

What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?

A Christian Is A Steward



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

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Learn how Christian are stewards and what it means to be a faithful steward

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Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

Study Number: DGW103

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?

A Christian Is A Steward

What does it mean to be a Christian? Being a Christian means a great deal. Fortunately, God has given us all the information we need to know about what being a Christian really means. As we study His saving message, we discover that a Christian is a steward.

Fundamentals Of Stewardship

The Christian is a steward. The Scriptures clearly picture this to be true. For instance, Jesus teaches some parables in which He describes the work of stewards and leaves us to make application of these parables to our lives as Christians. But, before you can evaluate how you are doing as a steward in the sight of God, you must recognize some fundamentals of stewardship.

What is stewardship?

The general idea of a steward is someone who is a manager of a household or of household affairs. The steward would, therefore, tend to whatever the master would entrust to his care. This could be his property, his wealth, his fields, his family, etc.

In today's society, we do not tend to use the term "steward" frequently. However, we still employ the same general concept. For instance, suppose you are hired as a manager of a restaurant. Whoever owns that particular business has entrusted many of the

responsibilities and oversight of that business to your care. Now, do you suppose that the owner would be pleased if you fail to prepare the work schedules for the other employees so that no one comes to work? Or, do you suppose that the owner would be pleased if you run specials that result in the business losing money? On the other hand, do you suppose the owner would be pleased if you create an excellent work environment, get the most out of the employees, and increase the profit?

There are also some who hire business managers to watch over their finances. These are individuals who take money that is not their own and invest it in the areas they believe to be appropriate to accomplish established goals. But, suppose the business manager begins to make foolish investments that the owner of those funds never authorized. Or, suppose that the business manager takes some of the funds for himself rather than investing them as he was instructed. On the other hand, suppose that the business manager uses wisdom in making the appropriate investments and provides the desired increase for the owner.

Now, for one last example, consider if you were going away on a six-month business trip. During this time, you entrust everything you are leaving behind to the care of another person. His responsibility is to properly care for your family, your house, your possessions, your money, etc. However, imagine if you return home unannounced to find that your family has been neglected (they haven't eaten in five days, they are wearing dirty clothes, etc.), the roof on your house is leaking, the grass has grown up around the house and hasn't been mowed in months, some of your possessions are missing, bills have went unpaid, checks have not been deposited, etc. Would you be pleased with your steward? On the other hand, suppose that you return home to find things just as you left them and find signs that everything has went smoothly and has been taken care of while you were gone. In fact, you actually find that some home improvements have been made while you were gone. Would you be pleased with your steward?

Matthew 25:14-30

During Jesus' earthly ministry, He would frequently teach in parables. Parables were earthly stories that were used to convey spiritual truths. Among the many different subjects Jesus addressed through His parables is the subject of stewardship. For instance, Jesus teaches parables about stewardship in Matthew 24:45-51, Matthew 25:14-30, Luke 12:42-48, and Luke 16:1-13. You would be profited by a study of each one of these parables. However, for the purposes of this study, we will only focus on Jesus' parable in Matthew 25:14-30. This is, perhaps, His most well-known parable dealing with the subject of stewardship.

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

“So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

“Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’

“But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.

‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

This passage is in the context of Jesus teaching about His coming. He has already demonstrated that He is coming at an unknown time (Matthew 25:1-13). At Jesus' coming, the great Judgment will take place (as pictured in Matthew 25:31-46). At this time, everyone who has ever lived on earth will be judged for how they had lived and will either be sentenced to eternal punishment in Hell or rewarded with eternal life in Heaven. A primary component to this Judgment, as Jesus pictures in this parable of the talents, is the aspect of stewardship.

Jesus, like a man traveling to a far country, has entrusted you with certain things. And, when He returns, He will require that you give an answer as to how you have managed those things. Will you be rewarded like the two men in the parable who put what they had been entrusted with to good service for the master? Or, will you be punished like the one man in the parable who wasted what the master had entrusted to him? According to this parable, God views you as His steward on this earth and you will be judged accordingly.

You are a steward!

Listen to what Paul said about himself in Galatians 2:20. “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Paul recognized that, as a Christian, his life was not about living to please himself. This means that all of the things that made up Paul's life (i.e. his money, his possessions, his abilities, his time, etc.) were also

not his to use in just any way he wanted to use them. Instead, he considered that everything about his life belonged to God to be used in His service, to His honor and glory.

But, this is not just true about Paul's life. This is also true about everyone who is a Christian. Every Christian (including yourself) has been bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, listen to the language of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and consider how Paul's statement in Galatians 2:20 ought to be the same kind of statement you will make about your life. "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

In addition, Jesus pictures it this way. In Matthew 13:44-46, Jesus teaches two parables with the same meaning. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

These individuals realized that their opportunity to have the hidden treasure or the pearl of great value was so wonderful that they gladly gave up everything in order to possess it. In the same way, Jesus says that your opportunity to take part in the joys of the kingdom of Heaven (an opportunity that has been made available through the blood of Jesus Christ) is so great that you should gladly give up anything and everything that is necessary to obtain it. And, as we learn from both Galatians 2:20 and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (along with other passages), God requires that you give Him complete control over your life.

Consider the following illustration (based on Matthew 13:45-46). I believe that this imaginary conversation makes the point about how God views you as a steward. This illustration is taken from *Call To Discipleship* (Please note that I have not read any other part of this book and make no recommendation). [Ortiz, J., & Buckingham, J. (1975). *Call to discipleship*. Plainfield, N.J.: Logos

International. Accessed from <http://sermonillustrations.com/az/s/stewardship.htm> on July 29, 2015.]

"So when man finds Jesus, it costs him everything. Jesus has happiness, joy, peace, healing, security, eternity. Man marvels at such a pearl and says, 'I want this pearl. How much does it cost?'

"The seller says, 'it's too dear, too costly.'

'But how much?'

'Well, it's very expensive.'

'Do you think I could buy it?'

'It costs everything you have – no more, no less – so anybody can buy it.'

'I'll buy it.'

"What do you have? Let's write it down.'

'I have \$10,000 in the bank.'

'Good, \$10,000. What else?'

'I have nothing more. That's all I have.'

"Have you nothing more?'

'Well, I have some dollars here in my pocket.'

'How many?'

'I'll see: Thirty, forty, fifty, eighty, one hundred, one hundred twenty – one hundred twenty dollars.'

'That's fine. What else do you have?'

"I have nothing else. That's all.'

'Where do you live?'

'I live in my house.'

'The house, too.'

'Then you mean I must live in the garage?'

'Have you a garage, too? That, too. What else?'

'Do you mean that I must live in my car, then?'

'Have you a car?'

'I have two.'

'Both become mine. Both cars. What else?'

"Well, you have my house, the garage, the cars, the money, everything.'

'What else?'

'Are you alone in the world?'

'No, I have a wife, two children...'

‘Your wife and children, too.’
‘Too?’
‘Yes, everything you have. What else?’
‘I have nothing else, I am left alone now.’

“‘Oh, you too! Everything becomes mine – wife, children, house, money, cars – everything. And you too. Now you can use all those things here but don’t forget they are mine, as you are. When I need any of the things you are using, you must give them to me because now I am the owner.’”

Once again, this illustration helps to understand how God views your life, as depicted in the passages we have just considered. Everything about your life is to be used in the service of God. There is not one area (if you want to partake of the great blessings of the kingdom of Heaven) that you do not have to give to God!

This is the concept of stewardship. Everything you have (including your very own life) is not your own. You are simply a manager of what has been entrusted to your care. So, as you live on this earth and you are given certain blessings (both physical and spiritual). But, you must not consider those blessings as your own to be used on selfish things. Instead, you must consider how you can use them in the way(s) that most pleases God and accomplishes His purposes – because He is the true owner of them and because He will judge you one Day for how you have managed His possessions while you were entrusted with them!

What Kind Of Steward Are You?

You are a steward. There is no denying that fact. In fact, everyone (whether he/she is a Christian or not) is a steward. Nothing anybody has on this earth truly belongs to himself/herself. God is the one who is the source of every blessing of life. Nobody would even have life (physical life or spiritual life) without God. But, certainly those who are Christians are stewards in an even greater sense. Therefore, the

question is not whether you are a steward or not. The question is: “What kind of steward are you?”

Either faithful or unfaithful

To understand the answer to this question, let’s go back to Jesus’ parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. This parable teaches you some vitally important lessons to help you understand what kind of steward you are.

First, notice that in Jesus’ parable of the talents, each of the three men were entrusted with an amount the master knew they could manage and were judged accordingly. For instance, the master did not give every man five talents (note that a “talent” was a particular weight of gold or silver). Instead, one man was given five talents, one man was given two talents, and another man was only given one talent. These talents were given, according to Matthew 25:15, “to each according to his own ability.” Similarly, God only entrusts to your care what you are capable of handling. He does not give you more than you can bear – and then punish you for failing to bear it! Consider 1 Corinthians 10:13 as proof. The passage should help you see that God knows what you are capable of bearing and will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability. “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

Second, also notice (from Jesus’ parable of the talents) that the master judged each of his three stewards on the basis of what each one had done. They were *not* judged on the basis of what the others had done. For instance, the one talent man was not condemned for his actions because he did not gain five talents or two talents (as the others had done). Instead, he was condemned because he did not properly manage the one talent he was entrusted with. Similarly, God will judge you based on what you do with what you are entrusted with. God is a righteous and fair Judge who will not hold you to a standard which you are incapable of living by. Instead, the God who knows your abilities will judge you according to what you do (see Romans 2:5-11).

Third, observe that there were only two categories of stewards in Jesus' parable (in Matthew 25:14-30). Both the five and two talent men were declared to be "good and faithful" servants, as they were faithful over what had been entrusted to their care (Matthew 25:21, 23). Both of these were rewarded as a result. However, the one talent man was declared to be a "wicked and lazy servant," as he was unfaithful as a manager over what had been entrusted to his care. This man was punished as a result of his unfaithfulness. Therefore, as this parable depicts the Judgment that you will (one Day) be subject to, you must observe the fact that you will either be found to have been a faithful or an unfaithful steward of what God had entrusted to your care. 1 Corinthians 4:2 simply states, "Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful."

Fourth, you learn from this parable what it means to be a faithful steward. Both the five and two talent men used their abilities and opportunities to accomplish the master's purposes with what had been entrusted to their care. Similarly, if you want to be found to have been a faithful steward, you must use your abilities and opportunities to accomplish God's purposes with what is entrusted to your care.

Fifth, you learn from this parable what it means to be an unfaithful steward. Notice carefully that the one talent man did not lose what was entrusted to his care. Instead, the man simply hid the talent in the ground and returned that single talent to the master when he returned. The man who was given a single talent did not use his abilities and opportunities to accomplish the master's purposes for that single talent. This was enough for him to be considered a "wicked and lazy servant." Similarly, God will find you to be a wicked and lazy (unfaithful) servant/steward if you do not accomplish His purposes with what He has entrusted to your care.

Now, having established that God will either find you to be a faithful or unfaithful steward, please consider all of the many things God has entrusted to your care during your life. Realize that He will judge whether or not you have used these things to accomplish His purposes during your lifetime. So, I challenge you to make a list of everything you have that makes up your life on this earth. Evaluate each

one to see whether you are being a faithful or unfaithful steward of it. Now, we will begin evaluating some specific things in order to see how you are a steward of each one of these and to help you evaluate whether you are being a faithful or an unfaithful steward of each.

You are a steward of your time

Time is one of the most precious resources that has been entrusted to your care – because there is such a limited quantity available. God knows that you only have a limited amount of time to live on this earth and that you have many, many demands on your time. Therefore, the way in which you choose to spend your time is significant. For instance, Ephesians 5:15-16 says, "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

As Paul is describing a transformed life that is devoted to the service of God in Ephesians 5, it is certainly noteworthy that he is concerned about your time. God wants you to "redeem" your time. To redeem your time is to buy it up, to make the most of it. Therefore, God wants you to take the time that you have in your day and give it to Him, to be used in His service (to His honor and glory).

If you are a faithful steward of your time, you will be doing exactly that. After all, that is exactly what Jesus did. In John 9:4, Jesus said, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work." Jesus recognized that He only had a very short period of time to live on this earth and accomplish all the things He needed to accomplish in order to glorify His Father. Therefore, Jesus was diligent to put His time to the best use possible.

Today, there are many things God wants you to be doing with your time – and every decision you make about your time is either a decision that will help you accomplish God's purposes or a decision that will not help you accomplish God's purposes. For instance, there are a number of things that you can do with your time that will directly help you accomplish God's purposes. You should pray. You should teach the gospel to others. You should try to do good to as many people as you have opportunity

to help. You should encourage others. You should study God's word. You should be fulfilling your role in your family (for instance, as a father, this may include working a secular job to provide for your family's needs; as a mother, this may include making sure the chores around the house are done). And, there is even some time you will need to spend to refresh yourself so that you can be even more effective in your work in the future.

Certainly, there are many things you can accomplish for God every minute of your life on this earth. Therefore, you need to be evaluating how you are spending these precious moments God has entrusted to your care. Consider whether there is a better use of your time. Consider whether you are wasting the time you will never be able to get back. You will be judged for whether or not you have been a good steward of your time.

You are a steward of your wealth

Every good and perfect gift comes from God (James 1:17). Certainly, whatever wealth (including your money and your possessions) you have is a gift from God to you while you live on this earth. Some have been blessed with a great amount of earthly money and possessions, while others have only been given what is necessary to sustain their physical lives on earth. However, regardless of the amount of wealth you have been blessed with, you need to be using it to accomplish God's purposes.

Consider three examples of how individuals have used their wealth to accomplish God's purposes (two positive and one negative). First, consider the negative example of the man who is described as a rich fool in Luke 12:13-21. In this passage, Jesus teaches a parable about a man who prospered greatly. He considered within himself, "What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?" Then, he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" However, Jesus says that his soul was required of him that very night (he died). This man in Jesus' story was only focused on using his wealth to accomplish his own purposes. He was not concerned in any way about accomplishing

God's purposes with what he had prospered. Then, when he died, all that he had accumulated would simply be left to someone else. Clearly, this man was not a good steward of his wealth.

A second example comes from Mark 12:41-44. In this passage, Jesus was observing how people put money into the temple treasury. As He watched He took note of how many people who were rich were giving out of their abundance. However, He took particular note of one poor widow who gave two mites (a very small amount). Then, Jesus said that this one poor widow had put more into the treasury than all of the others. Obviously, she had not done so monetarily. Instead, it was because she had truly given to the Lord what she had rather than just giving Him something from an abundance (as the others had done). Clearly, this woman who did not possess great earthly wealth still used what she had to serve God and demonstrate good stewardship.

A third example can be seen in the lives of many of the early Christians. Part of the work of these early Christians was to provide financial assistance to their needy Christian brothers and sisters. Examples of this can be seen in Acts 2, Acts 4, Acts 11, Romans 15, 1 Corinthians 16, and 2 Corinthians 8-9. Particularly, I want to draw your attention to the example of Acts 4:32-37. This passage says that none of those who believed said that "any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common." Then, it goes on to state that there was no one among them who lacked; "for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need." The passage even specifically identifies the work of Barnabas in this respect. Particularly notice, though, the point that these Christians did not consider their possessions as their own. Therefore, because they did not consider them as their own, whenever God had a use for them, they gladly sold them and helped those who were in need. This is good stewardship!

While there are many things that you can choose to spend your money on and many things you can choose to do with your possessions, you need to realize that your wealth is not yours! You should, therefore, be seeking to accomplish God's purposes

with those things He has entrusted to your care. You can give of your money to support the work of the local church. You can give money to someone who is in need. You can use your house to teach the lost and encourage brethren. You can use your vehicle to help transport people to church services or take them to the doctor.

The bottom line is that you need to consider every way you are choosing to use the wealth that you have been given (whatever amount of wealth that may be). You will be judged for how you have used the physical wealth that has been entrusted to your care. Are you putting all of it to work to accomplish the purposes of God?

You are a steward of your body

In 2 Corinthians 5:1-8, Paul describes your body as a “tent” (a tabernacle). That is, it is a temporary structure that has been given to house your soul. But, a time will come when your physical “tent” will be put off and your soul will be clothed with a permanent “building” from God. His point is to compare the temporary with the everlasting. But, while you need to be focused on the everlasting, you also must be mindful of how you are treating the temporary.

While your physical body is only a temporary housing for your soul, it is identified as being the temple of God. Look at 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 again. “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

As a Christian, you have been purchased by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. And, as a Christian, the Scriptures teach that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now, He does not do so in some miraculous way that enables you to perform special gifts. Instead, as the word which the Spirit revealed dwells in you, the Holy Spirit dwells in you. Therefore, since God dwells in you in this way, your body is the temple of the living God and you must treat your body according to His purposes.

First, this includes refusing to use your body to accomplish the purposes of the devil. For instance,

the Christian must crucify the fleshly desires that produce such sinful actions in his body such as: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like (Galatians 5:19-21). Romans 6:12-13 instructs that you “do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin.”

Second, this includes using your body to accomplish the purposes of God. Whenever the Spirit of God works in you through God’s word, your life will produce the “fruits” of “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). In fact, the Christian should be producing every kind of spiritual fruit that God’s word is capable of producing in his life (see Luke 8:15). Romans 6:13 says that you must present yourself to God “as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”

Third, as you consider the reality that your body is to be dedicated to accomplishing God’s purposes, this also has serious implications for how you treat your body. You should be considering whether you are doing anything that knowingly harms your physical body. Common things like smoking cigarettes, other forms of tobacco, the consumption of alcohol, drugs, and overeating are well-known to harm your body. These things often result in a decrease in both the length and quality of your life. Therefore, such things hinder your service to God. Think about it. If a person insists on smoking and decreases his life by five years, he has (effectively) robbed God of five years that could have been used in God’s service. On the other hand, if an individual carefully makes decisions that promote good health, he will be able to use that health to accomplish God’s purposes.

Whatever the degree of health you currently have is, you can determine to use it in God’s service to accomplish His purposes. You will be judged concerning how you have used whatever health you currently have (whether that is good health, poor health, or something in between). Therefore, you

need to be considering the choices you are making about your physical body.

You are a steward of your relationships

You likely have a number of relationships that are involved in your life on this earth. You may have a spouse, parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, children, nieces, nephews, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great nieces, great nephews, cousins, etc. In addition to these family relationships, you likely have friends, neighbors, co-workers, classmates, acquaintances, etc. And, as a Christian, you even have Christian brothers and sisters. You likely have these kinds of relationships – and may interact with people of these sorts of relationships on a daily basis. But, do you use these relationships to accomplish God’s purposes? Are you being a faithful or an unfaithful steward of your relationships?

Your opportunities and responsibilities toward each one will certainly depend on the type of relationship it is. For instance, a husband has the responsibility to love his wife as his own body, to treat her as the weaker vessel, and to dwell with her in an understanding way (see Ephesians 5:22-33 and 1 Peter 3:7). A wife has the responsibility to respect and be submissive to her husband (see Ephesians 5:22-33 and 1 Peter 3:1-6). Fathers and mothers have responsibilities toward their children. Children have responsibilities toward their parents and grandparents. Therefore, part of your stewardship involves fulfilling the specific roles you have been given by God relative to those relationships.

But, even in addition to those fundamental responsibilities in specific relationships, you need to consider whether you are using your relationships to accomplish other purposes of God. For instance, are you using your relationships to teach other people the gospel of Jesus Christ? A good example of this is Andrew (Simon Peter’s brother). John 1:41 says that after Andrew had heard John (the Baptist) speak and followed Jesus, he “first found his own brother” and told him, “We have found the Messiah.” Then, John 1:42 says that he “brought him to Jesus.” You can be like this man – or like the woman in John 4 who found Jesus and went back to her city and told them about Jesus – and bring those you have relationships with to Jesus Christ!

However, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ is only one way you can use your relationships to accomplish God’s purposes. You can encourage them. You can serve them. You can help them. You can visit them. You can bear their burdens. Whatever your relationship are, you need to be evaluating whether or not you are using them to accomplish God’s purposes. You will be judged for how you are using these relationships you have been blessed with. Make sure that you are not using them to fulfill selfish purposes.

You are a steward of God’s grace

As a Christian, you have gained access through Jesus Christ into the marvelous grace of God (Romans 5:2). This grace that God has given you the opportunity to partake of should mean a great deal to you and is the source of the true joy and peace you can have as a Christian. However, how are you using the spiritual blessings God has given you access to by His rich grace?

1 Peter 4:10 says, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” What are you doing with your opportunity to be a Christian and be forgiven of your sins? Are you still living your life for sin? Are you failing to be a light to those who are in darkness? Are you failing to point others to Jesus Christ? Are you failing to put off the old man and put on the new man?

The apostle Paul recognized the wonderful opportunity he had been given by the grace of God and determined that he was going to make the best use of that opportunity. 1 Corinthians 15:9-10 says, “For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” Similarly, he considered himself as a servant of Christ and a steward of “the mysteries of God” (the gospel, 1 Corinthians 4:1). Therefore, Paul was determined to make the most of his opportunity to be a Christian and be forgiven of his sin by devoting his life entirely to serving God (compare with Galatians 2:20).

In the same way, Paul (as an ambassador for Jesus Christ) would plead that others would be “reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). He said, “We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain” (2 Corinthians 6:1). He wants you to recognize that God’s grace is too great a thing to waste. Instead, you need to be truly thankful for God’s grace and devote yourself entirely to the service of God.

Are you using God’s grace to transform your life? Are you using God’s grace to tell others about the salvation that is in Jesus Christ? Are you using God’s grace to serve other people? Are you using God’s grace to encourage others to serve God? You will be judged as to whether you have been a good steward of the manifold grace of God or whether God has shown His grace to you in vain. Consider how you are using His undeserved favor (grace).

You are a steward of all things

Continue thinking about everything that makes up your life on this earth. Consider your job. Consider your abilities. Consider your opportunities. Consider your knowledge/wisdom. Consider your experiences. Consider everything. Then, evaluate whether or not you are using these things to accomplish God’s purposes. God has given you all of these things to use them to His honor and glory. Are you misusing them for your own pleasures? Or, are you devoting them to be used in God’s service to accomplish His purposes? You will be judged for how you have labored as a steward.

In all of this, you should be encouraged to realize that God can use you to accomplish His wonderful purposes – if you will give yourself entirely to Him. While we all have different degrees of wealth, different demands on our time, different degrees of health, different relationships, etc., He can use us all as stewards in His service to accomplish His purposes!

Conclusion

Will you embrace your role as a steward?
Will you devote everything you have been entrusted

with to God’s service in order that you might accomplish His purposes? Or, will you misuse and abuse all that God has entrusted to you in the way Jesus condemns in Luke 16:1-13? Determine today that you will not waste your life and all that it consists of. Determine to be a faithful steward by giving your life entirely to God!

Study Questions

1. Fundamentals Of Stewardship

What is stewardship?

What do you learn about stewardship from Matthew 25:14-30?

Are you a steward? Explain.

2. What Kind Of Steward Are You?

List some lessons from Matthew 25:14-30 to help determine what kind of steward you are.

What kind of steward are you of your time?

What kind of steward are you of your wealth?

What kind of steward are you of your body?

What kind of steward are you of your relationships?

What kind of steward are you of God's grace?

What kind of steward are you of all things?