



5 Principles of Biblical Stewardship

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The Essentials for a Faithful Life

What does the word “stewardship” mean to you? It is a term that can come weighed down with baggage of obligation and little joy. Yet we also see a world where the effects of money are power and greed. So how do we get back to the original truths that God gave His children and restore the joy to stewardship?

Through my research, study of the Word, and 18 years in the nonprofit world, I have found these 5 truths to be simple but transformative in the generosity journey.

1. It's All God's

Psalm 24:1 says, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.” Simply put, the earth belongs to God. He owns it.

The early patriarch Abraham also acknowledged this when he said to the king of Sodom, “I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth.” [Genesis 14:22] Moses repeated this idea: “Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. [Deuteronomy 10:14]. God himself testifies in Job 41 :11, “Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine.”

These passages clearly state that as owner, God has full right and title to everything on this earth. He owns the ground. He owns everything on the ground. He owns our very lives. He is the one in control.

2. It's Not Mine

When I was in high school, I worked for a small hole-in-the-wall hamburger joint. There were only 4 tables, and all the hamburgers were cooked to order. Sometimes the owner couldn't be there to close down the place. So he'd ask me to close it down. This meant making sure that all the other employees did their normal clean up duties. But the biggest responsibility of all was to empty out the cash register and walk it over to the bank for deposit in the night drop.

I considered it a great honor to be entrusted with this responsibility. Even though I saw the large amount of bills go into the bank bag, it never occurred to me that I should do anything other than deposit it. The simple truth: it wasn't my money. It wasn't my restaurant. I did not put the effort and the risk into the startup. I was just an employee. I was a steward.

Since God owns everything on earth, we can apply this concept of stewardship towards everything we own. It really isn't ours. It belongs to God. He is the boss. We are the employees. He has entrusted his possessions to our care.



3. I'm Accountable

In 2 Corinthians 5:10, the Apostle Paul drives home this point "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body whether good or evil."

Paul repeats the same idea in Romans 14:12: "So then each of us will give an account of himself to God." Revelations 2:23 similarly says, "[A]nd I will give to each of you according to your works."

These passages make it clear that Christians will be judged on their works-their salvation is secure, but they will be held accountable for what they did in the body. At the judgment seat of Christ, our works will be reviewed. What we did with our time, our talent, our treasure, our truth, our relationships will all be reviewed.

The Master will have us stand before him and account for all that we've done with what he's given us. Our challenge is to be faithful, knowing that we are accountable. In being faithful, we'll receive his commendation.

4. There is Reward (and Loss)

Sixth-grade math was a disaster. I was transferred to a new modular school where they decided to implement some new educational theories. Part of the theory was that kids should learn at their own pace. Grades were bad, and we could learn from our mistakes.

Our math curriculum came on these laminated plastic cards. I remember working problems and then checking my answers on the answer key. For those that I got wrong, I was supposed to go back and rework the problem.

The big problem for me was that I was more interested in advancing to the next unit than learning the lesson. So I'd skip reworking the problems and go on ahead. And because grades didn't matter, I was flying through my math lessons. But in truth, I was falling behind.

I needed a teacher. I needed tests. I needed accountability. I needed grades.

That's what the scripture teaches. Accountability means that our stewardship carries potential for either reward and loss-otherwise what is the point of that stewardship?

Jesus says in Revelation 22:12, "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done." God the Father wants us to be motivated. He wants us to please him, and he promises us that our decisions in this life carry eternal consequences.



5. Invest in Eternity

On the subject of money, Jesus acts like a wise financial advisor and he speaks of a different kind of retirement plan:

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Investing in the things of this earth is like investing in Enron stock-you know it's going to fail, so why make the investment? On the other hand, investing in heaven is a foolproof investment-it won't rust, fade or disappear.

I'm afraid that all too often we have a tourist mindset through this life. We are here to visit the sites, see the world and eat nice food. But Jesus is saying so much more. He's saying that with our time here on this earth we should be making investment and seeking return. And the only smart investment is in eternity.

Conclusion

I've heard many say it-we should preach the gospel to ourselves every day. The message of God's great love, his great sacrifice and his redemption of mankind is a timeless message. And indeed, how I need to hear it again and again.

But in a similar vein, we need to preach the five essentials of biblical stewardship to ourselves every day. These five essentials are guideposts, and for those who endeavor to live by them, they are life-changing. I've seen it time and time again.

I pray that we'll unleash a generation of people who realize this earth is not their home, and their ultimate aim is heaven. There, Jesus waits to greet us, and to call us to an eternal home and say, "Well done. Well done."

About Us

The Signatry is a Christian foundation who partners with families, advisors, and ministries across the world to make an eternal difference through generosity. We equip families with practical wisdom to think through the legacy they want to leave and to find the generosity tools to support this vision. Established in 2000 and having facilitated over \$3 billion to ministries across the world, we are passionate advocates for the transformation experiencing the generosity of God brings.

Have more questions? Need some help getting started?

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