



Stewardship: God's Will in Finances

Lesson # 2

Completing our understanding of the term Stewardship we see in Webster's dictionary that the word steward is defined as a person who manages another's property. As products of God's creation then we are His designated managers of His property. He can choose to entrust us to manage as much or as little as He desires, **but in no case will we ever become owners.**

In Genesis, the Bible presents one view of the material world. **It all belongs to God.** The Garden of Eden was God's; Adam and Eve merely tended it. God gave them permission to enjoy the garden as their own, with one restriction. When they violated that one restriction, they were evicted.

David wrote in **Psalms 24:1** that, "*The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.*" This is, no doubt, the single most difficult premise for mankind to accept, especially those of us living in the 21st Century. If though, as Christians, we can accept our role as stewards and manage God's resources according to His direction, He will then entrust us with even more. But, on the other hand, why would He entrust to us more of His property if we hoard it and act like owners? When we acknowledge God's total ownership, we can experience God's miraculous and wise direction in all areas of responsibility, including but not limited to financial management.

In **Matt. 25:14-30** we read about "The Parable of the Talents," but we should call it the "Parable of the Steward," because that is really its focus. When Jesus told this story, a talent was known as a unit of money. Before that time it was a unit of weight. Today many think of this story in terms of all of our resources, gifts and abilities. Take time right now to read this scripture then answer or discuss with your family the following questions.

To what did Christ equate this parable?

Why was each given a different amount?

Did the owner ask or expect each to earn exactly the same?

How were the two faithful servants rewarded?

What happened to the last servant?

"¹⁴ Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and

to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶ The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹ "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' ²¹ "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' ²² "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' ²³ "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' ²⁴ "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' ²⁶ "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. ²⁸ "Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. ²⁹ For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. ³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' The key to this parable is *stewardship*. We are to use our abilities, manage the Master's resources well, and then return them to Him.

Now read **Luke 12:16-20** and compare what you learn with the "Parable of the Talents." ^v¹⁶ and he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops. ¹⁸ "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."²⁰ "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"

How is this farmer described?
Did God object to his wealth?
Where did the farmer go wrong?
Why did God rebuke him?

In **Luke 12:25-34** God describes the elements of becoming a steward. ²⁵ "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? ²⁶ Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? ²⁷ "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ²⁸ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is

*thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!*²⁹ *And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it.*³⁰ *For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them.*³¹ *But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.*³² *“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.*³³ *Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.*³⁴ *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

How does God assess our abilities as owners? (Verses 25-26)

What is God’s promise? (Verses 27,31)

What should our attitude be? (Verse 32)

What does God ask of us? (Verse 33)

Why? (Verse 34)

HOW GOD USES FINANCES

Because we are typically sensitive and vulnerable to money God will often use it as a means of directing us. If, and the emphasis is on the word if, we are open to God’s promise He tells us that He will supply His wisdom and direction as it relates to our finances. But His plans are not always the same as our desires. So, we must be willing to accept His plan. All too often we strike out on our own path without clear direction from God and then expect Him to make everything work out for us. In effect that is asking Him to bless our priorities and plans over His own. We need to be alert to God’s signals, including “Stop” and “Yield,” When we fail to yield, we have decided that our wisdom is superior to His. It never is, and learning this lesson can sometimes be very costly. The price we pay for going our own way can be money, time and most assuredly, peace.

Carefully read the following scripture verses to unlock what God has to say on these issues:

Trust; (Matt. 6:32-33) *“³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

What is His promise?

What is His prerequisite?

Ability to Supply; (Mark 11:24) *“²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”* What can we trust God for if we are truly in His will?

Trustworthiness; (Luke 16:11) *“¹¹ So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?”* God expects certain minimum responses from us. In this verse, God equates what to what?

Love; (Matt. 7:11) “¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” What should we always remember?

God wants to show us that He does what He says; (Rom. 10:11-12) “¹¹ As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame. ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,”

Who will not be disappointed?

Does God distinguish between believers?

Unification; (2nd Cor. 8:13-15) “¹³ Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. ¹⁴ At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, ¹⁵ as it is written: “He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little.”

From what do we share?

Why?

Who benefits?

Direction; (Prov. 3: 5-6) “⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” **(Gal. 6:9)** “⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

In whom do you trust?

In what do you trust?

Why to both?

Witness; (Deut. 15:11) “¹¹ There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.” **(Matt. 25:45)** “⁴⁵ “He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’”

In these verses, what does God command us to do?

In the New Testament, God equates helping the truly needy with what?

Never forget God’s gift to you of time, talent and resources. Use them interchangeably and freely.