

TITLE: A CHRISTIAN MUST BE A GOOD STEWARD

TEXT: 1 PETER 4:10-11 – "...as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

INTRO: Everybody has responsibilities in this life. Society has expectations of each of us. We have many freedoms, and we're allowed to have many different possessions, but these must not be allowed to harm others. We are expected to contribute positively to our society (be a good citizen, good neighbor, pay taxes, etc.). Our employers expect us to be trustworthy with their money, time, etc. This is the definition of a good steward.

I. STEWARDSHIP DEFINED:

- A. Literally "law of the house," governor, overseer, servant – the owner is ultimately in charge of all, but goes away on business leaving the steward in charge of everything there. He is responsible for paying bills, overseeing servants, overseeing children, protecting the owner's possessions, etc. This is a great responsibility; he is entrusted with all these things.
- B. Examples: **Lk 12:42-44** – "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household...?"
 - 1. Joseph, as a servant of Potiphar, was a good steward of what Potiphar entrusted to him (**Gen 39:4-10**).
 - 2. Joseph, as a servant of God, was a good steward of what God entrusted to him (**Gen 39:9**). He wouldn't "sin against God!" His body, like ours, belonged to God and was entrusted to him for a little time (**Jam 4:13-15**).

II. STEWARDS OF THE EARTH:

- A. **Psa 24:1** – "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." It all belongs to God!
- B. **Gen 1:28** – "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over... every living thing that moveth upon the earth."; **2:15** – God put Adam in the garden "to dress (work) it & to keep (protect) it." God had expectations!
- C. We should do our part to take care of the earth, keeping things in perspective -- it will be destroyed by God - **2 Pet 3** (not by us).

III. STEWARDS OF OUR BODIES:

- A. Physically speaking, the most amazing gift we've been given is our own bodies.
- B. **1 Cor 3:16** – "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Many argue that this is only in reference to the church as a whole. But the church is made up of individual members (Rom 12; 1 Cor 12). **1 Cor 6:15-20** – "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid." The context is fornication, however our bodies are from God, & as Christians, we are the members of Christ & the temple of the HS. We should avoid the obvious things that harm our bodies (alcohol, smoking, drugs, things that have no positive value). Note that the silence of the Scriptures forbids, and that no authority can be found for these things.
- C. **Rom 12:2** – your bodies are to be a living sacrifice (Christ lives in you – **Gal 2:20** – how would He treat your body?)
- D. **1 Tim 2:9-10** – dress in modest apparel (women).
- E. Don't go overboard w/exercise. **1 Tim 4:8** says it is profitable for a little, but *godliness* is profitable for all things.

IV. STEWARDS OF OUR TIME, TALENTS, EFFORTS:

- A. **Col 4:5-6** – redeeming the time ("redeem" – buy back; to recover ownership by paying a sum).
 - 1. Paul was writing this from prison. He knew how to redeem his time (Phil 1:13; 4:22)!
 - 2. How do you spend your time? How have you redeemed it (used it wisely)? Do you find opportunities to teach others?
 - 3. (v.6) proper speech, knowing how to answer everyone. The very ability you have to speak is a gift from God.
- B. **Mt 25:14-30** – parable of the talents (weight/money). But the application can be made to our abilities. How do we use them?

V. STEWARDS OF OUR MONEY:

- A. Recognize the source. "It's MY money! I've worked hard for it!" Who gave you the abilities to earn that money? **Jam 1:17**.
- B. Pay what we owe (physically) (**Rom 13:7-8; Jam 5:4; Lev 19:13** – "the wages of a hired servant shall not abide with thee all night until the morning."). Pay the bill by the due date, not based on the grace period!
- C. Pay what we owe (spiritually)
 - 1. **1 Cor 16:1-2** – 1st day of the week, lay by in store, as God has prospered you!
 - 2. **1 Cor 9:1-14; 1 Tim 5:17-18** – preachers and elders are worthy of their hire/reward.
- D. Church – Use it wisely! Benevolence (**Gal 6:10**), Evangelism – proper use of money in foreign missions – accountability.

VI. STEWARDS OF THE GOSPEL:

- A. There is NO higher calling than this! God's plan for the salvation of man has been put in our hands!
- B. **2 Cor 4:7** – The treasure is in earthen vessels (Peter sent to Cornelius; Ananias to Paul; Philip to the eunuch) God has always used His people to carry out His will / message. So we must be good stewards of this message he has given us.
- C. **1 Cor 4:1-2** – We are "ministers of Christ & stewards...Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."
- D. **1 Pet 4:10** – "...as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Your abilities are given by God, and are to be used properly.
- E. **1 Pet 4:11** – "...that God in all things may be glorified (here is the conclusion – the purpose in all these areas of stewardship).

CONCLUSION: Most people today live their lives without any acknowledgement of God or His involvement in creating them. Even many who profess to be Christians ignore on a daily basis much of what God says. But God has made it clear that He will demand an account of everything He has entrusted to us, even every idle word (Mt 12:36). Let us strive every day to be good stewards, so that He will be glorified!