

BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH
NEW MEMBER LESSON #10 – STEWARDSHIP



Introduction:

Stewardship is a fascinating topic, particularly with regards to our accountability in the Kingdom of God. Hopefully we have established throughout these lessons the understanding that we, the believers in Jesus Christ, live under Kingdom authority. With this in mind we want to first look at Stewardship by identifying the Owner of all things, the responsibility of the Steward and the Accountability that is expected by the Owner.

Noted Author and Theologian C.S. Lewis is credited with saying “Every faculty you have your power of thinking or of moving your limbs from moment to moment, is given you by God. If you devoted every moment of your whole life exclusively to His service, you could not give Him anything that was not in a sense His own already”.

God is the Owner of all things including time, space and resources. He has entrusted people to steward or manage all things. People are accountable to God for the way in which we handle God’s property.

The Lesson:

This lesson will examine the *mandate from the Owner* (God), the *responsibility of the Steward* (Us) and the *blessing/accountability* of being a good Steward.

It is important that we obtain a working definition of Stewardship which will direct our focus throughout this lesson. Oxford dictionary defines stewardship as ‘the job of supervising or taking care of something’, which belongs to someone else. A Steward manages the possessions of someone else including resources, opportunities and abilities. If you are thinking, “that’s not me”! Actually it is you. God gave us all things and we are responsible to manage while we are alive and well on planet earth.

The Mandate or Command from God: Genesis 1:26-31; Psalms 24; Matthew 25: 14-30

In Genesis 1:26-28 God gave Adam the authority over every living creature. Psalms 24 affirms the Earth is the Lord’s and everything in it with great detail. God is the Creator and Owner of all things. He gave humans the responsibility of managing everything on earth.

The Matthew Scripture gives us a comparative view of stewardship. It examines the story of a man going on a journey and releasing charge of his wealth to his servants. He called his servants and entrusted his

wealth to them. The Bible says to one he gave five bags of gold, to another he gave 2 bags and to another (1) one bag, each according to his ability. The Man left on his journey and returned to see how the servants handled the wealth.

The five bags may represent any number of things in a modern context. Imagine the 5 bags being 5 children, or 4 homes, 3 skills, 2 book deals, 1 business/ministry, multiple opportunities, excellent health, a great mind, and the list goes on. You get the picture. Stewardship is not limited to how we manage money, but our time, energy, talents and abilities have all been given to us by God. The way we handle these treasures will determine our future success or failure.

The Responsibility of the Steward:

Significant in the definition of Stewardship is becoming aware of the fact that we do not own anything. We have been given the task of managing all things well. What does this look like? Managing simply means to handle with care, to operate in a manner that will present good results. Operate for this lesson will mean to act in accordance with God's word and his plan.

The best way to steward life, is to stay close to the Owners' Manual. We have been given a manual to help us to manage every issue in life. This manual is the Bible. Other manuals will give us specialty training to manage our gifts. It is the word of God, which will initially lead and guide us into all truth. The word read or Preached will build our faith and teach of how to manage well. If in doubt, Pray ask God, who will speak to you by His Spirit to reveal the proper way and/or action to take. Christian relationships will enhance our knowledge as well, however we want to hear God first and let our family and friends only be a source of confirmation. The Lord is clear in His communication with us.

God expects us to handle everything entrusted to us. It is so interesting that He knew how much we would be able to handle. Everyone has been given according to their ability to produce wealth/well. Either way, what we have is enough if we manage it by the Lord's standards.

Colossians 3:23-24 directs our posture in handling the things of God. This scriptures says "Whatever You do; work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Even if you find yourself surrounded with people who do not appreciate your work ethic, remember it is the Lord you are serving and Him you want to please. He is the one we are accountable to in the family of God.

The Accountability

There is an expectation that the Owner will reward us according to our faithfulness in following His directions. We are accountable to God as we manage all things; family, ministry, time, talents, money, abilities, resources. We do not have anything to waste. We have been given unlimited resources to live a life worthy of being the King's Children.

The Blessing of managing well results in more blessings. The outcome of poor management or doing things on our own terms, results in depravity, loss and poverty. Our lack of accountability, not only affect us individually but will have great impact on everything around us.

In the Matthew scripture the Lord gave a double reward to those who used the gifts well and he took from the one who buried his gift and did nothing with it. Ouch! It is okay to try and fail; however it is not okay to 'do nothing'. The Lord recognizes persistence and will honor continued efforts to do the right thing. Pray for direction before proceeding, adhere to biblical instruction and stay connect to our Heavenly Father. The results

will be favorable. God makes no secret of his intent to bless us and to give us a glorious future and a hope, which never disappoints.

Review

1. Who is the Owner of all things?
2. Who is the Steward?
3. Define Stewardship?
4. Who are we accountable to?
5. What are some areas of our lives we can practice being a good Steward?
6. What is the benefit of being a good Steward?
7. What is the result of poor stewardship?

Name

Date