

Stewardship

Our “Hand to Mouth” Existence

Shopping in a department store, a minister saw a man whom he knew to be the director of the City Mission on Skid Row. Although the minister did not know the director, he wished to be friendly and to encourage the fellow who spent most of each day ministering to those trapped in poverty and/or addiction.

We exist only because God’s hand provides for our mouths.

Introducing himself, the minister began asking about the director’s work. “How is it going?,” queried the clergyman. “It’s a hand to mouth existence,” came the answer, “God’s hand providing for our mouths.”

That answer was and is a universal truth. It is true that whether we are “down and out” or “up and in,” we exist only because God’s hand provides for our mouths.

“Who provides the raven his food?,” asks Job (38:41). And someone greater than Job said:

“Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink or ... what you will wear: Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” (Matthew 6:25)


Our Lord reminds us that God always
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We Are Not Consumers

Church involvement takes the investment of all of us: our time, our talent and our responsible stewardship. To be a truly great church, the contribution of everyone of every age and background is needed.

It is easy to fall into outdated patterns of church membership, and think of the church in terms of what I get from the community. We cannot think of ourselves as consumers when it comes to church. We are not consumers, but members. We need the involvement of all our members, in literally hundreds of ways, so that our church community will continue to respond well to our own needs, and the needs of those around us.

Ask not “What do I get from my church?,” but rather “How can I be an active member of the church and give in a way that enriches the community?.” 

Throughout his teachings, Jesus simply asked that we change the way we think ... change the way we look at ourselves and our neighbors; learn to use our life, our talents and our gifts to serve others, and through service to others, find that we have served and loved God.



God Gives to Us

“And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord’s: It is holy unto the Lord.” Leviticus 27: 30

My bountiful garden

I thought of this verse as I admired the bountiful garden the Lord had blessed me with. Each year I share my vegetables with relatives and neighbors and feel that by my giving to others, God will continue to give to me. I view my tithing at church in a similar manner. Everything belongs to God and because God loves us, he gives to us. In re-turn, we learn sharing.

It was not always so with my thinking toward tithing or sharing my garden bounty though. It was then God taught me a lesson, gentle and kind, that I will never forget. Selfishness is not God’s way ... neither is lack of compassion for his children.

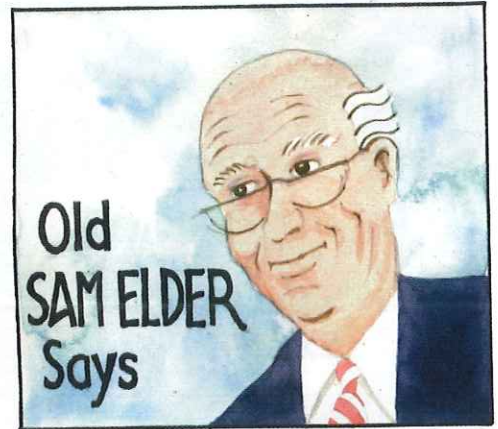
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It is possible to be content even when we are not satisfied, for contentment is an ever-present feeling in the heart, which comes from Christ’s presence in us.

With this companion-ship it is possible to work hard to achieve the Lord’s doing with our talents and our time.



“I don’t know how you did that Mrs. Astin, but you’ll have to send it back.”



Homer Piggot was a thoroughly practical man, so old Sam Elder was not surprised when Homer tackled him on church finances.

“When I give, I want to see what I’m paying for, like oil for the furnace, books for Sunday school or pay for the pastor,” Homer declared. “My money comes the hard way. I can’t bear to pour it down some religious mouse-hole.”

“I’m glad that you want to pay your share of local church expenses; there are others who don’t do as much,” answered old Sam Elder. “Homer, you’re trying to give to NEEDS. I hope you recognize the NEEDS of our community, our nation and God’s world.”

“Of course! The TV, the radio, the newspapers – all are reporting endless tragedy and suffering. All represent NEEDS,” stated Homer.

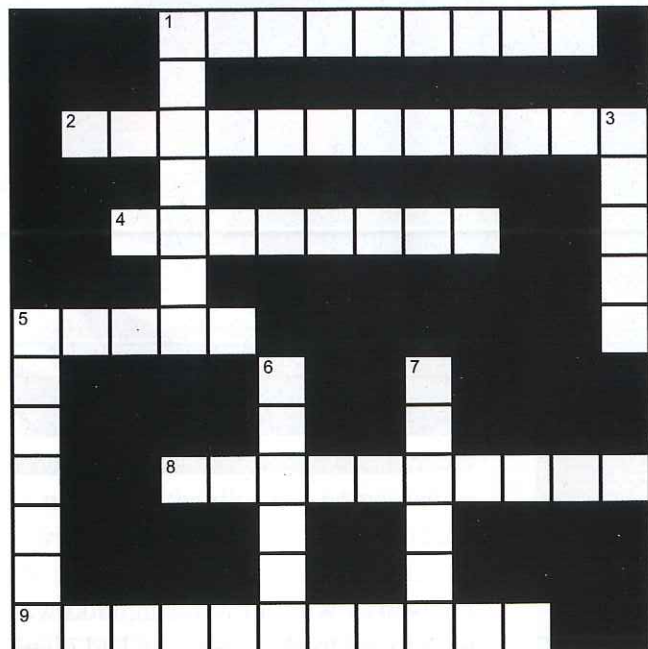
“Do you agree that it is impossible to put a total cost figure on all of these NEEDS?” asked Sam.

“I agree!” said Homer. “Rather than wasting time totaling costs, we should be relieving some of these NEEDS.” “Then how do you compute your weekly share of those needs?” asked Sam.

“That too, is impossible! I just give what I can afford,” responded Homer.

“Homer, you can now see why the church asks that we give as God has blessed us,” concluded Sam. “We can’t base our giving on NEEDS. They are vast beyond comprehension!” ☩

Stewardship Word Scramble Puzzle



Across

Clue

1. Enriched by our giving.
2. This from everyone makes a great church.
4. Level of our contributions.
5. God's hand provide for my _____.
8. Involvement takes this from all of us.
9. Not the way of God.

Answer

cmutmonyi
onuniortibt
uoergsne
mhtuo
esivemtnt
eishssfesnl

Down

Clue

1. Even when we are not satisfied.
3. Shouldn't base giving on these.
5. Stewards are not consumers.
6. God feeds these birds (Job 38:41).
7. These members enrich the community and the church.

Answer

ttceonn
sened
smrbeme
aresvn
aaitcv

The Good Steward

"And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." 2 Corinthians 8:5


My youngest son finds unending pleasure in scooping up all visible blossoms and bringing the fragrant flowers to me. He gives his gift with great enthusiasm and without expectation. He loves me! And the act of giving brings him joy.

But my oldest son has a wonderful habit, which also delights me. Before coming home to wash clothes or eat a meal, this college student calls and says, "I'm coming over. Do you need anything?" He has a servant's heart that lightens my load.

Both of these sons are giving of themselves. One is sharing the "treasures" of his toddlerhood. The other is making his time and energy available

to me.

God is, of course, the all-sufficient one, totally self-existent. Our gifts are not necessary for the accomplishment of God's will. But how pleased God is with both our joyful giving and commitment to service.

Prayer: Father, we make a fresh surrender of all that we have to the one who gave all for us. 

Nobody pretends that generous giving on top of taxes and college and everything else is going to be easy. But that's all right. We are not challenged by what is easy. We are challenged by what is tough.

We like to take the small company and make it big. We like to give enormous chunks of ourselves, 10 to 12 hours a day, to the challenge of our jobs. We can do as much for God.




“Each year I share my vegetables with relatives and neighbors and feel that by my giving to others, God will continue to give to me.”




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Hand to Mouth...

knows what we need and that what is truly important is that we strive first for the Kingdom of God. Then Christ’s promise is: “All these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:33)

Good stewards are those who gratefully acknowledge their “hand to mouth existence,” and who generously share what God has provided to them for the work of the Kingdom. 

C.P. Ferrell

themselves within my reach. God was guiding me to share what he had given to me. 

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God Gives to Us...

Guiding me to share

We were suddenly given new neighbors; a couple in their late forties, both disabled and confined to wheelchairs. I liked the lady the first time I saw her. She waved to me from the front seat of her car ... yes, she drives, but at that time I was unaware of her handicap. It was summer when they moved into the neighborhood and my garden was flourishing for the very first time since I began planting a yearly garden. The reason behind my plentiful crop became all too clear then. I was to share. God had placed those unable to do for



Stewardship Word
Scramble Puzzle Answer

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