

Requirements of Stewardship
Part Two
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Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

The Lord has obviously been teaching us some critical lessons lately about stewardship.

Stewardship being the proper management of what God has entrusted to our care.

This covers a very broad range of categories.

Those usually identified first are money and property; these are the easiest to see and measure.

Stewardship, however, is not confined to money and property.

Your relationships and responsibilities to others, the care of your own body, your influence in the lives of other people, your work ethic, your service to the Lord in the Church; and many other areas of your life are all subject to the requirements of stewardship.

Two weeks back, we laid before you two fundamental requirements of stewardship: this week in Part II, our intention is to broach two more that are equally as important.

The first requirement we discussed was that we must **recognize the source** of the good things in life that we have.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Lest we should make the same mistake as others who have come before us:

Deuteronomy 8:17-18

17 And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of *mine* hand hath gotten me this wealth.

18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as *it is* this day.

Our second requirement, which has been a huge eye-opener to many of us, is that we must learn to **be content with what we have**.

Understanding that to be content with what we have does not mean that we must always want, or be satisfied with, things to stay the way they are; it simply means we

trust the Lord completely so that we are OK with where Jesus has us right now in the process of His growing and changing us.

As we move into our third requirement of stewardship:

III. Stewards must be faithful.

1 Corinthians 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

A. Stewardship is the proper administration over all those things with which God has entrusted us.

1. Rarely does proper stewardship occur naturally: it must be learned.
2. And...that learning process usually begins with money.
3. Now, you may not like that. You may not like someone holding you accountable with what you do with your money, but you don't have a choice because, as we have already learned, it's really not your money.
4. Let me remind you, I am not that One who holds you accountable, I am simply a fellow steward subject to the same requirements as you are.
5. I can promise you this: if you will become faithful to the Lord with your money, you will look back one day very soon to that being one of the best decisions of your life.

B. There are reasons that learning good stewardship begins with money.

1. There are basic requirements that are commanded in following the Lord.
 - a. First, we are commanded to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; to get saved!
 - b. Next, we are commanded to be baptized and become a part of our Church.
 - c. Then we face the command to begin tithing and giving.
2. Tithing and giving are in the beginning of our stewardship requirements because, for one, they are the easiest to master.
We read about it in:

Luke 16:10-13

10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, how will ye be faithful in your true riches?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

4. Money (or mammon as it is called here) is the least important of all the things God has entrusted us with.

5. Until you can be faithful with the money God sends into your possession, God cannot; He certainly will not, trust you with what He calls the “true riches”.

6. We are commanded:

1 Corinthians 16:2 Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him...

7. We are commanded:

2 Corinthians 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.*

8. It is not enough that tithing and giving are to be done; they are to be done cheerfully, gladly, joyfully and generously out of a heart of gratitude and contentment.

9. Many people spend their whole Christian lives as unfaithful stewards; but not you! Amen!

10. Once your faithfulness with money has been truly established, you will also be able to give out of abundance.

11. **2 Corinthians 9:6** But this / say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

C. Once you have mastered the money, God then requires the same degree of faithfulness with the true riches.

1. Our context in I Corinthians 4:2 speaks specifically regarding Paul’s faithfulness with the gospel.

2. Paul’s faithfulness in using his gifts faithfully for the Lord, bringing sinners to Christ, was such that he could honestly say:

1 Corinthians 4:16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

3. Peter lays out this very same requirement for us as well:

1 Peter 4:7-11

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.
8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.
9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.
10 As every man hath received the gift, *even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*
11 If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

4. Each of you have been made managers over various gifts, talents, abilities and spiritual gifts.

5. We are not to waste them but to rather use them to minister blessing to one another and glory unto the Lord!

Our final requirement of stewardship for this series is:

IV. The Master comes first!

A. The disciples called Jesus "Master", because that is Who and What He is!

1. Luke 17:7-8

7 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

2. Some of you have mastered the money; you tithe and give faithfully and you never miss.

3. Many of you serve faithfully in various ministries using your spiritual gifts, your talents and abilities for God's glory; and in many cases, without thanks or recognition.

4. You are learning to place the privilege of your work for the Lord above every other duty in your life.

5. You, brothers and sisters, are the true faithful stewards of the manifold grace of God in this place.

5. You faithful stewards are also the happiest of all the people on this planet called Earth.

B. Faithful stewards put Jesus first in everything!

1. That is exactly as it should be.

2. Colossians 1:12-18

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him.

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; **that in all things he might have the preeminence.**

3. What is preeminence? It simply means that **Jesus comes first!**

4. Our tithes and offerings come out of the first we receive, not what is left over after we take what we want or need.

5. Proverbs 3:9-10

9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the **firstfruits** of all thine increase:

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

6. **Exodus 22:29** Thou shalt not delay *to offer* the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me.

7. **Exodus 23:19** The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD thy God.

8. Worship comes first as well!

Exodus 12:16 And in the **first** day *there shall be* an holy convocation...

Conclusion:

The faithful stewards of old placed the Sabbath of the Lord above all other needs and personal desires.

Isaiah 58:13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, *from* doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* words:

The Lord holds faithful stewards of today to the same standards.

Hebrews 10:24-25

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Who is first in your life?

In the story of the talents that Brother Ray shared with us a few weeks ago; there was one unprofitable servant who buried the master's talent and did nothing with it.

The Bible doesn't tell us, but I can't help but wonder what that servant did with his own money while he buried what belonged to his master?

I know many of you are doing everything you can to increase what you have...and that's ok, you should be. But what are you doing first to increase God's Kingdom?