

# STEWARDSHIP

## Giving to God His Own

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### PART 1

#### God the Owner

#### INTRODUCTION

My friend failed his driver's test before he even got on the road. How could it happen? Well, he ran a stop sign in the parking lot. And even though he managed to do well on the rest of his test, that single violation spoiled it. He failed the moment he had that first violation. There's a lesson for us here as we begin to talk about stewardship. If we stumble over the fundamental basis for stewardship, the rest of our discussion won't even matter. Let's dig in the Word and see who really created all things, and who really owns all things.

#### GOD IS THE CREATOR

Read through the Bible passages below and fill in the blanks.

- ♦ Romans 1:20 – The \_\_\_\_\_ declares that God is the Creator!
- ♦ Genesis 1:1 – The \_\_\_\_\_ tells us that God is the Creator!
- ♦ Job 38:1-5 – God's own \_\_\_\_\_ tell us that he is the Creator!

Some things to think about...

- ♦ **Evaluate:** God will not accept excuses from people who claim that they didn't know he created all things.
- ♦ How do you think the theory of evolution affects the way people treat God's creation?
- ♦ **Read Genesis 1:31.** What does this passage tell us about God's creation?

#### GOD IS THE OWNER

Read through the Bible passages below and fill in the blanks.

- ♦ Psalm 24:1 – Everything in this world belongs to \_\_\_\_\_.

- ♦ Psalm 50:10 – We do not have anything that God doesn't already \_\_\_\_\_.

Some things to think about...

- ♦ **Agree or Disagree:** Our ownership of property is only a temporary arrangement.
- ♦ Does God's ownership extend to things like vehicles? Furniture? Money?
- ♦ **Read Psalm 100:3.** Does God own us?
- ♦ How does knowing that God owns all things change the way we look at our lives?

## GOD APPOINTS US

Read through the Bible passage below and fill in the blanks.

- ♦ Genesis 1:27-28 – God gives his creation to \_\_\_\_\_.

Some things to think about...

- ♦ What does it mean to "rule" over God's creation? What doesn't it mean?
- ♦ **Evaluate:** We are stewards of God's creation.
- ♦ Why do we talk about stewardship?

\_\_\_\_\_ !

## CONCLUSION

God's Word is clear. It tells us God created all things, and that he also owns all things. It also tells us that God has given us the roles of "stewards" of his creation. We'll talk more about *how* and *why* we do that in our next lesson.

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### PART 2

#### We the Stewards

#### INTRODUCTION

*We the People...* Many have argued that these words marked the beginning of our participation in American democracy. They are our entry point into American history. In a similar way, the words *We the Stewards* mark the beginning of our participation in Christian stewardship. God, the creator and owner of all things, appoints us to be stewards of all he has made. And so, we need to talk about stewardship...because God does!

#### GOD APPOINTS US

Read the passages below to discover more about God's directions for us as his stewards.

- ♦ *HIS COMMAND*

Genesis 1:27-31 – God gives his creation to \_\_\_\_\_.

Matthew 5:48 – We are to take care of God's creation \_\_\_\_\_.

- ♦ *OUR PROBLEM*

Psalms 51:5 – We are \_\_\_\_\_ who are unable to obey God.

Isaiah 29:13 – We disobey God in both our actions and our \_\_\_\_\_.

Some things to think about...

- ♦ **Evaluate:** The history of the world is essentially the story of human greed.
- ♦ Can you think of some Biblical examples of poor stewardship? Good stewardship?
- ♦ **Agree or Disagree:** Since God gave his command to rule over the world before the fall into sin, stewardship really doesn't apply to us now.

## GOD'S GREATEST GIFT

Read through the Bible passages below and see God's perfect example of stewardship.

John 3:16 – What is God's greatest gift to us? What blessings does this give us?

- ♦ Jeremiah 31:34 – \_\_\_\_\_
- ♦ Romans 5:1 – \_\_\_\_\_
- ♦ Philippians 3:20-21 – \_\_\_\_\_

Some things to think about...

- ♦ **Read Isaiah 43:25.** Why does God give us these blessings?
- ♦ **Agree or Disagree:** It is impossible for an unbeliever to understand stewardship.
- ♦ What happens to our stewardship if we don't remember God's greatest gift?

## GOD'S OTHER GREAT GIFTS

Read through the Bible passages below and identify some of the other gifts God gives us.

- ♦ Psalm 31:15a – God gives us \_\_\_\_\_.
- ♦ 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 – Our \_\_\_\_\_ are gifts from God.
- ♦ Deuteronomy 8:18 – God also gives us all our \_\_\_\_\_.
- ♦ Ecclesiastes 5:19 – All our \_\_\_\_\_ come from God.

Some things to think about...

- ♦ How do these gifts affect our views on things like laziness? Smoking? Abortion? Failure? Work?
- ♦ **Evaluate:** The Christian does not say, "What's in it for me?" but "How can I best serve God and others!"
- ♦ **Agree or Disagree:** Sometimes Satan tries to use God's gifts against us.

## CONCLUSION

The apostle Paul sums up God's blessings to us beautifully in Romans 8:32 – "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" It is God's unending grace to us that forms our attitude as we talk about stewardship.

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### PART 3

#### Guidelines for Giving

##### INTRODUCTION

Someone once said that the Bible could really be an acronym for **B**asic **I**nformation **B**efore **L**eaving **E**arth. There's certainly truth to that, especially when it comes to stewardship. While we are here on this earth, God has appointed us to be faithful stewards of his creation. He gives us his Word to help us in that task. Not only does the Word lay out some general guidelines for stewardship, but it also reminds us of what gives us the strength and the ability to follow these guidelines. Especially when we are talking about our church offerings, it is critical to remember God's unending grace to us in his Son Jesus, our Savior. That is what leads us to be faithful stewards, and to say along with the apostle Paul, "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15).

##### GUIDELINE #1

- ♦ Exodus 25:2 – God asks for \_\_\_\_\_ offerings.

Some things to think about...

- ♦ **Agree or Disagree:** The church has no right to tell its members how much they should be giving in their offerings.
- ♦ **Evaluate:** The Christian doesn't ask, "How much do I have to give?" but rather, "How much can I give?"

##### GUIDELINE #2

- ♦ 2 Corinthians 8:2 – God asks for \_\_\_\_\_ offerings.

Some things to think about...

- ♦ From where does the Christian's joy in giving come?

- ♦ **Evaluate:** God hopes that the check you write out for him brings you more joy than the check you write out for any other purpose.

### GUIDELINE #3

- ♦ Proverbs 3:9 – God asks for offerings that are the \_\_\_\_\_.

Some things to think about...

- ♦ What are firstfruits? What aren't firstfruits?
- ♦ Does it matter in what order I write out my checks? What difference does it make to God? To my own soul? To my fellow Christians? To the unchurched?

### GUIDELINE #4

- ♦ 1 Corinthians 16:2 – God asks for offerings that are \_\_\_\_\_ to the gifts he has given to us.

Some things to think about...

- ♦ **Agree or Disagree:** The Christian should not only look at the size of his offering, but the size of the income it comes from as well.
- ♦ What's an easy way to make our offerings proportionate?

### GUIDELINE #5

- ♦ 2 Corinthians 9:7 – God asks for \_\_\_\_\_ offerings.

Some things to think about...

- ♦ How can we teach our children to give thoughtful offerings?
- ♦ What can our church do to help encourage thoughtful offerings?

### GUIDELINE #6

- ♦ 1 Corinthians 16:2 – God asks for offerings that are given \_\_\_\_\_.

Some things to think about...

- ♦ **Agree or Disagree:** Because God wants regular offerings, we have to give every week.

- ♦ Why do you think Paul encouraged the Corinthians to give "on the first day of the week" and not just "every week"? What might that say about our offerings?

## **CONCLUSION**

What a tremendous gift God has given us in his Word. There, we find general principles that apply to our entire lives of stewardship. We also find guidance for the offerings we give at church. But most importantly, we find the comfort of the forgiveness, peace, and eternal life we have through our Savior Jesus. Because he has given us everything we need, we now have the privilege of serving both God and others with all these gifts.





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### PART 4

#### Examples and Resources

##### INTRODUCTION

We tend to be a society that learns much better through real, personal examples. Sometimes that means we learn from positive examples. Sometimes it means we learn from negative examples. When it comes to stewardship, God doesn't just lay out the principles. He also gives us illustrations in his Word of how these principles can practically play out in our lives. In this final lesson on stewardship, we'll dig deeper into the Word to help us grow in our understanding and appreciation for godly stewardship.

##### A FEW CASE STUDIES

Read through the Bible passages below and think about what God is teaching us about stewardship. What can we learn? What can we change? What about these verses might be comforting? What about them might be intimidating? How might these verses affect our prayer life?

- ♦ Genesis 4:1-16 – Cain and Abel
  
- ♦ Mark 12:41-44 – The Widow's Offering
  
- ♦ 2 Kings 12:1-12 – Joash Repairs the Temple
  
- ♦ 2 Chronicles 31:2-10 – Contributions for Worship

## SUMMARY

Read through the passages below and share how they apply to stewardship.

- ♦ Romans 8:32
- ♦ Proverbs 3:5-10
- ♦ 1 Corinthians 10:31

## OTHER RESOURCES

If you are interested in some more resources on stewardship, check out some of the books and essays listed below.

- ♦ *Stewardship: What I Do With What God Gave Me* by Arno J. Wolfgramm
- ♦ *Christian Stewards, Confronted and Committed* by Waldo J. Werning
- ♦ "Christian Stewardship is Taking God at His Word" by John Jeske
- ♦ "Christian Stewardship of Possessions—Compelled by the Love of Christ" by David J. Valleskey
- ♦ Other essays and articles on stewardship at [www.wlssays.net](http://www.wlssays.net)

## CONCLUSION

We are rich beyond compare. God, our Heavenly Father, has not stopped showering us with blessings. He has given us this world for our good. He has given us his Son, who redeemed us by his blood. He has given us the Holy Spirit, who strengthens our faith and moves us to show faithful stewardship in all we do. And he has also given us the promise of a true, eternal, heavenly home. May we remember all God's blessings every day.