

Stewardship 101

Lesson 1

Stewardship

PART I EXPLANATION

Introduction: It is important to recognize the responsibility that we have to God to be good stewards with what He has entrusted to our care. As the chief of His creatures, we have been given dominion to rule over the earth and the creation. To enable man for this job, God has given different abilities and resources to men. The purpose of this creation and the rule of it are to bring glory to God by how we use those gifts. That is the chief end for which man was created, to glorify God in every aspect of their lives.

This stewardship is given to every person saved or unsaved. However, it is especially true of a child of God. The accountability of our stewardship is to the One who entrusted to our care specific gifts. According as God has given to us shall we give account of our lives to Him for how we used our talents. The Bible informs us that each man will be rewarded according to his own labor. We are each judged according to how faithful we were with what was entrusted to our care. We are not expected to produce based on the abilities and resources that He entrusted to others, only what He has given to us. We are told that to whom much is given, much will be required. Obviously, He is fully aware of what He has distributed to each servant, so it will be impossible to make excuse for unfaithfulness to the all-knowing God.

It is expected and certain that all genuine Christians will be fruitful in their lives. However, the Scriptures also indicate that there are varying levels of fruitfulness among the children of God and that rewards will be given on an individual basis. Paul challenged the Corinthians to take heed how they built upon the foundation of Christ because their works would pass through the fire of judgment. Those of our works which endure the fire will be rewarded. We are warned that every secret work, whether it be good or evil will be revealed. This is a great motivation for holiness. If there were no day of reckoning, there would be less incentive to labor. There is nothing wrong with being motivated to work harder because of a promised reward.

Stewardship in the life of a Christian is not only to manage the natural gifts and resources that God has committed to their care, but also to exercise the spiritual gifts that He has given. God has given to His saint's spiritual gifts, which are talents that are intended for the building up and strengthening of the saints. It is extremely important for the saints to identify what particular gifts have been given to them so that they can be sure to use them properly. Failure to recognize our gifts will make it impossible to be faithful in exercising them. Because God is the dispenser of these gifts to His saints He sovereignly places them where He sees fit. No saint has been given every gift necessary to run a church or lead a successful Christian life. We are made to be dependent upon one another, as a body, to function efficiently and fulfill the responsibility to spread the message of the gospel.

It is imperative for the people of God to recognize that everything that they have belongs to God. Though He has given us all things richly to enjoy, He also expects us to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate to others of what we have received. By doing so we are laying up in store a good foundation for the time to come. This accountability, though sobering, gives meaning and purpose to our individual lives as we live them for His glory.

Definitions: *For English use the Webster's 1828 Dictionary and copy all appropriate definitions for each word. For the Greek and Hebrew use a Strong's Concordance and copy the definition. The Strong's number is in parenthesis.*

English: **Steward** -

Stewardship - n.

Greek: (2012) **epitropos** *ep-it'-rop-os*

3623. **oikonomos** *oy-kon-om'-os*

Hebrew: (4943) **mesheq** *meh'-shek*

Quotation: “God hath work to do in this world; and to desert it because of its difficulties and entanglements, is to cast off His authority. It is not enough that we be just, that we be righteous, and walk with God in holiness; but we must also serve our generation as David did before he fell asleep.” John Owen

“For God requiring the first-born for His offering, and the firstfruits for His service, requireth the first labours of His servants.” Henry Smith

“It can be written on the tomb of an unrepentant sinner...’Here lies a man who in all his life never worked one hour for God.” William Gurnall

“Oh, then be ashamed, Christians, that worldlings are more studious and industrious to make sure of pebbles, than you are to make sure of pearls.” Thomas Brooks

“God hath many servants, but little service in the world.” Thomas Adams

“We should not serve God by fits, as we used to pray when the night comes, to hear when the Sabbath comes, to fast when Lent comes, to repent when death comes; but the service of the heart is a continual service.” Henry Smith

“And let me tell you, the more labor you have put forth for the Kingdom of heaven, the more degrees of glory you shall have. As there are degrees of torment in hell so of glory in heaven. Mt. 23:14 As one star differeth from another star in glory, so shall one saint. Though every vessel of mercy shall be full, yet one may hold more than another.” Thomas Watson

Confessions (Look up and read these articles)

London Baptist Confession of 1689

Chapter 32: Of the Last Judgment - paragraphs 1-3

Spurgeon’s Catechism

Questions: 1-3

PART II EXPLORATION

Key Questions (*Answer in writing*)

1. What responsibility has God entrusted to mankind?

2. What is the purpose for which man is to strive in fulfilling this responsibility?

3. What added responsibility is there for stewardship in the life of a Christian?

4. Why is it essential for the saints to identify their spiritual gifts?

5. Why is it important to realize that God owns everything that we possess?

6. Why are rewards given on an individual basis?

7. What does Paul warn us about in regard to building our lives on the foundation of Christ?

8. Why will we be unable to make excuse in the judgment for our stewardship?

9. What three things does paragraph one of the London Confession of faith mention that we will give account for in the judgment?

10. What two benefits does paragraph three of the London Confession of faith give for being persuaded that there is a day of judgment?

Key Scriptures: (Look up these verses and fill in the blanks)

Matthew 16:27 When Christ returns He will _____ every man according to his _____.

Matthew 24:45-51 The promise to those that are _____ servants that they will be made _____ over his household. A faithful servant is defined as one who is found _____ what the Lord commanded when the Lord returns. The faithful servant will be ruler over _____ his goods. But there is a warning to the _____ servant which anticipates a delay in his lords coming and looketh not for him and is caught off guard. His reward will be to be cut _____ and his portion will be with the _____.

Matthew 25:14-30 Christ illustrates the work of His kingdom as a man that is _____ into a far country who leaves calls His servants and _____ unto them His _____. He distributes these differently to each servant according to his _____ and takes His journey. One man receives five, another two and another one. The man with five made _____ more. The man with two gained _____. The man with one buried it and didn't use it to gain anything. The man with five was commended as a _____ and _____ servant and was promised to be made ruler over _____ things. Likewise the man with two talents. However, the man with one talent that buried it was called a _____ and _____ servant. This man's talent was taken away from him and he was called an _____ servant and was cast out into outer _____ where there would be _____ and _____ of teeth.

Romans 12:3-8 God is the one that gives to every man the _____ of faith, therefore we should not think more _____ of ourselves that we ought to. Each member has _____ differing according to the _____ given. Whatever gifts you have been given you should use.

I Corinthians 3:8-15 We are each rewarded according to our own _____. As we build upon the foundation of Christ every man's work will be made _____ and it will be revealed by _____. If any man's work _____ the fire he shall receive a _____.

I Corinthians 4:1-2 We are _____ of the mysteries of the _____. It is required in a steward that they be found _____.

I Corinthians 6:19-20 We should strive to glorify God in our _____ and in our _____ which are God's.

I Corinthians 10:31 Everything that we do should be done to the _____ of God.

I Timothy 5:24-25 Some people's sins are _____ beforehand but other people's will not be revealed until the judgment day. Likewise some people's good works are revealed and those whose works are not known in this life cannot be _____.

Key Chapter(s) (*Read daily and summarize in your own words the meaning of the chapter*):

Luke 16

PART III EXPECTATION

Memory verse: I Peter 4:10

Personal Definition: (*Write a definition in your own words*)

Stewardship -

Personal Application: What are your gifts that you need to use to edify the church?

Meditation question: (*be prepared for discussion*) What is the lesson being taught about the servant that does not use his talent (Mt. 24:45-51)?

Extra Credit: Identify three specific things that you can do to exercise your gifts in the church and do them.