



Practical Christian Living

Stewardship—Taking Care of God's Blessings

Icebreaker: *What comes to mind when you think of stewardship?*

We keep looking back to the God's creation of the world because that is where we find the example of how God intended things to be.

Genesis 1:26-31

What did God entrust to the care of mankind?

- Fish, birds, livestock, and all other creatures and plants

God gave them a responsibility to care for creation. While they didn't have many of the other things we take care of today they still had a responsibility to be good stewards of God's creation. God expected them and he expects us to take care of the things he has entrusted into our care.

What things does God expect us to be good stewards of today?

- Talents, time, finances, family, the earth/environment, etc
- Some times we think God is going to destroy the earth so why worry about taking care of it? God entrusted the earth to our care and we need to be mindful of that responsibility.

We are going to spend some time this week on how we are to be good stewards of our time and our finances. If you want to tell what is important to someone you can ask two questions—"How do they spend their time?" and "What do they spend money on?" You have heard the expression, "Time is money." Time and money are both limited resources and how we use or abuse them can reflect the health of our relationship with God.

Psalm 24:1

How many things belong to God

- Everything

How do you treat something that isn't yours?

- You treat it at least as carefully as you treat your own things.

Stewardship starts with the idea that everything is God's and we are just taking care of it for the time being. If we have things in our lives that we can't live without we need to start thinking of how we are going to change that. If some material thing besides shelter, food or clothing is so important to you that you cannot live without it the best thing you can possibly do is to let it go.

The question of stewardship is "Who owns who?" Do our possessions and material things own and control us or do we own and take control of them? Materialism is a control issue.

Matthew 25:14-30

What does it mean to be entrusted with something of value?

- It means you are expected to take care of it.

Why do you think the 1 talent man hid his talent?

- He was too afraid to risk it. He couldn't let it go.

Stewardship requires trust that God will provide. *If God made everything wouldn't he be able to provide us with what we really need?*

Giving

Each week on Sunday we have a chance to give back to the work of the church. This is a very scriptural practice but something we don't talk about often enough. When we give to others we are blessed—not with money or homes or nice cars but blessed because God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

What does it mean to sow and what does it mean to reap?

- When we sow we give and when we reap we receive a harvest.

How does God want us to make a decision on what and how much we should give?

- In our hearts and not under compulsion or reluctantly.

Can you give reluctantly and cheerfully at the same time?

Why should giving generate joy and good cheer?

- Because we are passing on the blessings God has given us to someone else.

Who will make sure you still have all that you really need even after you have given to others?

- God supplies it all

This passage says God will make his people rich in every way so that they can respond how?

- In generosity.

An attitude of generosity reflects a heart that understands where the blessings come from—God and that we are just stewards or caretakers of all that God has entrusted to us. The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. Everything we have is just on loan from God and he will come back and take an accounting of how we have chosen to treat it.

Application:

What area of your life could you improve at being a good steward?