

Stewardship (Part 1)

Think for a moment: What events produced the greatest stress in your life today? This past week? Haven't they involved some feeling of being overloaded with responsibilities at home, work, school, church, or all the above? How about stress related to paying bills? Running late for an appointment? Going with too little rest? Juggling your finances? Waiting in a traffic jam on the highway or runway? Facing unexpected car repair or medical expenses? Running short of cash before payday? Each of these anxiety-producers, like so many other daily issues, relates to either time or money. The clock and the dollar are such substantial factors in so many parts of life that we must consider their role in any serious discussion of godly living.

Donald S Whitney
Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life

Stewardship is a Spiritual Discipline that recognizes and practices the truth that nothing we have belongs to us. It asserts that everything we “own” belongs to God and that we are simply stewards of His money, gifts, homes, cars, meals, clothes, phones, computers, etc.

Psalm 89:11 The heavens are yours, and the earth is yours; everything in the world is yours—you created it all.

Deut. 10:14 Look, the highest heavens and the earth and everything in it all belong to the Lord your God.

Consumers or Stewards?

Fifty years ago Americans consumed half as many goods and services per person as they do today. During the same amount of time the size of homes tripled. Every day we buy more clothes, appliances, cars, books, televisions, computers, and so forth simply because we can (and often when we can't). Some sociologists have named this propensity to continually purchase and consume more, “affluenza.” God intends the body of Christ to battle affluenza and reach the world with his loving care. He does so through people who stewards His wealth by sharing their resources and gifts. Stewards distinguish between building their own kingdom and building the kingdom of God. The practice of stewardship will reveal what is in our heart. Stewardship shines its light into our entitlement mentality and on our need to impress others with what we have.

Adele Ahlberg Calhoun
Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us

Owners or Stewards?

1 Cor. 6:19-20

Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price.

The Disciplined Use of Time

What do the following passages suggest about stewarding the time given to each of us?

Ecclesiastes 9:10-12

Whatever your hand finds to do, do *it* with *all* your might; for there is no activity, planning, knowledge, or wisdom in Sheol where you are going. ¹¹ I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise nor wealth to the discerning, nor favor to the skillful; for time and chance overtake them all. ¹² For indeed, a person does not know his time: like fish that are caught in a treacherous net and birds caught in a snare, so the sons of mankind are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them.

John 9:4

We must carry out the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.

Ephesians 5:15-17

So then, be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of your time (redeeming the time), because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.

James 4:13-15

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." ¹⁴ Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. For you are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while, and then vanishes away. ¹⁵ Instead, *you ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

2 Peter 3:8

But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.

The Next Few Weeks We'll discuss the following:

- The Disciplined Use of Money
- Other Arenas of Stewardship
- Breaking Free of Self & Ownership and Practicing Stewardship