

CLASS 501

Discovering Christian Stewardship



FROM THE PASTOR’S PEN _ Dr. Michael W. Wesley, Sr. Pastor

Dear Christian Friend,

I am excited to offer this new class to our church family. What is my relationship to my stuff? This is clearly the most foundational question we must answer if we are going to make any progress in our attitudes, perspectives, and decisions in relation to material things—particularly material wealth. If we cannot answer this question with clarity and confidence, we will find ourselves—in spite of our financial successes—underachieving in our lives.

If you think of this question as a stool with three legs upon which the answer is balanced, you will be able to better envision the truth about your stuff.

The first “leg” of this stool is the fact that God owns everything because He created everything. King David tells us in Psalm 24:1, “*The earth is the Lord’s and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.*”

The second “leg” of this stool is the fact that not only did God create us, but He also redeemed us from slavery to the prince of this world through the death of His son, Jesus Christ. Paul tells us in Titus 2:13b-14, “*Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.*”

The final “leg” is the fact that we own nothing. We are called by God to be *stewards*, carrying out the Owner’s wishes for *His* property. It is at this point that we need to come to grips with the terribly misused and abused concept of *stewardship*.

Churches routinely use the term *stewardship* to refer to their capital campaigns. These campaigns are simply fundraisers used to get church members to give. But since “fundraiser” has such a negative connotation, they substitute (incorrectly) the seemingly nobler phrase “stewardship drive.”

You will often hear churches and pastors use *stewardship* as a synonym for *tithing*. Some have used the term *stewardship* as a heading to report the weekly offerings and attendance. All of these uses that link *stewardship* to giving and tithing are inadequate at best—and entirely wrong at worst.

By definition, a *steward* is “a person who manages another’s property or financial affairs; one who administers anything as the agent of another or others, a manager.” So, for us to be “stewards for God,” we must acknowledge that *all* we are and *all* we have possession of belong to Him. We are charged with managing *His* property according to *His* wishes.

This course is designed to help clarify the issue once and for all: God is the true owner of all that we have: our time, our talent and our treasures. We are stewards or managers. Once we are clear on that issue, it is possible for us to live very productive lives being generous and obedient without personal fears that we will ever lack anything. I trust that God will set you free and you can be all that He wants you to be and enjoy the use of all that He places in your personal care as long as you live on the earth.

Christian financial management is an act of stewardship.

A steward is one who manages something on behalf of someone else.

All we have belongs to God. He is the owner of everything, and our responsibility is to oversee and manage all we have received.

PART 1:
CHRISTIAN
STEWARDSHIP

7 ESSENTIAL
LESSONS

1. We Are Not The Owners.

Joseph was a steward in Potiphar's household. He was put in charge of caring for his master's possessions and his master's household.

I sometimes confuse myself because I'll write my name on books and other items I own. This habit is a little misleading because everything I own- everything you own- is the property of God and he has given us the job of stewards.

2. We Act On Behalf Of The Master.

A steward doesn't get to buy what he wishes with the money of another. He makes executive spending decisions that he believes to be in line with the will and wishes of the owner.

In a similar way, we must not protect our own self-interest while managing God's money. Instead, we seek to use it in a way that is in line with his will and wishes for his property. Of course, we best discover his will and wishes through the Bible.

3. The Key Quality Of A Steward Is Trust.

If someone is going to ask us to oversee his estate, then surely he must trust us. With trust always comes expectation. To be trusted with something is the greatest of blessings and the greatest of burdens. We must do what is trustworthy and honorable with what we have received

4. We Are Entrusted With Different Amounts.

As stewards, we should rid ourselves from either jealousy or a judgmental heart. We are not asked to analyze and criticize what other stewards are doing. Instead, we simply look at what we've been entrusted with and ask how we can bring the most glory to God with what he's given to us. There is danger spending too much time concerned with the speck in our brother's eye, while we have a plank in our own eye.

5. We Must Anticipate An Evaluation Of Our Performance.

When a master puts a steward in charge of his possessions, the steward should expect to be evaluated based on his performance. His performance is not one that earns the respect of the master. Instead, his performance is a recognition of the sovereignty and greatness of the master.

Life is lived in response to the great blessings the steward has received. His evaluation will be based on what was first entrusted to his steward and based on the current results.

A steward always anticipates the question: "Were you faithful with what was entrusted to you?"

6. Stewardship Involves Much More Than Money.

We're stewards of all we have- gifts, environment, education, experience, and so on. We are who we are because of what we've been given by God.

Are we using it- all of it- for his praise, honor, and glory?

7. Good Stewardship May Require Training.

It's rare for a person to instinctively know how to best manage all the resources of a master. There will be lessons to learn and habits to change. If I don't know how to budget, then learning about budgeting would be an act of good stewardship. If I don't know anything about investing, then learning how to invest would be an act of good stewardship.

Good stewardship may require good education.

If we seek to live for the praise and honor of God, we'll be frequently remind ourselves of our proper role as God's stewards and servants.

WHAT DOES STEWARDSHIP MEAN TO YOU?

Take a few minutes to think and write
your answer here.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN ENTRUSTED WITH?

Take a few minutes to think and write
your answer here.

PART 2:
THE FIVE KEY
WORDS OF
STEWARDSHIP

by Dr. Dino Pedrone

1 Corinthians 4:1-2

The glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ has the power to absolutely transform a repentant heart. Once that life is changed, there is a marvelous and Biblical responsibility that is placed on an individual's life to claim his/her position in Christ with all of its opportunities. Once such opportunity is recognizing that we are stewards of that which God gives to us.

In **1 Corinthians 4:1-2**, the Word of God gives to us the following command, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

The 1st Key Word is ACCOUNT.

To take an inventory. Reasoning, reckoning, supposing and thinking. Every believer needs to take an inventory of his/her life and examine his/her position in Biblical stewardship. As this lesson begins we need to spend time recognizing what our call is.

Key questions we should ask ourselves are:

- Is Christ Lord in all that which I possess?
- Am I faithful in my recognition of God's ownership of all things, especially the things that I own?
- Do I see His sovereign work in my individual life?
- Am I sharing the joys of my learning experience of stewardship with my friends?
- Am I faithfully giving to God my finances, spiritual gifts, talents and time?

The 2nd Key Word is MINISTERS.

This term comes from a derivative of another word which means an "under oarsman." It refers to a subordinate, an assistant, sexton, a servant.

When we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, we become a servant to God. The term for servant in God's Word meant, one who was a bond servant. God has given to every individual the privilege to take a portion of responsibility and use it properly as He directs. What I have is to be used as He directs. Every transaction should be thought through.

We need to constantly pray that we obey absolutely what He wants us to do with His finances. Careful management is to be a part of directions.

A Guideline Given by Some Money Managers Would Be As Follows:

- Give 1/10 to God.
- Put 1/10 in savings.
- Put 1/10 in an emergency account until three months of pay is set aside.
- Live on the remaining 7/10 with freedom to work towards giving as much as possible to God's work. This may not work for you, but it could be a goal. Remember, we are to be ministers of the transactions- understanding that we dealing with God's money. He is the owner.

The 3rd Key Word is STEWARDS.

The Greek term is oikonomos. Here we find that we are a house distributor, manager, or overseer. The word minister reminds us that we are under someone. That someone is God. The word steward carries with it the idea that we are over someone or something. We are over that which God has given to us. Our homes, businesses, bank accounts, offices, automobiles, or whatever is in our names, are to be managed by us, but in reality they are owned by God.

Our management should be accompanied with the fervent, heartfelt prayer. "Lord, what do I do with this that is yours?" There is no past tense where God's ownership is concerned.

Notice the following verses:

- “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.” **Psalms 24:1**
- “For every beast of the forest is mine and the cattle upon a thousand hills.” **Psalms 50:10**
- “Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.” **Job 41:11**
- “The silver is mine and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts.” **Haggai 2:8**
- “Behold the heaven and the Heaven of Heavens is the Lord’s thy God; the earth also, with all that therein is.” **Deuteronomy 10:14**
- “It is He that giveth thee power to get wealth.” **Deuteronomy 8:18**

The 4th Key Word is MYSTERIES.

The term has the idea of a silence imposed by someone. The word “mysteries” means truths once hidden but now revealed; as in **Luke 8:10**. A minister is not to be stimulated as a supernatural teacher, or a civil autocrat, or an infallible critic, but as an ambassador for Christ. We are all to be ministers of that which God has given to us. We must be careful, conscientious and consistent with it. The world cannot understand why a Christian would become diligent in giving to a local church. This would be rather mysterious to him. To the believer, God has revealed the mystery of the church. Therefore, a Christian should diligently stand firm and give to the church.

The 5th key word is FAITHFUL.

The word means true. Today it is imperative that we make our commitments to Christ and then remain faithful and true to them.

These five key words are reminders to us of the position and practices of a steward. Every child of God is a stewards of that which is in this keeping.

The Master is God. We are responsible to the Mater for that which He has given us. He owns it. We administer it.

PART 3:
GOD'S VIEWPOINT
ABOUT MONEY

1 Timothy 6:9-11

People do all kinds of foolish things to become rich. They will rob, kill, kidnap, sacrifice their integrity, and prostitute themselves for money. Many destroy their families and ruin their health in pursuit of “just a little more.” All this- despite the fact that wealth can't provide lasting _____, _____, or _____.

On the other hand, money is an essential part of our lives. Those who have little or none of it will face many hardships. So what is the proper way for a Christian to view finances? Let's examine what God's Word says about money, and how we are to acquire, give, and spend it.

Scriptural Principles

1. _____ is the _____ and _____ of all wealth.

Scripture says, “The earth is the Lord's and all it contains” and “He owns the cattle on a thousand hills” (**Ps. 24:1; 50:10**). Although God blesses us with the health and ability to make money, we must never forget that He is the source and owner of all wealth.

2. _____ is a major subject in the _____.

There are more verses about wealth than there are about heaven, hell, or prayer. More than 2,000 scriptures mention money, and over half the

parables have to do with monetary principles. Why did the Lord give us so much instruction about finances? (**Write your thoughts here**)

3. The Word of God encourages us about _____
_____.

Money is not evil in itself; it is simply a means of exchange. But we must learn to use it wisely (**Matthew 25:14-30**). Also, God desires for us to have the money we need (**Luke 6:38**). We won't necessarily be rich by the world's standards. But as we are generous, the Lord provides for us. He gives us money for food, clothing, and other basic needs. Best of all, God enables us to enjoy His blessings (**Eccl. 5:19-20**).

4. The Bible _____ us about the _____ of _____.

Scripture definitely cautions us about our attitudes towards earthly treasure. Proverbs warns us not to wear ourselves out to become rich because wealth is often fleeting (23:4-5). **First Timothy 6:10** says, "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pieced themselves with many griefs." Financial blessings can turn into a _____ if we aren't careful. **Proverbs 15:6**

5. God shows us _____.

_____ : The Lord provides for us primarily through our jobs. The apostle Paul wrote: “If anyone is not willing to work, he is not to eat, either”. (**2 Thess. 3:10**).

_____ : Once we have a little money, we can grow it through investing (**Matt. 25**).

_____ : When you and I share our abundance with others, God blesses us with more: “Give and it will be given to you” (**Luke 6:38**).

_____ : Even a dollar a week adds up over time. **Proverbs 21:20** says, “A wise man saves for the future, but the foolish man spends whatever he gets.”

_____ : Sometimes, God will use other people to provide for us. While I was growing up, the Lord often blessed my mother and me through the generosity of others. Look for opportunities to give to those in need and willingly receive when others seek to bless you financially.

6. The Lord _____ us in how to _____ money.

_____ : **Philippians 4:19** says, “My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory.” The Father also promises that if we delight ourselves in Him, He will give us the desires of our hearts (**Ps. 37:4**).

_____ : At least ten percent of the money that you earn should be returned to the Lord through tithes and offerings (**Mal 3:10**). Financial gifts from believers support missions work around the world.

_____ : For instance, you may set a goal to purchase a home, buy a more reliable car, get out of debt, or help your children attend college. While we shouldn't be greedy, there is nothing wrong with seeking to improve our lives.

_____ : Follow the leading Spirit and generously assist those who are in genuine need.

7. _____ uses money to accomplish _____.

_____ : The Bible promises that the Lord will supply. As we rely in Him for financial provision, God reveals His faithfulness to us. The Father also uses money as a tool to help us learn self-discipline. We need to learn to ask Him before making any purchase, rather than just making sure we can afford it.

_____ : *The Lord tests our faith.* He will withhold what we need until we turn from human resources and run to Him. *God tests our love for Him.* What we do with our money indicates what holds first place in our hearts (**Matt 6:21**). *The Father tests our obedience.* For example, God instructs us to tithe (**Mal 3:10**). How can you and I say we love the Lord if we are unwilling to obey His commands (**John 15:14**)?

_____ : Talk with others about how the Father miraculously provided for you. For example, share that tithing was a

vital part of getting out of debt. When we testify about the Lord's marvelous provisions, the world listens and God is glorified.

_____: Jesus gave us the command to take the gospel to every creature (**Matt 28:19-20**). The Lord wants us to experience the incredible joy of sharing the gift of eternal life with others. Giving is one way we participate in taking the Good News to the lost.

Believers should evaluate the place money has in our lives. No matter how much money we have, you and I have a responsibility to discover God's perspective on it. We should save, give, and tithe according to His instructions. If we simply use our finances to _____, we are in _____ against the Lord. But when we follow God's commands in this area, He _____ us and provides for us in exciting ways.

From the Lord's viewpoint, the issue is not how much money you have. The important thing is to be _____ in handling it.

CHALLENGE

This week, I **challenge** you to apply these scriptural principles regarding finances. If you aren't already giving ten percent to the Lord, I encourage you to start there. God will be sure to honor your obedience.

PART 4:

THE HABIT OF

TITHING

“Honoring God With My Giving”

“On the first day of each week, set aside some of what you have earned and give it as an offerings. The amount depends on how much the Lord has helped you earn.” **1 Corinthians 16:2**

How My Giving Reveals My Spiritual Maturity

“Just as you excel in everything else.. In faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness... see that you also excel in the grace of giving.” 2 Corinthians 8:7

WHY GOD WANTS ME TO GIVE

7 Benefits to My Life...

1. GIVING MAKES ME _____!

“God so love the world that He gave his only Son..” John 3:16

2. GIVING DRAWS ME _____!

“Where your treasure is, there your heart is also” Matthew 6:21

3. GIVING IS THE ANTIDOTE TO _____!

“Command those who are rich in this present world not be arrogant nor to put hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to be generous and willing to share. In this way they may take hold of the life that is truly life!” 1 Timothy 6-17-19.

4. GIVING STRENGTHENS _____!

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Honor the Lord by giving him the first part of your income, and he will fill your barns to overflowing.” **Proverbs 3:5,9**

“...Give and it will be given to you.. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.” **Luke 6:38**

5. GIVING IS AN INVESTMENT _____!

“...Give happily to those in need, and always be ready to share whatever God has given you. By doing this, you will be storing up real treasure for themselves in heaven- it is the only safe investment for eternity.”

1 Timothy 6:18-19(LB)

6. GIVING BLESSES ME _____!

“ A generous man himself will be blessed.” **Proverbs 22:9**

“A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.” **Proverbs 11:25**

“Good will come to him who is generous...” **Psalms 112:5**

7. GIVING _____!

(Jesus) “There is more happiness in giving than in receiving.”

Acts 20:35

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT TITHING

WHAT IS TITHING?

“Tithe” means a tenth part.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A “TITHE” AND AN “OFFERING”

- A “tithe” is giving ____ of my income.
- A “offering” is anything I give _____ my tithe.

WHY SHOULD I TITHE?

8 REASONS FROM GOD’S WORD

1. Because God _____!

*“A tenth of all you produce is the Lord’s, and it is holy.”
Leviticus 27:30*

2. Because Jesus _____.

*“Yes, you should tithe, and you shouldn’t leave the more important things undone either.” **Matthew 22:23***

3. Tithing demonstrates that God has _____.

*“The purpose of tithing is to teach you to always put God in first place in your life.” **Deut. 14:23***

4. Tithing reminds me that _____ was given to me by God!

*“Always remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you the ability to produce wealth.” **Deut. 8:18***

5. Tithing expresses my _____!

*“How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?” **Psalms 116:12***

6. God says that refusing to tithe is _____ from Him!

*“God says “will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing me!” But you ask, “How do we rob you”? God says “in tithes and offerings... Bring your whole tithe to My house.” **Malachi 3:8-10***

7. Tithing gives God a chance to prove _____ and wants to bless you!

“Bring your whole tithe to my storehouse. Test me in this says the Lord, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you won’t have room enough for it! I will prevent pest from devouring your crops and the vines in your fields will be protected from plagues.”

8. Tithing proves that I _____!

*(Jesus) “If you really love me, do what I command.” **John 14:15***

*“... I want you to be leaders also in the spirit of cheerful giving.. This is one way to prove that your love is real, that it goes beyond mere words.” **2 Cor. 8:7b-8***

WHAT SHOULD I TITHE?

The ____ part of what I earn, not the _____!

“Honor the Lord by giving him the first part of all your income.”
Proverbs 3:9-10

WHERE SHOULD I GIVE MY TITHE?

Where I _____!

“Bring your whole tithe to My storehouse...” **Malachi 3:10**

WHEN SHOULD I TITHE? _____

“On the first day of every week, set aside some of what you have earned and give it as an offering. The amount depends on how much the Lord has helped you earn.” 1 Cor. 16:2

GIVING WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDES

GIVE _____.

“For if the willingness is there, your gift is acceptable according to what you have, not according to what you don’t have.” **2 Cor. 9:12**

“Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under pressure...” **1 Cor. 9:7a**

GIVE _____.

“.. For God loves a cheerful giver!” **2 Cor. 9:7**

GIVE _____.

“They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service...” **2 Cor. 8:3-4**

GIVE _____.

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will reap generously.” **2 Cor. 9:6**

THE KEY TO GIVING

“...they first gave themselves to the Lord.” **2 Cor. 8:5**

A COMMITMENT PRAYER

“Father, I know you love me and want what’s best for me. I recognize that all I have, or will ever have, comes from you. I am more interested in pleasing you than in having more possessions. I want you to have first place in my life and I am willing to begin tithing as you have commanded. Out of gratitude for all you’ve done for me, and in expectation that you will continue to provide for me, I commit myself to returning at least the first 10% of all I earn back to you. I want to begin investing for eternity. Help me to remain faithful to this commitment. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Stewardship

The Stewardship Ministry here at GSMBC implements a Stewardship System to carefully challenge, educate, encourage and inspire 100% of our church members to give generously.



"They first gave themselves to the Lord" 2 Corinthians 8:5

Stewardship isn't just about money

It touches every part of life, and it demands the wise management of all that we have and all that we are.

It's about Vision—the dreams that motivate us to press toward the goal and reach for the future.

It's about Influence—the power to relate with proactive wisdom in all of life's relationships.

It's about Commitment—the fidelity that reminds us of promises to keep and purposes to fulfill.

It's about Time—the marker that defines the days of our earthly life.

It's about Opportunity—the divinely-appointed chances to make a difference and make an impact.

It's about Resources—the material assets entrusted to our care.

It's about You—because God has given you the responsibility of managing your life, of stewarding all that is in your hand.

Life is a journey, a trek through time toward an eternal destination. And whether the road is rough or smooth, stewardship is a constant priority.

Four Ways to Build on Tithing

1

Give 10% A tenth of all you produce is the Lord's, and it is holy. Leviticus 27:30

2

Give Extravagantly Jesus receives and praises an extravagant gift! Matthew 26:6-13

3

Give Sacrificially They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service... 2 Corinthians 8:3-4

4

Give Cheerfully Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under pressure... 1 Corinthians 9:7a

**Raise the Bar—
Become a Faithful Giver!**

For more information about Stewardship at Greater Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, please contact Shirley in the Stewardship Office at (205) 925-5972, ext. 208

PART 5: **RESPONSIBILITIES** **OF STEWARDS**

In the New Testament, Paul notes that God not only owns the world and its wealth, but He owns us as well.

Do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own. **1 Cor. 6:19**

Illustration: When you go to a hotel, you might give your bags to a steward who takes them to your room, but they are not his bags. You entrust your bags and their safekeeping to him for a short period of time. The foundational principle of stewardship is that God is the owner of all.

So what does that say about our relationship to the owner and the stuff entrusted to us?

1. He is the Owner – I Am the Manager

Everything I have today comes from God. It is His; I own nothing. David said that “the world and everything in it” belongs to God (**Psalms 89:11**). I am not the owner of the things in my life; as a steward, I am merely the manager.

If I believe that I am the owner, then I am constantly going to be in conflict with God over what I do with the things that I have. But when I understand that the Lord is the owner, and I am only the manager, the conflict disappears, and freedom overtakes my life.

Illustration: Let’s take a test right here to make sure we all understand. If you made \$400 last week, and you have come to church on Sunday, how much of that \$400 belongs to God? All of it: \$400. Someone might say, “Let me see, 10 percent of \$400—that’s \$40!” No, the principle of tithing does not mean \$40 is God’s, and the rest is yours. It all belongs to God.

Look at this question in **1 Corinthians 4:7**, “For who makes you so superior? What do you have that you didn’t receive? If, in fact, you did receive it, why do you boast as if you hadn’t received it? The amplified answer for the first two questions is, “Nothing.” The answer to the third is, “I shouldn’t.”

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 cautions, “You may say to yourself, “My power and my own ability have gained this wealth for me, but remember that the Lord your God gives you the power to gain wealth, in order to confirm His covenant He swore to your fathers, as it is today.”

2. As a Manager I have a Divine Responsibility

If God is the owner, then I am the manager whom He has trusted with His property. I must learn to think, therefore, like a manager. A manager oversees the owner’s assets for the owner’s benefit. A manager carries no sense of entitlement to the assets he or she manages. The job of a manager is to find out what the owner wants done with His assets and then to carry out His will. This understanding affects how we give.

Give abundantly

King David, then the most powerful man on earth, understood this owner-manager relationship. After receiving a tremendous offering, David responded to God...

“But who am I, and who are the people, that we should be able to give generously as this? For everything comes from You, and we have given You only what comes from Your own hand.”

1 Chronicles 29:14 (HCSB)

David was thinking like a steward, a manager, not an owner.

Illustration: Jerry Caven had a successful restaurant chain, two banks, a ranch, a farm, and a real estate ventures. At 59, Jerry was searching for a nice lakeside retirement home. But the Lord, His Owner, had other plans.

“God led us to put our money and time overseas,” Jerry said. “It’s been exciting. Before, we gave token amounts. Now we put substantial money into missions. We often go to India.” When asked what changed the Cavens’ attitudes toward giving, the answer came quickly. “Once we understood that we were giving away God’s money to do God’s work, we discovered a peace and joy we never had back when we thought it was our money!” (Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle: Discovering the Secret of Joyful Giving*).

Give sacrificially

In **2 Corinthians 8**, Paul tells of Macedonian Christians and their sacrificial giving. Paul testifies here of the Macedonian believers...

We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God granted to the churches of Macedonia: during a severe testing by affliction, their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed into the wealth of their generosity. I testify that, on their own, according to their

ability and beyond their ability, they begged us insistently for the privilege of sharing in the ministry to the saints, and not just as we had hoped. Instead, they gave themselves especially to the Lord, then to us by God's will. **2 Corinthians 8:1-5 (HCSB)**

How could they give so generously while in extreme poverty? They didn't see poverty as an exemption from giving. They simply refused to miss out on the satisfaction of giving sacrificially.

Give joyfully

Have you ever wondered why the Bible says that "God loves a cheerful giver?" (**2 Corinthians 9:7**). Joyful giving is a sign that the givers understand the owner-manager relationship. Cheerful giving can only come from a heart set on things above, not on earthly things (see **Colossians 3:1**). God loves a cheerful giver because such givers are investing in heaven, which reaps eternal dividends.

When the tabernacle was being built in the Old Testament, people got so caught up in the joy of their heavenly investments that they had to be "restrained" from giving more.

Then all the craftsmen who were doing all the work for the sanctuary came one by one from the work they were doing and Moses, The people are bringing more than is needed for the construction of the work the Lord commanded to be done." After Moses gave an order, they sent a proclamation throughout the camp: "Let no man or woman make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." So the people stopped, The materials were sufficient for them to do all the work. There was more than enough. (**Exodus 36:4-7**)

Moses basically had to get up and cry out, "Enough already!"

We give because everything is God's to begin with. The scriptures teaches us, both by mandate and model, that we are to give abundantly, joyfully and sacrificially.

3. The Manager Will Give an Accounting

I am held accountable to God because He, as the Owner, has expectations of the manager. The Owner has complete right to a full disclosure of what's been done with His property. Our managing His property will undergo a job performance evaluation. Look at **Romans 14:10-12**.

But you, why do you criticize your brother? Or you, why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written:

As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to Me, and every tongue will give praise to God.

So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Each will give a personal account to God. God will want to know what we have done with the possessions He has entrusted into our care. Here are few areas of inspection.

Ourselves

The Owner will check how devoted we have been to Him. That's why Paul wrote in **Romans 12:1**, "Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and

pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship.” Paul says a proper and spiritual act of worship is to give yourself fully to your Owner to be used as His servant.

Our Possessions

He will also hold me accountable for what I’ve done with the things He has entrusted to me. One of the final parables Jesus gave concerned a master who entrusted his possessions to three servants while he was away. The master, after returning, held each servant responsible for how he had used or invested what had been entrusted to him. (**Matthew 25:14-30**)

Our Time

Look at **Ephesians 5:15-17** “Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk- not as unwise people but as wise-making the most of time, because the days are evil. So don’t be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.”

We will be held accountable for how we used each “day the Lord has made” and given to us. **Psalms 118:24 and 74:16.**

Our abilities

The owner will examine what we have done with the gifts and abilities He has granted us (**1 Peter 4:10**). God, my Owner, expects me to take the spiritual gifts and abilities He has handed me and use them for His glory.

God has entrusted to my management time, possessions, abilities, and even my very being. All are to be used for His honor. I will be accountable for all these things and how I used them. God has high expectations that I will serve Him and grow to think and care and love like He does.

Conclusion:

If the examination were tonight, if the Owner called you to give an accounting this evening, what would the record say about your giving? Would it reflect a humble belief that you are only managing what He owns? Would joy and cheer mark your life as one who gives generously because you know your investment is gaining heavenly treasure for you? Some of us need to rethink how we're spending our resources for Christ and His kingdom.

The white-haired lady was mistaken as she went to the wrong car, wielded a gun, and sent the passengers scurrying. But hers was an honest mistake. It wasn't her car. And she wasn't held accountable for her actions. But we will be held accountable. All that we call "ours" is actually His. My prayer is that we will—that we do—properly manage what He has entrusted to us.

KEEP YOUR WORD!

Deuteronomy 23:23 says: "But once you have voluntarily made a vow, be careful to fulfill your promise to the Lord your God."

