



Stewardship

“But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

Heart Island is tucked away among the Thousand Islands in the St. Lawrence River on the Canadian-American border. The island is home to Boldt Castle. The 120-room stone castle is a monument to George Boldt’s love for his wife, Louise. George Boldt made his fortune in the hotel business. He owned New York’s elegant Waldorf Astoria Hotel. When he decided to build a castle as a gift to his wife, money would be no object. Soon the plans were drawn, and construction began on a castle truly fit for a queen.

Before the castle was completed, tragedy struck. Mrs. Boldt suddenly died. The news was devastating to her husband. He ordered all work on the building to cease. He never returned to the island, and he let the castle fall into disrepair. The castle was only significant to him if his wife could enjoy it. Love is a strong motivator. When you love someone, you plan ways to convey that love. True love holds nothing back. You give up yourself to express that love.

When you fall in love with Jesus, you surrender your life to Him. As you mature in your love, you continually discover new ways to demonstrate your love. Gently and sweetly, Jesus brings to your attention areas in your life where self still reigns. Then comes the pain of surrender. But whenever you surrender self and ask instead, “What can I do for You?” you find that your love brings new and deeper commitments. Love, the primary motivator, enables you to grow in your walk with God. That’s what good stewardship is all about.

Preview

The Bible portrays God as loving humanity so much that He has withheld nothing to provide for our present and eternal happiness. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). In comparison to this gift, what could we ever give? Christ was a gift, not of what He had—even though He had everything—but of Himself. Selflessness is true stewardship. Selfishness comes naturally to our hearts. But He has provided for this too. Listen to His promise: “A new heart will I give you—a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 26, 27).

God asks every individual to put Him first. When we do, He takes responsibility for our needs. When He has first place in our lives, we can watch the miracles take place right before our eyes. He loves to pour out His blessings on His children.

Points to Ponder

1. When we give all, are we giving what belongs to us?

No, all we are and have belongs to God. He accepts our surrender and then puts us back in charge of it, making us stewards of all we are and all we possess.

2. What are the basic gifts God gives to every person?

He has given everyone a body, abilities, time, and material possessions, plus the earth around us. God demonstrates the divine principle of giving in all nature. Many plants produce thousands of seeds. They may be as large as the forty-pound coconut that grows on an island in the Indian Ocean. Or they may be as tiny as the Epiphytic orchid, which measures some thirty-five million seeds to an ounce. All produce in great abundance.

Who can count each little parachute seed on a dandelion or a milkweed? In a watermelon, pumpkin, or cucumber, God packs hundreds of seeds. How thoughtful of God always to make more than enough so that you can enjoy the delicious seeds of corn on the cob!

Nuts & Bolts

1. A selfish person resents giving.

How can you show him that God is really reclaiming that which already belongs to Him?

Psalm 24:1: "The earth is the _____, and the fulness _____;
the _____ and they that _____ therein."

2. What's a good answer when someone says, "It's nobody's business what I do with my body"?

Luke 10:27: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy _____, and with all thy _____, and with all thy _____, and with all thy _____."

3. How can I know that God wants me to use my talents and abilities to His glory?

The Lord commends His faithful servants in Matthew 25:23: "Well done, good and _____ servant; thou hast been _____ over a _____ things, I will make thee _____ over _____ things: enter thou into the _____ of thy Lord."

4. Because time is God's gift, each moment is precious. Not only are we to give God one seventh of our time, the Sabbath, we should also make wise use of all the rest of our time.

Colossians 3:23: "Whatever ye _____, do it _____, as to the _____ and not to _____."

5. Why should Christians be concerned with being good stewards?

1 Corinthians 6:19, 20: "What? know ye not that your _____ is the _____ of the _____; and ye are not your _____? For ye are _____ with a _____; therefore _____ God in your _____ and in your _____ which are _____."

6. What portion of our income belongs to God?

Genesis 28:22, "Of all that thou _____ me I will surely give thee _____ unto thee."

Technically, 100 percent belongs to God, but He asks us to return a tithe or 10 percent of our income.

7. How is the tithe to be used?

Numbers 18:21, 24: "I have given the children of Levi all the _____ in Israel for an inheritance, for their _____ which they serve... The _____ of the children of Israel,... I have given to the Levites to inherit it."

1 Corinthians 9:13, 14: "Do ye not know that they which _____ the holy things _____ of the things of the temple? . ." "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which _____ the gospel should live of the gospel." Thus gospel ministers today should be paid from tithe given through the church.

8. Grateful Christians do not limit their gifts to the church just to tithe.

In Luke 12:48, Jesus gives us a principle that should guide us in giving offerings: "For unto whomsoever much is _____, of him shall be much _____; and to whom men have _____, of him they _____ ask the _____." God asks us to give as much as we are able to give, according to the blessings we have received from the Lord (Deuteronomy 16:17).

9. What does God say will happen to those who knowingly rob Him of tithe and offerings?

Malachi 3:9: "Ye are cursed with a _____; for ye have _____ me, even this whole nation." Since God is the owner of everything, we are stewards, and we return our tithe to Him and give our offerings as faithful stewards.

10. God has made us stewards, not for His benefit, but to remove our selfishness.

- a. Jesus warned in Luke 12:15: "Take heed, and beware of _____: for a man's life consisteth not in the _____ of the things which he _____."
- b. Stewardship teaches us habits of economy and efficiency so that we won't spend our money for self-gratification. (See Galatians 5:24.)
- c. We receive joy in partnership with God. Matthew 25:40: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the _____ of _____ my brethren, ye have done it unto _____."
- d. God blesses the remaining 90 percent in a miraculous way.
Malachi 3:10: "Bring ye all the _____ into the storehouse,... and _____ me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of _____, and pour you out a _____, that there shall not be _____ enough to receive it."

11. Why does Jesus talk so much about money?

Luke 12:34: "For where your _____ is, there will your _____ be also." Our allegiance follows our money.

12. Why should anyone get excited about stewardship?

God established tithe as a principle in both the Old and New Testaments. He has promised to provide for our needs when we are faithful to Him.

Words to Remember

Steward: A person entrusted with the management of the household or estate of another.

Title: A tenth of one's income, which God claims as His.

Offerings: Freewill gifts of gratitude to God, given in addition to tithe.

Levites: The tribe of priests in the Old Testament who were not given any land. The tithe was used to support them.

The Difference Between

An owner: A person who possesses and exerts control over his own property.

A steward: A person who manages the property of another.

I Truly Believe

To offer God less than first place is to offer Him no place at all. God will not accept our offerings if we withhold ourselves.

Think through the following statements carefully and check those you fully believe.

- I believe that God, as the owner of the universe, calls on me, as a manager of His goods, to be faithful in tithes and offerings.
- I believe God wants me to return the tithe of my income to His storehouse.
- I am convinced that God will keep His promise to pour out blessings on me when I return my tithes and give offerings to Him.
- I want to follow God's will by dedicating my time, talents, life, and income to Him.

My Prayer

Dear Father,

I cannot thank You enough for saving me from sin and its penalty of death. I dedicate to You my entire life—my time, talents, and possessions. Help me to manage every aspect of my life the way You want me to. Amen.