

Stewardship

Inspiring a deeper understanding of true giving

October 2021

May I speak of money? I own no money, nor do you, simply because God insists that all things ... even money ... belong to him. In God's Word we read, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the Lord Almighty" (Haggai 2:8). This claim of God presents a confusing situation at first glance. After all, I do have money in my possession. I speak of it as mine.

The very practical question arises, "Is the money I have God's or mine?"

Actually, there is no confusion. Scripture tells me God owns all things. God places material things in my possession. These are not gifts. Rather God entrusts what is his to my care to use in God's service. It follows then that I am not the owner, but a manager or steward of God's property.

God entrusts his property

Yet, I am not frustrated that I am deprived of ownership. Can I be deprived of something I never owned? Instead, I am honored that God entrusts his property to my keeping, that God deigns to make me a steward of what is his; that God depends on me to administer it honestly.

Honest administration immediately obligates me to place all God has entrusted to me to his service. But this doesn't mean I must give every cent to the church. God has entrusted to me a body, soul and mind. God has entrusted to me a wife and children, similarly endowed. He has given me the responsibility of caring for them. Therefore, when I take a portion of the money God has

entrusted to me to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, recreation and other necessities of life and health for these, then I am a steward who is fulfilling God's trust.

Of course, I provide for these things in proper portion. I would hardly be a good steward if I spent a large sum on some luxury while a basic need was left unmet. "In proper proportion" is a primary rule in my administration.



In proper proportion

"In proper proportion" is the rule that also applies when I prepare to make my offering to God and through the church.

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Think of time as a priceless gift; develop an awareness of its incomparable value and examine your conscience in this light. Are you using your time according to God's plan, or are you throwing it away?

If tomorrow were never to dawn, what would you do for God today?



A Mere Colt

"I have so much to offer God," my pride calls from within. I can see a vision of what God can do with me, with my life, and I am excited. Day after day, I have waited in expectation. Surely the time has come for me to be of great service. I have heard the Lord will be passing this way today. So, patiently, I wait a little longer. And then I see two men nearing. I stand a little taller because I know these men are sent from God. But as I stand there, they bypass me and go to my donkey ... a mere colt.

"Why are you doing this?" I ask.

"The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly," the men answer. Then they walk away.

"My donkey?" I mutter. God wants to use my donkey? What about my talents? My abilities? My availability? What about that, Lord?

Then, I see a crowd forming. Many are waving palm branches and crying out, "Hosanna in the highest!"

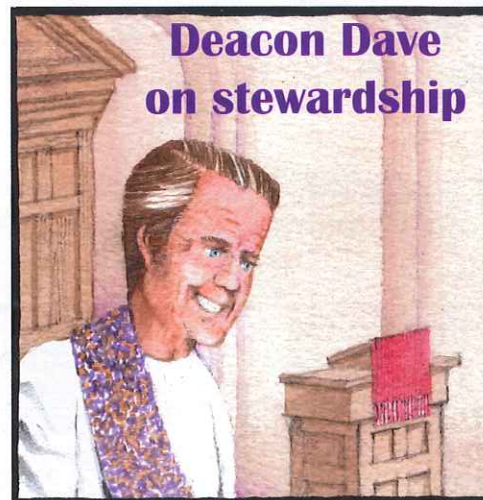
I squeeze my way through the jumble of arms and branches, and I see him! There is my Lord! My eyes tear. There is my donkey. The Lord is riding on my donkey.

I drop to my knees. "Dear Jesus," my soul cries. "Forgive my pride. You have used what I have considered least, yet you are elevated. May this always be so."

"Continue to use me, Lord," I pray. "What I consider my best, may not be what you need from me at all. But now I understand, Jesus. What you need most is my open arms, and my willingness to serve in any way you ask."

I look up from my place on the crowded road, and I look into his eyes

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"Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality."

2 Corinthians 8:13

Paul held up the generosity of the Macedonian churches to those in Corinth (2 Corinthians 8). It seemed his desire was that they show some kind of proof for their appreciation of the Lord's blessing and sustaining power to them. He urged them, therefore to bring to completion the great work begun earlier in their ministry. It seemed apparent they had forgotten, like we often do, with what fervor and fire they had started to serve the Lord with.

We, too, could use this urging of Paul's periodically. He wanted to bring the churches in Corinth from their relaxed attitude toward giving and sharing, and found it necessary to remind them of their oneness in the body of Christ. The Corinthians had begun to take pleasure in what others were doing for God's kingdom and the sustaining of the earthly churches, and had forgotten their own part.

Strive For Equality

"Strive for equality" was Paul's urging to the Corinthians. Since Christ bore the total weight of our salvation

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To be a good steward is to be conscious that all things we have on earth are generous gifts from God. Stewardship is to care, to have concern, and to give thanks by giving of what has been given to us.



Through the Stained Glass...

For the past few years, we have been preoccupied on the subject of what is wrong with the church, generally there has been a negative approach. In so expending our best energies, we have lost something. Not only have we tended to splinter, but the church has appeared to have had less impact on its communicants. It is certainly easier to be defensive and negative about something in which we do not invest of ourselves; on the other hand, we tend to work creatively where our investments are!

I know of no way to help turn the tide more effectively than by investing the best of ourselves in the church, thereby giving evidence of our positive belief in God. If God's church is to have meaning to us or to others, then our commitment must be clear and decisive and, I might say, it must cost us something. It has been said that there is no "cheap grace."

Pledging to the church is one very specific way in which we give ourselves or prove our belief. If the investment is made grudgingly and represents only that which can be worked in conveniently, then this tells the story of our faith in God's primary instrument for his life and work on this earth, namely, his church. If it costs something worthwhile, then the investment is clearly a weighed and weighty one.

A new sense of commitment through giving (and the trust it represents) is

crucial to us all, not because of the dollars represented, but because it will be a creative conversion movement for your church and for you. ☩

God bless you in your giving.

What I want my church to be!

My church is composed of people like me. I help make it what it is.

It will be friendly, if I am. Its pews will be filled, if I help fill them.

It will do great work, if I work. It will make generous gifts to many causes, if I am a generous giver.

It will bring other people into its worship and fellowship, if I invite and bring them.

It will be a church of loyalty and love, of fearlessness and faith, and a church with a noble spirit, if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these same things.

Therefore, with the help of God, I shall dedicate myself to the task of being all the things that I want my church to be.



God desires that first of all you give him yourself. When you do this, you will find a certain satisfaction.

God then wants you to use your time, talent, and treasure for his purposes. This means total commitment of what you have to God. That's a hard step to take, but it will bring complete happiness and satisfaction in serving God.



“Dear Jesus,” my soul cries. “Forgive my pride. You have used what I have considered least, yet you are elevated. May this always be so.”

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May I speak of money...


As the owner of all things, God requests offerings in many instances. As God’s steward, can I disobey?

Yet, I do not bring my offering because of a command from God. Would a command be necessary? When I think of the tremendous blessings God has deluged upon me ... blessings that serve me now and that will endure forever ... could I possibly deny God an offering? Could my offering be only a pittance?

Motivated by love and gratitude, I first separate God’s portion whenever I receive income. I make that portion of a size that will give adequate evidence of my love and gratitude. This separated portion I then dedicate to God’s specific service and administer it in a way that God would have me do.


With this done, the remainder, understand, is still devoted to God’s service. I use that remainder, as God would wish, to provide for the needs of my life and for the needs of those God has committed to my care. In God’s name and to his service is my guiding principle.

So, as a steward of money, I recognize that God owns all things. I recognize that

I am God’s manager of what he places in my charge. To be a good and faithful steward ... that is my aim. 

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A Mere Colt...

as he passes by. It is then I know that my small gift is monumental, historical. 

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Deacon Dave...

on himself, could we not at least share in the earthly ministry as a body so that “*He who gathered much does not have too much and he who gathered little does not have too little?*” (2 Corinthians 8:15) 