



From Sticks To Snakes, God Calls Us To Be Stewards

Then the Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?"

"A staff," he replied.

The Lord said, "Throw it on the ground."

Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake.

Exodus 4:2-3a

In 1994, Brian and Marla Hill left their jobs to start an on-hold message business using a system that Brian had developed to generate leads in his previous occupation. Brian was excited about the business opportunity, but he also felt a deep desire to make Christ known. As they were writing the business plan for the new venture, he recounts asking God, "Really, God, is this it? Am I really going to change the world through on-hold messages?"

What Brian and Marla did not know at the time was that this business would be one of many ways God would bless their family and teach them how to steward His resources.

Asking for Guidance

In the years that followed, the business experienced great success, and Brian and Marla were blessed with five children. As their family grew, Brian saw that their children were given to them to steward too. "Even my children were a responsibility, not an entitlement. I trained them from an early age to be mature, responsible leaders," he explains. Motivated by a shared desire to develop and invest in their family, Brian and Marla wrote out their family's vision, mission, and values. Soon thereafter, a vision sprouted for building a family legacy lodge on property they owned. So, they began to plan and save toward making it a reality.

One day, when the plans for the lodge had been drawn and the last penny needed to build it was deposited, Brian was on his way to the bank when he felt overcome with feelings of confusion instead of excitement. "I went from, 'I can't wait to get started,' to 'I don't know what God wants us to do.' So, I asked the Lord for His guidance on how to use the money and felt prompted to give it away." Brian shared this experience with Marla and, after years of saving and planning, they decided to split all of the money into large gifts to their favorite ministries and begin saving once again.

It All Belongs to Him

Brian jokes that many people expect him to say that he received a check in the mailbox a week later for ten times to the penny, but it did not happen that way. And while they never received a miraculous reimbursement for trusting God, Brian claims they got "a hundred times the vision."

In the time after giving away the money for the lodge, Brian and Marla realized their vision for the lodge was not big enough for God. They were being asked to throw down the vision they were comfortable with (their “staff”), so God could transform it into something that was so big (a “snake”) that they would ordinarily run away from it, as it is not something they could handle. But just like with Moses, God was calling them to trust Him, to pick up what He gave them, and to walk it out as He planned.

Brian explains, “Regardless of what God has given us, He has entrusted that to us. If it is a stick, then steward your stick. If it is a staff, then steward your staff. If it is a scepter, steward your scepter. When God asks Moses, ‘What do you have in your hand?’ Moses replies, ‘I have a staff.’ God says, ‘Throw it down and see what I can do.’ God asks us to surrender what we have, to trust Him and recognize that He hasn’t given it to us for us, but he has entrusted it to us for Him.”

Through continued blessing of their business, Brian and Marla were soon able to earn enough to fund the new vision of building the lodge to give it away.

Brian recalls, “The vision God gave us was that if we will do this, if we will build this and give it away, then our children will have the opportunity to sit at the feet of leaders of all types from around the world and to learn and become more than we could have ever hoped if it were just up to us.” With this new vision from God, they built the lodge—complete with a multi-purpose event center and bunkhouses for guests—and opened the doors to whoever God would send.

“What Marla and I value most about The Signatry is the opportunity to meet and connect with likeminded, generous people. There is power in gathering together, building relationships, collaborating, and encouraging one another in the work God has given us. It is a blessing to be able to know that I am not a lone ranger, but that I have accountability and a responsibility to God and to others to give as God intended so that others can receive as God intended. We are honored to be a part of this community working to change the world.” -Brian Hill

Over the years, Brian and Marla have witnessed an amazing manifestation of what God promised. Their lodge has hosted ministries from all around the world representing many tribes, tongues, and causes.

“Our journey of stewardship has been marked by God, time and time again, asking us to surrender what we have and to trust him to do more with it than we could ever ask or imagine,” Brian says. “In doing so, God has led us to recognize that He has not given us what we have for us but, rather, He has entrusted it to us for Him. He is the owner and we are the stewards.”

Take Your Next Steps

Brian’s story illustrates how God calls us all to be stewards with our resources, but to do so, we must trust in Him even when His plans are bigger than ours. The Signatry provides tools, resources, and community support to help donors wisely steward their assets for Kingdom impact. Learn more about starting your own stewardship journey at thesignatry.com, or contact our Donor Care team at donorcare@thesignatry.com to take your next steps.

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