

CHAPTER 12

Being A Faithful Steward

Are you a STEWARD? Let's find out what this word means.

The word "steward" is found in Luke 16:1: "There was a certain rich man, which had a _____." What is a STEWARD?

A steward is a man who manages or takes care of another's property. The word actually means "the manager of a house." It does *not* mean the OWNER of the house, but it means the MANAGER of the house. In Luke 16:1 who was the OWNER of the house? "a certain _____." The steward in Luke 16:1 was responsible to take care of the rich man's goods. Did he do a good job in taking care of what belonged to the rich man? _____

Most of us do not need to have a steward. We are not too rich, and the few possessions that we do have we can look after and take care of ourselves. But if a man has 10 houses, 8 boats, 150 acres of land, 500 head of cattle, 3 swimming pools, 25 cars, 8 trucks and one oil field, then certainly he would not be able to take care of all these possessions by himself. He would need men to help him manage all of these things. A steward is a manager--one who is responsible to take care of those things that belong to someone else.

Are you a STEWARD? Are you responsible to take care of those things that belong to someone else? You might say, "I'm not a STEWARD, I'm an OWNER. I do not own very much, but I do own some things. I own some clothes, some books and some other important possessions that are in my room. These things are mine and I own them. I own them and I take care of them."

Who Is The Real Owner?

Suppose you were to save up some money and finally you buy an electronic or video game which you have always wanted. Would this game be yours? Would you be the owner of it? It is yours because YOU BOUGHT IT!

Turn in your Bible to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and read these verses carefully. If you are a believer in Christ, have you been bought? _____ If God has bought you, then this means that He owns you! "Ye are *not* your _____" (1 Corinthians 6:19), but you are HIS! If you are saved, then you are God's POSSESSION: "until the redemption of the PURCHASED P _____ (that's you!)" (Ephesians 1:14). Just as the electronic or video game is your purchased possession, so the believer is God's purchased possession.

God paid a great price to get you! "Ye are bought with a P _____" (1 Corinthians 6:20). What price did God pay to purchase you (1 Peter 1:18-19; Romans 8:32)?

The Bible says, "WE ARE THE _____" (Romans 14:8). Every believer should be able to say, "I am the Lord's! I belong to Him. He is my Lord, my Master and my Owner! I am His and He is mine!"

Usually when we own something, we also own everything that goes with it. For example, if your parents own a car, then usually they also own the radio that is in the car and the things that are in the trunk of the car and the spare tire and anything else that goes along with the car. Suppose you were to own a pet hamster. Probably you would also own the hamster's cage and water bottle and food and exercise wheel and whatever else comes with the hamster.

The same is true with God and the believer. Not only does God own the believer, but He also owns everything that goes with the believer. Not only does God own ME, but He also owns everything that I have--my clothes, my money, my possessions, my body and everything else that is mine! It's *all* His! He's the OWNER!

If God is the OWNER, then this means that I am the STEWARD. I am the one who should take good care of these things that belong to God. I am the one who is responsible to be a good manager of my clothes, my body, my money, my possessions and all that I have, because all of these things really belong to the Lord!

What is the one thing that God is looking for in a steward? It says in 1 Corinthians 4:2: "IT IS REQUIRED IN STEWARDS, THAT A MAN BE FOUND..."

- a) good looking
- b) athletic
- c) faithful
- d) a genius

Was the steward described in Luke 16 faithful (Luke 16:1,8)? _____ What kind of steward does God want us to be (Luke 12:42)? _____ May the Great Owner and the Great God help us as believers to be faithful stewards over the things that He has entrusted into our care.

A Steward of Possessions

Since God possesses us, everything that we possess is really His too. My possessions are really His possessions. Every believer should be able to pray this prayer: "Lord, all that I possess is Yours. Help me to take good care of these things and use them in the right way."

Usually we are very careful about possessions that are not our own. For example, when we borrow something, we are usually careful not to lose it or damage it or break it. If I were to borrow a bicycle and then later return it all broken and smashed up, what would the owner think? Why was the man so concerned about the iron axe head which fell into the river (see 2 Kings 6:4-5)? _____ We are usually very careful about things which we borrow and things which belong to someone else!

When the believer realizes that all that he (or she) has belongs to the Lord, he will be very careful what he does with these things and how he takes care of these things.

Possessions can be used in ways that please and glorify God. Possessions can also be used in sinful ways. For example, consider a gun. A gun used in the wrong way can bring terrible destruction and death. A gun used in the right way can be used to protect people and even save lives (in the hand of a policeman, for example).

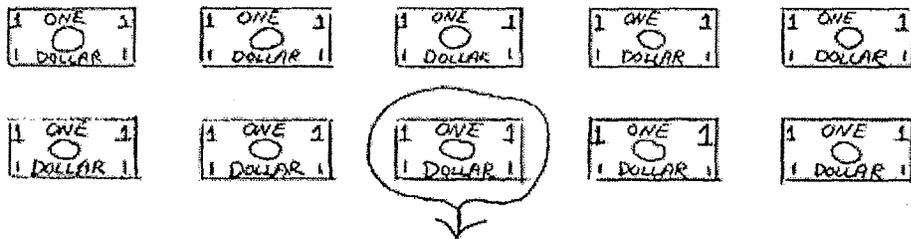
The following is a list of possessions, including some things which you probably own. Discuss how each of these can be used in the wrong way and also how each of these can be used in a way that would please the Lord:

- (a) a bicycle
- (b) a guitar
- (c) a baseball
- (d) a pencil or pen
- (e) a pet snake
- (f) a telephone
- (g) a computer

A Steward of Money

One of our possessions is MONEY. We may not be rich, but most of us have some money, and we need to realize that our money belongs to God also.

Sometimes people are taught to give God a TITHE (a tenth part). This means that out of every ten dimes, one dime would go to God. Out of every ten quarters, one would go to God. Out of every ten bags of flour, one bag would go to God:



"This one dollar I will give to God and all of the other nine are mine!"

Should we give God one dollar and keep the other nine for ourselves? Does God own one-tenth of us or does He own all of us? God wants us to realize that all that we have is His! All of the ten dollar bills belong to Him and I want to be very careful how I spend every one of them! I want to be a good steward in my use of money. I want to use it rightly and wisely in the Presence of my God and Saviour. "Lord, every penny I have is Yours. Help me to use it in the best possible way!" It is a good thing for believers to give a tenth to the Lord, but they also need to remember that all that they have belongs to Him.

The secret of giving is found in 2 Corinthians 8:5. What did these believers do **first of all**:

- a. They gave their money to the church.
- b. They gave their clothes to the poor.
- c. They gave their possessions to those in need.
- d. They gave themselves to the Lord.

They GAVE THEIR OWN SELVES! God does not just want your money, He wants YOU! When He has YOU, then He has everything else! God wants us to present our bodies and our whole selves to Him (Romans 12:1).

A farmer once approached a chicken and a pig and asked this question, "Will you contribute to my ham and egg breakfast?" For the one, it was merely a contribution. For the other it involved a complete sacrifice! Should we be like the chicken or like the pig? What will you give to God? An egg or **yourself**? Did not Christ sacrifice His all for us? And because of this, God wants each believer to present his body "a L _____ S _____ (not a dead sacrifice like the pig).

The Lord Jesus once pointed out the example of a poor widow woman to teach us a lesson in giving (see Mark 12:41-44). Who cast in more money, the rich people (verse 41) or the poor widow (verse 42)? _____ Why did Jesus say that she cast in more (verses 43-44)? _____ God looks at more than the gift; He looks at the heart!

A Steward of My Body

Another possession that we all have is our body. God has given each one of us a body which is "fearfully and _____ made" (Psalm 139:14).

Let us not forget that we are not our own and we have been _____ with a price (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Therefore we are told to G _____ God in our B _____ (1 Corinthians 6:20). Every believer should be able to say, "Lord, my body belongs to Thee. Help me to take good care of it and to use it in a way that will glorify Thee."

What are some of the ways that we care for our bodies in a way that would please the One who is our OWNER?

- 1) Keep clean.
- 2) Brush teeth after each meal.
- 3) Get plenty of exercise.
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____

What are some of the things that we should *avoid* (things that might harm our body and things that would not please the Lord)?

- 1) Harmful drugs.
- 2) Too many sweets.
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

God has given me a brain and a mind. Am I using the mind God has given me? Do I pay attention in school and in church to my teachers and seek to learn all that I can? Do I ask God to help me to be learning new things every day?

A Steward of Talents

As a person, God has given you certain talents and abilities. Some people are musical, others are artistic, others are athletic, etc. We all have certain things that we can do well. Am I using these talents for the Lord? Am I developing these talents as I should? For example, if I play a musical instrument, am I faithful to work hard at it and practice every day?

As a believer God has given me some kind of gift (or gifts) which should be used to strengthen and encourage other believers. Just as the right ear is an important part of the human body, so I am an important part of the body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:14-27). In 1 Peter 4:10 we learn that we should be faithful stewards when it comes to the gift God has given to us: "As every _____ (believer) hath received the G_____, even so minister the same one to another (use your gift to serve and build up other believers), as good S_____ of the manifold grace of God."

The best way your big toe can help your body is to stay healthy. If the big toe gets broken or has an ingrown toenail or gets a bad cut or blister, then the whole body will suffer (and feel miserable). The best way you can help the church is to STAY HEALTHY--walk in the Spirit (Chapter 2), keep on growing in the Lord (Chapter 3), read God's Word (Chapter 4), pray (Chapter 5), be active in your church (Chapter 6), submit to the Lord Jesus Christ (Chapter 7), obey His commands (Chapter 8), believe His promises (Chapter 9) and do His will (Chapter 10)! If you are doing these things, your life will be a great blessing to others!

A Steward of Time

Suppose someone were to give you \$86,400 every day (in CASH). Suppose also that if you do not use any of this money it would disappear and you would lose your opportunity to spend it. Would you do? Would you let that money just sit around and do nothing with it, or would you spend it?

Every day God gives us a precious gift of 86,400 seconds. These seconds tick by only once, and then they are gone forever. Those seconds only come once, never again. If we do not spend them well, we lose them. **Time** is a precious possession.

God tells us that we are to be "redeeming the time" (Ephesians 5:16 and Colossians 4:5). This means that we are to "buy up the time" or make the most of every opportunity that each day, hour and minute brings.

Every day is FILLED with opportunities. There are opportunities to learn, opportunities to help others, opportunities to tell others about the Lord (see Chapter 13), opportunities to obey parents, opportunities to trust the Lord, etc. Every day is LOADED with opportunities. Am I missing out on these opportunities or am I making the most of them?

Every day God gives each one of us 1440 minutes:

**I have only just a minute,
only sixty seconds in it,
Forced upon me, can't refuse it;
didn't seek it, didn't choose it;
But it's up to me to use it.
I must suffer if I lose it,
Give account if I abuse it.
It is only just a minute,
BUT ETERNITY IS IN IT!**

At the beginning of each day we can pray: "Lord, thank You for another day and for all the opportunities that will come my way. Help me to use the hours and minutes in the best possible way so that I can be a good steward of time."

A Steward of Truth

God has given me the Bible. God has given me His Word. God has given me His truth (John 17:17). What am I doing with it? Am I being a faithful steward of God's truth (1 Corinthians 4:2)? Am I believing the truth? Am I obeying the truth? Do I love the truth? Am I walking in the truth? The Bible is a precious and great possession. May I not neglect it. I AM THE ONLY BIBLE SOME PEOPLE WILL EVER READ!

**"Moreover, it is required in stewards,
that a man be found faithful."**

1 Corinthians 4:2
