, "Of all that thou ______________ ______________ me I will surely give thee
   ______________ unto thee."
   Technically, 100 percent belongs to God, but He asks us to return a tithe or 10 percent of our income.
7. How is the tithe to be used?

Numbers 18:21, 24: “I have given the children of Levi all the __________ in Israel for an inheritance, for their __________ which they serve... The __________ of the children of Israel,... I have given to the Levites to inherit it.”

1 Corinthians 9:13, 14: “Do ye not know that they which __________ the holy things __________ of the things of the temple?... “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which __________ the gospel should live of the gospel.” Thus gospel ministers today should be paid from tithe given through the church.

8. Grateful Christians do not limit their gifts to the church just to tithe.

In Luke 12:48, Jesus gives us a principle that should guide us in giving offerings: “For unto whomsoever much is __________, of him shall be much __________; and to whom men have ____________ of them they __________ ask the ____________.”

God asks us to give as much as we are able to give, according to the blessings we have received from the Lord (Deuteronomy 16:17).

9. What does God say will happen to those who knowingly rob Him of tithe and offerings?

Malachi 3:9: “Ye are cursed with a _______; for ye have _________ me, even this whole nation.” Since God is the owner of everything, we are stewards, and we return our tithe to Him and give our offerings as faithful stewards.

10. God has made us stewards, not for His benefit, but to remove our selfishness.

a. Jesus warned in Luke 12:15: “Take heed, and beware of ________; for a man’s life consisteth not in the __________ of the things which he __________.”

b. Stewardship teaches us habits of economy and efficiency so that we won’t spend our money for self-gratification. (See Galatians 5:24.)

c. We receive joy in partnership with God. Matthew 25:40: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the ____________ of _________ my brethren, ye have done it unto ____________.”

d. God blesses the remaining 90 percent in a miraculous way.

Malachi 3:10: “Bring ye all the __________ into the storehouse,... and ____________ me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of ____________, and pour you out a ____________, that there shall not be __________ enough to receive it.”

11. Why does Jesus talk so much about money?

Luke 12:34: “For where your ____________ is, there will your ____________ be also.”

Our allegiance follows our money.
12. Why should anyone get excited about stewardship?
   God established tithe as a principle in both the Old and New Testaments. He has promised to provide for our needs when we are faithful to Him.

Words to Remember
Steward: A person entrusted with the management of the household or estate of another.
Tithes: A tenth of one’s income, which God claims as His.
Offerings: Freewill gifts of gratitude to God, given in addition to tithe.
Levites: The tribe of priests in the Old Testament who were not given any land. The tithe was used to support them.

The Difference Between
An owner: A person who possesses and exerts control over his own property.
A steward: A person who manages the property of another.

I Truly Believe
To offer God less than first place is to offer Him no place at all. God will not accept our offerings if we withhold ourselves.

Think through the following statements carefully and check those you fully believe.

[ ] I believe that God, as the owner of the universe, calls on me, as a manager of His goods, to be faithful in tithes and offerings.
[ ] I believe God wants me to return the tithe of my income to His storehouse.
[ ] I am convinced that God will keep His promise to pour out blessings on me when I return my tithes and give offerings to Him.
[ ] I want to follow God’s will by dedicating my time, talents, life, and income to Him.

My Prayer
Dear Father,
I cannot thank You enough for saving me from sin and its penalty of death. I dedicate to You my entire life—my time, talents, and possessions. Help me to manage every aspect of my life the way You want me to. Amen.
Stewardship

Read the following Bible texts and with the help from the lesson above, answer the following questions by circling “T” if the statement is true or “F” if the statement is false. (Hint: there are 9 true and 1 false)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY TEXTS</th>
<th>Gen. 1: 28, 2:15</th>
<th>Lev. 27:30, 32</th>
<th>Mal. 3:10-12</th>
<th>Luke 2: 49</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Cor. 3: 21-4:2</td>
<td>1 Cor. 6: 19, 20</td>
<td>Jam. 1: 17</td>
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</tbody>
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1. **T or F** Life can be divided into four basic areas—our bodies, our abilities, our time, and our material possessions—each a gift from God (see pg. 302).

2. **T or F** As one seventh of our time (the Sabbath) belongs to God, so does one tenth of all material things we acquire (see pg. 304).

3. **T or F** Tithing is an acceptable practice throughout Scripture (See pg. 304).

4. **T or F** Our gifts to God should be in proportion to the light and privileges we have enjoyed (see pg. 308).

5. **T or F** Christian stewards are responsible not only for their own possessions but for the world around them (see pg. 307).

6. **T or F** Christ, the ultimate steward, is our example of stewardship (see pg. 307).

7. **T or F** God has placed us in the role of stewards for His benefit, not for ours (see pg. 307).

8. **T or F** Proper stewardship is selflessness—complete surrender to God and service to humanity (see pg. 307).

9. **T or F** Stewardship involves service to others and being willing to share anything God has graciously bestowed that might benefit another (see pg. 308).

10. **T or F** The adoption of the biblical plan of stewardship is indispensable for the church (see pg. 308).