

21. Stewardship

We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow men, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness.

In today's terminology a steward would be called a manager. A steward is a person who is in charge of another's possessions. We are God's stewards because He has entrusted this world to our care.

- God has placed us in charge of His creation. Genesis 1:26-28, 2:15
- The things we call possessions actually belong to God. I Chronicles 29: 14
- Even my own body and spirit belong to God because Jesus has purchased my redemption with His blood. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Peter 1:18-19

True stewardship involves dedicating every aspect of our lives to God. We are responsible to care for our Master's property and to be faithful in returning His portion to Him in tithes (ten percent of our income), in giving offerings proportional with God's blessings, in supporting the spread of the gospel, and in sharing with those in need.

- We should offer ourselves to God as Christ offered up His life for us. Ephesians 5:2; Romans 12:1-2
- God does not need our gifts, but offers us the privilege of sharing and learning to trust Him to for us. Psalm 50:12-15
- We must take good care of our Master's property. Matthew 24:45-51
- We are responsible for care of the Lord's house. Haggai 1:3-11
- Failure to return tithes and offerings is robbing our Lord. Malachi 3:8-12
- We should support the spread of the gospel. 1 Corinthians 9:9-14
- We should be willing to share what God has entrusted to us with those who are in need. 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; Romans 15:26-27
- We should give cheerfully, not grudgingly. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7
- The real purpose of stewardship is that we may become more like God, whose very nature it is to give. John 3:16

Personal Application

-  What is the difference between being a steward and an owner?
-  What is the best way to overcome selfishness?
-  Recognizing that I am God's steward helps me realize how important I am in the universe. It makes me want to take good care of all He has entrusted to me. His great gifts to me make me want to become like Him in sharing.

Commitment

- Father, I recognize that You are the Owner of everything in the world, and that You made me manager of talents, time, and resources. I want to be Your faithful steward and give as You have given. I will faithfully return to You tithes and offerings of what You have placed in my care, and I will do all I can to aid in the spread of the gospel.