

Stewardship

There once was a college teacher who invented a game called the “sharing game” for his students. At the beginning of one of his classes he brought in a bowl of 12 jellybeans and then explained the rules.

He said he would pass the bowl of jellybeans around the room, and when the students get the bowl they can take as many or as few of the jellybeans out of the bowl as they want.

However, there are two important things to remember while playing the game. First, for every jellybean the student has in his or her possession at the end of the game, one point will be added to their final grade. Secondly, after every pass around the classroom, the number of jellybeans left in the bowl will be doubled. The game will be played until the bowl is empty.

Now, theoretically, every student in the professor’s classes should get an “A” in the course. But what do you think happened? In every class where the teacher played the game, the bowl never made it beyond the first round. In fact, in one class the bowl never made it past the first student, as he grabbed all 12 jellybeans for himself.

Then he asked a friend, who was an elementary school teacher, to try the game on her class of fifth and sixth grade students. She went to her classes, explained the rules, and then watched in pure delight as almost every student passed the bowl to the next student, without taking any, until eventually the bowl was overfilled with jellybeans. And when they ran out of jellybeans, the students divided




them equally among themselves and gave what was left over to some of the smaller children in the other classes.

Care and Share

The characteristics of caring and sharing came from an innocent kind of love for each other that the children displayed in the parable of the jellybeans.

So too, we must give of ourselves in loving concern for one another. We give of those gifts which are typified by our time, our talents, and our treasure so that the world might know that we are Christians by our love and that the work of faith may prosper.

I would urge you to teach your children stewardship. Few will be good stewards and care and share in twenty-five years unless they are taught now, while they are young. 

Stewardship is what I do after I have said I believe. Stewardship is our attitude toward everything that God has placed at our disposal during our stay on this earth. It is our humble acknowledgement that all good things come from God.



Pastor John's musing...



It is important to make the most of your time and talents.

Talents


This is one of the most underrated areas of stewardship. So many of us are hesitant and even adamant about not sharing ourselves publicly with what ability we have.

We are so quick to say, "I can't," or "I'm just a farmer or factory worker and don't know anything else." Nothing is further from the truth, and if we are willing to be used, the results may amaze us.

Time

Time is one of the most precious things we have, and yet one of the most frustrating to know how to manage.

Time and talent are important contributions, as well as money. If we are concerned about ourselves spiritually, we want to do more than attend church to worship.

If we give to the church from the first money we earn, we get along fine on the balance. Likewise why not give of our time in a similar manner? Do your church work first and you will budget the balance of your time so that you will get along just fine. 

New Beatitudes

Blessed are those who tithe, for they enrich both the church and themselves.

Blessed are those who make pledges, for they enable their church to run on facts, not imagination.

Blessed are the systematic givers, for there shall be order in their lives and in their quarterly statements.

Blessed are those who use the offering envelopes, for their contributions shall be recorded, and shall be deductible from their income taxes.

Blessed are those who mark their envelopes clearly, for they reduce the headaches in the financial office.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, it maketh difficult enough to decipher some people's writing without having to read their minds, too.



God gives everyone potential talents. One dimension of stewardship is for each person to actualize those potential talents, while another dimension is to use the talents wisely. Be a good steward and share your talents with your church.



Showing Our Love

"Greater love than this no man hath."

This basically is what it's all about. How great a love God had for us to send his only son to redeem us, to help pay back all the debts that we had run up. And how great a love Christ has to give his life for us on the cross to help us understand more fully the meaning of that word "love" and exactly how much his Father loved us.

We are now in the season of Lent. In these few weeks we try to re-enact much of the life, as well as the death of Christ. We can learn many things through these times!

Everyday during this season and for the rest of the year we have a chance to give back a little of what has been given to us. There are a number of ways to show our love. We can do this by working for a charitable organization, giving to the mission causes, or to our church. Just through our example, by a smile in our daily chores, by a cheerful hello, by an extra special favor ... giving generously our time, our money, or our talents.

Our job is no easier than Christ's job was. We must learn to live every day, and to give every day to add our little bit to that which Christ gave to us during that Easter season long ago. ☩



Did you know that one-sixth of everything Jesus is reported to say in the New Testament concerns the relationship of a person to his or her material possessions? And one-third of all Jesus' parables are about this matter. The use and misuse of the world ... of possessions, of physical things, and of people ... the use and misuse of the world we have been given by God to live in and with is what the history of salvation is all about. It's the matter of stewardship. Let's not fool ourselves about stewardship, because if we do we will be fooling ourselves about the Gospel itself, about the very promise of salvation itself.

To toss God a tip, a little change from the excess of our lives, whether of money or time, is a little like tossing a bone to a dog who is looking for meat. If you find that your giving to God is being done in this spirit, then reconsider.

It's not a matter of meeting the church's obligations to the electric company and paying salaries. Our gifts honor the Lord and are an expression of our love.

While the church budget is important, our offering is an opportunity for us to truly thank our heavenly Father for all he has given us. If we give in relation to what we've received, there will always be plenty to pay the bills, too. ☩

Stewardship is faithfully handling the possessions God has provided, and regularly giving a worthy portion to support the ministry of God's church. Have you ever met anyone who really had their "heart set to give," who did not testify that he or she was the one who benefited by the giving? It is in giving that we truly receive.

Our World ...and welcome to it!



The Bible says God called the world he had created “good” (Genesis 1:31) and he told the people he created to “rule” or exercise “dominion” over it (Genesis 1:26).

Exercising dominion means to reasonably manage the good that has been entrusted to us. As stewards of God’s creation, we are called to do that. How? Asking these three questions may help provide answers.

1. What am I doing through my disposal methods and product choices to help ensure that future generations can enjoy healthy air, water, and soil?

2. Am I seeking to become informed about the ecological realities facing mankind (the greenhouse affect, the ozone problem, diminishing rain forests, etc.)?

3. Do I know what legislation is in process (or should be) that would help halt the proliferation of global pollutants?

God still calls Christians to exercise dominion over the earth by exercising restraint in our buying habits ... by exercising judgement in our recycling, by exercising our right to vote. And when we do, God calls it stewardship. 