

Responsibilities Of A Steward

Faithfulness leads to responsibility. Adam is an example of the unfaithful steward. Although God had given him the oversight of the beautiful Garden of Eden, he betrayed the owner's trust. He misused His creation and that very creation (according to Romans) still groans because of the unfaithfulness of Adam, the steward God had entrusted His creation to.

The servants (stewards) in Bible times who were entrusted with a portion of the master's possessions were challenged not only to keep them, but to utilize them and multiply the property.

The thought presented in this parable of Luke 16 is that what we possess is really not our own, but God's. Because 100 percent of what is received comes from God, we are responsible to use it wisely and in accordance with God's will. The fact that God is the true owner of everything is illustrated in the Psalms.

For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine.

Psalms 50:10-11 KJV

Carefully Maintains Possessions

How do you care for those possessions God has entrusted to you? Do you keep your house in good repair both outside and inside? Is your house clean and spotless? Do you organize and keep your yard equipment and tools in a safe dry place or do you leave them lying around in the rain to rust? God is a good caretaker. He is very organized. He created and continues to manage galaxies, the universe, billions of stars, the sun, moon and earth. He maintains His creation very well. We are to be equally as good at the organization and management of our affairs. Everything we have belongs to the Lord.

Do you keep the oil and fluids fresh in your car or do you let it go for several thousand miles before you drain and refill? Are your vehicles kept clean on the inside and outside?

You see, good stewardship involves more than just having possessions and material goods; it goes to the core of how you care for them. You are caring for God's blessing. If you don't care how you treat the blessings that God has allowed you to receive, how can you expect to keep them, let alone ask for more?

Dependable in Commitments

Stewardship is about dependability, which is a virtue of the person who has learned the importance of being worthy of trust.

One of the basic values or principles of dependability is to live up to one's obligations. If, for any reason, a commitment or promise cannot be fulfilled, the proper thing to do is to talk to the person with whom the commitment was made and negotiate a workable solution. The rich man's steward of Luke 16 was not dependable and apparently did not fulfill his financial responsibilities to his lord. He was about to lose his position, because he had violated his fiduciary relationship to the master of the house.

Invests in Eternity

The dishonest steward wasted his lord's goods for which he was liable and was judged by his master. We also are responsible to our Master for his creation and blessing. The scope of the parable is to suggest to us that it is important to manage our possessions and lives on earth in such a way that will benefit us in the eternal life.

It's not that eternal life is our sole reason for managing our possessions judiciously. We should do so out of our obedience, appreciation and our love for God.

The thought is that all of us are stewards of what has been entrusted to us and we have a responsibility to employ our wealth in acts of charity and good works. This is because we are seeking an eternal return in much the same way that the dishonest steward employed his abilities to achieve the greatest temporal profit.

The steward's lord commended him because he finally showed some ingenuity and ambition, even though it was for his own personal gain and benefit. The steward is not commended because he showed good financial sensitivity, rather because he had done wisely for himself. The steward who was about to be dismissed made every attempt to better his cause through any means available, even though that cause was self-serving.

What a person does with all his possessions is important to God. Jesus said in Luke 16:11, "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" (KJV) Mammon means "gain or wealth" (Berry's Greek-English New Testament Lexicon with Synonyms).

The Scriptures present us with a staggering reality. II Peter 1:3 notes, "...His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (KJV). Think of all that He has given us! The gift of salvation, the gift of grace, the gift of mercy and the gift of the Holy Spirit are just a few of God's amazing gifts! These treasures are infinitely more valuable than any worldly possessions we could own.

Faithful with Finances

Christians have access to unlimited and unimaginable resources. But with this access comes accountability.

If you don't take care of that old clunker of a vehicle you now own, how can you care for a new car? If you goof off during the day at your current job, why would God want to bless you with a better one? If you cannot take good care of the apartment you live in or the house you rent, how can you be trusted with your own property? There is a principle at work here. We must prove that we can be good stewards!

The Bible also indicates that one's control of the finances in his possession is a direct indication of the control he exercises in spiritual matters. If a person cannot handle God's blessing of finance, it is likely that he cannot handle too much time on his hands, promotion on the job, authority on the job, authority in the church, and probably a whole host of other spiritual matters. The unjust steward of Luke 16 had other personal problems besides just being a bad manager for his lord. His dishonesty became very apparent when he was about to lose his job. The handling of a person's financial affairs is closely akin to his or her other values. The value system of one's heart is exposed by one's relationship to money and material things. The rich young ruler is another illustration of that fact. (See Matthew 19:16-22.)