

“Biblical Principles of Stewardship” by Pastor Ed Terry Delivered 020920
Matthew 25: 14 – 30; Matthew 6: 1 - 4; 1st Corinthians 16: 1 – 4; **1st Chronicles 29:1 – 20**

A steward is someone who manages something for someone else.

A steward does not own what they manage.

As God’s steward I do not own my time, my talents, or my treasures.

God gave me the time, the talents, and the treasures I have to accomplish His plans while I am on this earth.

So stewardship means, *“Using our God-given abilities to manage God-given resources to accomplish God-ordained results.”*

Stewardship is about the way we manage the time the talent, and the treasure God has entrusted to us.

Our text from 1st Chronicles addresses three fundamental questions about stewardship.

Why do we give? How do we give? What do we give?

The first principal of stewardship is that God is the owner of everything.

All you have is on loan to you from God.

In verse 11 King David put it this way. ***“Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.”*** (1st Chronicles 29:11)

This verse clearly exposes a fundamental flaw in the world’s view that *“I worked hard to buy it and now it belongs to me.”*

But Deuteronomy 8:18 reminds all of us that God gave you the time, the ability, and the opportunity to earn that money.

Everything we have really belongs to God.

Verse 12 tells us that God not only owns everything but that everything we have is a gift from God.

“Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.”

The second principal of stewardship is that everything we have is a gift from God.

When someone gives you something or does something for you, you want to return the favor.

So it is out of gratitude that we should want to give God a portion of the time, the talents, and the treasure that God has graciously let us manage.

When you remember that God owns everything and that God is allowing you to manage what belongs to Him, you realize that when you give, you are not giving God what belongs to you, but rather you are only returning a portion of what already belongs to God.

Next, how should we give?

It is critically important that our giving be done for the right reason and in the right way.

The third principle of Biblical giving is found in verse 14. ***“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.”***

We are to give generously because God has generously given to us.

Listen again to the generosity of the Israelites in verses 3 – 7; ***“Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: three thousand talents (110 tons) of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents (260 tons) of refined silver”. When the people saw the generosity of their leader they were moved to follow suit. “They gave toward the work on the temple of God five thousand talents (190 tons) and ten thousand darics (180 pounds) of gold, ten thousand talents (375 tons) of silver, eighteen thousand talents (675 tons) of bronze and a hundred thousand talents (3,750 tons) of iron. Any who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the temple of the Lord.”***

Now that is some very generous giving.

But before we get overwhelmed with the tons of gold, silver, and precious jewels we need to remember that these people were able to generously give to God because God had given generously to them.

The fourth principal of giving is we are to give to God in proportion to how God has blessed us.

This is where the practice of giving God 10% of what God has given us.

We give to God as God has blessed us.

You see our giving is true barometer of our belief in The Lord.

In David’s prayer in verses 10-17 David acknowledged that they gave generously because they believed God would supply their needs.

The fifth principal of Biblical stewardship is we are to give willingly.

It is one thing to give generously, but it is another to give willingly.

Do you give as willingly like the people of Israel did or do you have to be coerced?

There are many examples throughout history of kings and governments collecting money from the

people by force.

And today none of us have a choice about paying income tax and /or sales tax.

But in our text we see David did not have to threaten people nor did King David send out soldiers to collect from the people.

Notice verse 9 ***“The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord.”***

The leaders set the example for the people. (v. 9).

Then in verse 17 King David said, ***“I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you”***.

Then in verse 18 David prays that the desire of the people to give willingly and generously to The Lord would always be in their hearts.

You see it is this attitude of giving willingly, giving generously and giving in proportion to what God has given to us that identifies the person who loves The Lord and is being a loyal disciple.

The sixth principal of giving is in 1st Corinthians 16:1-2.

Here we are told that our giving is to be systematic.

“Now about the collection for the Lord’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.”

Our giving is a vital part of worship and our giving is to be systematic.

We are to prayerfully determine the amount we are to give The Lord each week and that amount is to be set aside every week.

So if you set aside your offering and you cannot be in church one week your offering should be double the next week.

The seventh principal of stewardship is we are to give sacrificially.

Sacrificial giving is in our lesson from Mark.

The first 5 books of the Bible talk a lot about giving a sacrifice to God.

There we read that a sacrifice ***is “a pleasing aroma to the Lord.”***

Giving out of your abundance is not a sacrifice.

Doing without is a sacrifice.

The reason a sacrifice is pleasing to God is that we will sacrifice for those things that are important to

us.

We do not sacrifice for anything that is not important to us.

When we get to the point where The Kingdom of God and His righteousness are important enough for you and me to sacrifice for God, God will give us the power to make a difference in our neighborhood.

Many people today ask if they are supposed to give a tenth or a tithe.

Under the Mosaic system the tithe was really more than ten percent.

The tithe was given to The Lord to support the Levites, the upkeep of the tabernacle / Temple, and for the support of widows, orphans and the poor. Deuteronomy 14:28 - 29)

A tithe is different than an offering.

An offering was given over and above the tithe as a special thanks to The Lord for what He had done for a person.

The New Testament is quite clear we are not required to give a certain amount or a percentage!

The operative word is required!

However, every Christians should want to give more than 10% of the money they earn out of love for The Lord and to thank Jesus for all He has done for us.

Your offering is just as important part of your worship as singing praise and praying.

In fact if we sing praise to God and do not back it up with our giving to The Lord our songs of praise are empty.

Remember the old saying, *“Put your money where your mouth is.”*

Verse 18 tells us our stewardship is a sign of our loyalty to God.

“LORD, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you.”

This is true because our finances are usually one of the last areas we are willing to turn over to the Lord.

Giving our money is also a barometer of our trust for God to provide for our needs.

In Malachi 3:10, God challenges us to put Him to the test.

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse ... Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.’ Malachi 3:10

Time is our most precious commodity because everything we do takes time.

So every Christian should willingly, generously, and systematically sacrificially give our time to worship, Bible study, prayer, teaching our children, maintaining our church building, and helping our fellow members.

God has also given every person skills, abilities.

God has also given every Christian spiritual gifts.

And we have the responsibility of using them to accomplish His work.

In our text from 1st Chronicles we read that the materials for building the Temple were given so the craftsmen would have the provisions to complete the work.

We all need to look at our skills and abilities not only as a way to earn a living but seeing our skills and abilities as a ministry.

I recently read in interesting statistic.

Prayer is mentioned 371 times in the Bible, love is mentioned 714 times, and giving is mentioned 2,162 times.

This tells us that God places a lot of emphasis on giving.

So if we want to please God, our giving must be a top priority for each of us.

The Bible teaches us how to be good stewards and The Bible warns us about the consequences of being a bad steward.

Romans 14:12 reminds us that one day we will all stand before our Lord and give an account of our stewardship.

“So then each of us shall give an account of himself before God.

This accounting is not about salvation but how faithful we have been as stewards.

We will be judged in accordance with how well we managed the time, the talents, and the money God has entrusted to us to accomplish God’s plans in our life.

God expects each of us to manage the time, the talents, and the money that He has entrusted to us to accomplish His plans.

Stewardship is, *“Using your God-given abilities to manage God-given resources to accomplish God-ordained plans.”*

AMEN