

What does the Bible say about stewardship?

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Prayer

Introductory Activity

- **Precursor:** Financial Stewardship (i.e., managing God's gift of money) does not just pertain to your offering but has everything to do with the way you manage the rest of what God has given you as well. God wants us to be content with how he blesses us with treasures. The biggest secret of contentment is knowing that you have everything you need in Jesus and what he has done for you. Trusting that, whether "rich" or "poor," we will be content. Another key to contentment is keeping your priorities straight.
- **First Things First: First**, read the passages in the passage bank as a table and comment on what it has to say about the priorities God wants us to have as Christians. Think of other things we spend our money on as well. **Second**, when you have your list, rank the biblical priorities from God's perspective and the world's. **Finally**, discuss the reasons there is so much discontentment among the people of the richest nation in the history of the world. **Passage Bank:** Proverbs 3:9; Matthew 22:21; Ephesians 4:28; I Timothy 5:8; I Timothy 6:17.

A Godly Priority Structure:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

A Worldly Priority Structure:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Treasure Thoughts

1. God tells us *how* he wants us to give. The highlighted section of the passage contains 5 principles for giving an offering. Identify the 5 principles and explain what each means in your own words.

*"Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. **On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.**" (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)*

2. God tells us *why* he wants us to give. God wants us to be cheerful out of thanks to him when we give an offering. In 2 Corinthians 9:8, he says, "you *will* abound in every good work," not "you *should* abound in every good work." What's the difference?

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake, he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9)

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” (2 Corinthians 9:7-8)

Think about it! You are calling to encourage an inactive member to come back to worship and the first thing they say is, “Yeah, I know. I’ll send an offering in.” How would you respond?

3. God tells us *the trust we can have* as we give. Read Matthew 6:25-34 and answer the questions.
 - The Father knows what you need more than you know! Of course, the primary proof of God’s love for us is the cross and that shows us he will care for us. But Jesus makes a conditional promise instead of pointing to that. What is it?
 - On a scale of 1-10, how much do you (personally and as a congregation) worry about money? Who does Jesus say you are acting like if you worry about money?
 - Notice the promise in verse 33. What does this mean for you personally and as a congregation? What does it not mean?

Group Activity

- Below are listed 6 principles for giving offerings. At your table, pick your top 3 and discuss why they are important for godly giving.
 - **Give in response to God’s love.**
 - **Give willingly and cheerfully.**
 - **Give proportionately.**
 - **Give as part of your worship.**
 - **Give regularly.**
 - **Give your firstfruits.**
- On the next two pages is a stewardship presentation outline. Some of the points we have already covered. Give it a glance with a partner and identify 3 points you’d like to talk about. Then take 3 minutes and discuss your initial thoughts.

Closing Activity

Prayer Time. Take 2 minutes to write a closing prayer in the space below based on the truths about Financial Stewardship we just studied.

Stewardship Presentation Outline (See Discussion Question under “Group Activity”)

I. Teaching

- A. What you need to teach yourself
 1. This is a matter of eternal life and death.
 2. Financial stewardship is *not* about raising money, but raising people.
 3. This is probably the greatest challenge that you will face in your ministry.
 - a. We are living in the End Times. Jesus said, **“The love of most will grow cold.”** (Matthew 24:12)
 - b. There are many obstacles to financial stewardship of the End Times.
 4. This is a long-term, week-in-week-out project.
 - a. Consider how often the Gospels speak about this.
 - b. In the mission setting, make it a focus by the second year.
 - c. What about the annual “Stewardship Sunday”?
 5. Take man very seriously.
- B. How you need to teach your flock
 1. Financial stewardship cannot be taught without the preparation of specific Law.
 2. Teach them of their salvation in financial terms, just as Scripture does. God, too, is a steward. **“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”** (1 Peter 1:18,19)
 3. Teach them the fullness of the gospel—both as comfort and as empowerment. They don’t need to be afraid of being generous!
 4. Teach them the three-fold motivation for stewardship.
 5. Teach as a minister of the New Covenant, not the Old.
 - a. Do not get bogged down on “the Tithe.”
 - b. Look to the New Testament for guidance—terms and examples.
 6. Gimmicks cannot replace good teaching.

II. Modeling

- A. Within your congregation
 1. Your congregation serves as a macrocosm for your members.
 2. What does your Congregation Mission Offering say to your members?
 3. Plan a budget that demonstrates trust in God to provide.

4. Be careful to display that God deserves our very best. (Avoid “Junk for Jesus.”)
 5. Do not be a martyr when it comes to the way you are compensated. (Establish a Care Committee for Called Workers.)
- B. With your personal life
1. If you want your members to grow in their stewardship, then show them how.
 2. Demonstrate your generosity through financial offerings, not compensation sacrifices.
 3. One or two incomes?

III. Mentoring

- A. The goal
1. To serve as a loyal adviser and spiritual guide in matters of financial stewardship.
 2. Should the pastor know what his members give?
- B. The content of stewardship mentoring
1. Use planned giving. (It is a plan, NOT a pledge or commitment.)
 2. Include whole life stewardship when you teach financial stewardship.
 3. Utilize planned giving counselors to help advise about non-traditional gifts.
- C. The means
1. You cannot effectively mentor in a sermon.
 2. Work with your leaders.
 3. Other options—annual cottage meetings, every member visits, a Bible class.

Final Thoughts

- Don't buy into the idea that all means of financing ministry other than in-plate offerings are wrong.
- Learn how to use numbers well.
- Keep distance between yourself and the money.
- Remember what we mean when we say *Der Christ ist ein Optimist*.