

STEWARDSHIP

STUDY NO. 3

God is the creator of all things and therefore He is the owner of everything. God is the owner of our lives and everything that surrounds us. When He had finished creating everything He said to man:

"And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 1:28

What does God mean when He said "Have dominion or rule"? (Cross the incorrect answers)

Order – dominate –submit – worship – be grateful – destroy – govern – dispose – obey

Though God is the owner of everything He tells us to rule over the Earth. This is where the idea of Christian Stewardship comes from. This means to be responsible in the administration of God’s things. In other words it is administrating God's possessions as his servants well.

Stewardships

Meaning: "a person who administers another's property." This means that they are administering the goods that belong to someone else. They is not the owner of the goods, they only administrates them, they work for and act on the behalf of the owner.

Jesus told a parable about being a good servant/ steward. Read it in **Matthew 25: 14-30** then answer the following questions.

What does it mean to be a useful servant?

What is the duty of the servant or steward?

What talents does the Lord give to men?

What does God expect us to do with them?

Areas of responsibility

To be able to understand this even better we will divide it in three parts:

- 1- Creation
- 2- Money and material goods.
- 3- Time
- 4- Gifts

1. Creation.

When we read **Genesis 1 and 2**, we see that God's creation was perfect until sin came into the world. It was sin that corrupted God's perfect plan and introduced chaos and disorder to the world. This chaos will continue and is inevitable, but as Christians we should try not to add increase such disorder unnecessarily. We have to be responsible with our use of natural resources: e.g. do we recycle? What do we do with contaminated substances and everything else that destroys the ecological balance?

2. Money and materials goods

a) Tithes

To tithe means "to give God 10% of everything we receive" For example if we earn £100, £10 will be given to God. We can also tithe part of what we harvest. The tenth is not just money.

References to tithing in the Bible:

- Abram, called "man of faith" is the first character named in the bible who tithed. See **Genesis 14:20** and **Genesis 28:22**
- Moses: **Leviticus 27:30-32**. It was not a new law; tithes were consecrated to God. A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy (set apart) to the LORD. If a man redeems any of his tithes, he must add a fifth of the value to it. The entire tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod—would be holy to the LORD.
- **Malachi 3:8-10**. This passage is very important, here we see God accusing them (His people) of robbery.

We can see in the Old Testament tithing was compulsory for the people of God. They had to obey this divine command. In the New Testament we do not see this commandment overturned. Therefore we hold true to what we read in the Old Testament.

b) Offerings

The offering is something we can add to our tithe. We give to God for all the blessings that we receive from him.

Biblical references: **Exodus 35:29, Romans 15:26, 1 Corinthians 16:2**

How to give an offering?

1. With happiness: **Corinthians 9:7**
2. With a humble heart: **Matthew 6:2**
3. With sacrifice: **2 Corinthians 8:1-4**
4. Regularly: **1 Corinthians 16:2**
5. How much do we have to offer? _____ **Deuteronomy 16:16-17**

c) Possessions

As stewards we need to be concerned about what we are doing with the goods that we possess and our attitude towards them. We must live simply. We cannot take things with us from earth when we go to heaven. It is not a sin to live like a rich person but it is a sin to have a proud or bad attitude towards being rich. If God asks us for possessions and goods we should be willing to give them to Him (**Luke 16:19-25**).

3. Time

We must be responsible for the use of our time. There are five areas that we must always spend time on:

- a) Devotional Life: We must read _____ (**Psalm 119: 97-99**) _____ (**Daniel 6:10**) and offer God our praise and worship every day. It must be part of our daily routine.
- b) Family: Dedicating time to family life is part of caring for them. God gave us the family we have to build it up. We can only achieve this with time. We must dedicate time to our husband, wife, children, mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers.
- c) Work: We must do our work to the best of our ability. (**Proverbs 18: 9** and **Ephesians 6: 5-8**)
- d) Others: We must set aside time to relate to our brothers/sisters in Christ. To reach the unity of the faith we must spend time with our brothers and sisters.
- e) With ourselves: We need time to rest and to recover our strength, we need time to eat in peace, sleep what is necessary and to relax.

4. Gifts

The gifts are given by God; they refer to the abilities that the believer receives from God. They are capabilities given by God that should be used in his service. When the Bible speaks of gifts they are always related to the Holy Spirit and He is the giver of them. There are many different gifts.

1 Peter 4:10 *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*

In the light of this scripture choose one answer:

Each Christian has a gift

Not all Christians have a gift

Only those that ask for it will have a gift given to them

We looked at the spiritual gifts in a previous Bible study. Please name them:

What natural abilities do you have? Can these also be used by God?

How can I discover my gifts?

- 1) I can seek for a word from God; this word would need to be confirmed by the ministers in the church. It is also good to reflect on yourself and discover what gifts you have.
- 2) It is very important to experiment. For instance, if someone thinks that his ministry is teaching then it is important that that person prepares himself so he is ready to teach.

As we can see, stewardship covers all the areas of our life. Indeed, when we think of *our* life, *our* possessions, *our* time and *our* gifts, we hesitate to say that they are *ours* because we recognise that they have all been given to us by our Father. We should ask the Lord for wisdom and grace to be able to use them all for his glory.