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# STEWARDSHIP

Genesis 14:22, 1 Corinthians 4:2

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## Introduction

The concept of stewardship is deeply rooted in the Bible, reflecting the relationship between God and humanity. From the very beginning, God has called his people to live as wise and faithful stewards.

In the New Testament books, the word “**steward**” is rooted in the Greek word “*oikonomos*,” which means “the manager of a household.” The person tasked with this management responsibility is called a “steward,” but they can also be referred to as a manager, agent, or overseer.

While the concept of stewardship is ancient, the principles remain applicable today. We can all be stewards of the resources God entrusts to us.

Stewardship in the Bible has to do with understanding the importance that your life is not your own. Your life is on loan from God—regardless if you acknowledge this or not—and God calls you to steward everything about your life for his glory and the interests of others.

Biblical stewardship teaches that God owns everything, and He entrusts believers to manage His resources (time, talents, finances, and creation) responsibly on His behalf, with

accountability and eventual reward. This involves recognizing God's ownership, understanding our role as caretakers rather than owners, and using these gifts to honor Him, serve others, and advance His kingdom.

## Stewardship Over the Gospel

**1 Corinthians 4:2** states that it is required of stewards, or those in positions of trust, to be found faithful. This verse emphasizes the need for trustworthiness, honesty, and integrity in those entrusted with responsibilities, particularly religious ministers, who must serve God faithfully rather than themselves.

### Key Concepts

#### Faithfulness:

Faithfulness is about being reliable, trustworthy, and committed to our responsibilities. It means being consistent in our actions and words, even when no one is watching. Faithfulness is a key characteristic of a good steward, as it ensures that we're managing our resources and talents in a way that honors God.

#### Accountability:

Accountability is about being answerable

for our actions and decisions. As stewards, we're accountable to God for how we manage our resources, talents, and responsibilities. Accountability encourages us to be transparent, honest, and responsible in our actions, knowing that we'll be held accountable for our stewardship

### **Integrity:**

Integrity is about living a life of moral uprightness, honesty, and transparency. It means being true to our values, principles, and beliefs, even when it's difficult or unpopular. Integrity is essential for good stewardship, as it ensures that we're managing our resources and talents in a way that's consistent with our values and principles.

Paul's message drives home the need for consistency in our actions and thoughts. Remember, Paul himself faced trials and temptations, yet he remained committed to spreading the Gospel.

Jesus spent much of his ministry teaching about how we ought to live. If we take time to study and understand his teachings on stewardship in the Bible, it will change how we manage our time, money, possessions, and relationships. Many Christians today simply associate stewardship with financial accountability, but biblical stewardship goes much deeper than that.

**Let's take a look at some scriptures on stewardship and uncover principles that can impact how we live our lives.**

Below are 8 principles of stewardship in the Bible, including:

Ownership, Humility, Accountability, Diligence, Generosity, Multiplication, Planning, Sacrifice,

### **1. Principle of ownership**

God's Ownership:

The foundation of stewardship is that God is the ultimate owner of everything, including all aspects of our lives. **Psalm 24:1** states, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it".

Echoing **Deuteronomy 8:17**, we might say: "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But **Deuteronomy 8:18** counsels us to think otherwise: Remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. **Genesis 2:15**

God has entrusted us to oversee and manage his creation. Taking care of our planet, the environment, and the animals were the first tasks God used to teach responsible stewardship.

For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **Colossians 1:16-17**

Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your

**hand. 1      Chronicles 29:14**

Everything belongs to the Lord. These are foundational verses about stewardship. According to King David, everything belongs to the Lord. This is also backed up by God's statement in Job 41:11b, "Everything under heaven belongs to me."

In recognizing the principle of ownership, Christians understand that everything belongs to God. This realization impacts our daily lives by fostering humility and gratitude.

**Acknowledging God's Provision**

In **Genesis, 24:35** He told Rebekah's family, "I am Abraham's servant. The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become rich. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, camels and donkeys".

**Genesis 14:22** - Abram's decision to rely on God rather than the king of Sodom's wealth illustrates trust in God's provision. Believers are encouraged to trust that God will meet their needs without compromising their values.

**2. Principle of humility**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. **Proverbs 3:5-6**

As believers, we are called to approach stewardship with a humble heart, recognizing our dependence on God. Humility extends to relationships with others.

**Philippians 2:3 (NIV)** instructs, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves." The principle of humility challenges us to prioritize the needs of others, promoting unity and cooperation in both our personal and community lives.

Jesus' life not only demonstrates humility but also the essence of a good steward. Jesus, the ultimate steward of humanity's salvation, exemplifies the importance of selfless service. In stewarding the basic ability of washing another's feet he sets the example of serving others with deep love and humility that mirrored his entire mission.

**3. Principle of Faithfulness and Accountability**

Stewardship demands faithfulness and accountability. In the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), Jesus illustrates the importance of using one's gifts and resources wisely. The servants who invest and multiply their talents are commended, while the one who buries his talent is rebuked. This parable underscores the expectation that stewards will be held accountable for their management of God's gifts.

**4. Principle of diligence**

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

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly

handles the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15

Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth. Proverbs 4:10

These scriptures on stewardship is much more personal. Stewards recognize that diligence is a means of honoring God and contributing to the well-being of others. How we manage our talents and spiritual gifts reflects our values.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Colossians 3:23-24

## **5. Principle of generosity**

Generosity is a hallmark of biblical stewardship. In **2 Corinthians 9:6-7**, Paul writes, remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 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.

The story of the widow's mites is a short account in the Bible of Jesus making an observation that exemplifies stewardship regardless of how much someone possesses (Mark 12:41-44).

Jesus watched as people brought their offerings to the temple treasury. He saw the rich make a show of dropping off large amounts of money, hoping others would notice. Then a widow drops her two small coins in. Jesus tells His disciples that she

gave more than the others because she "gave out of her poverty" (CSB).

She gave humility, faithfulness, loyalty, trustworthiness, and accountability. Her coins were clearly not worth more than the bags of money the others gave. But the spirit in which she gave them was worth more. Her obedience and willingness to rely on God added value to her gift.

The widow could have made excuses for not giving in her circumstances. She could have reasoned that the rich people gave plenty, and their money would cover the loss of her small contribution. But she knew she had a spiritual duty of stewardship, not a monetary duty. Even her two coins demonstrated accountability. Both rich and poor decide their own destiny by the way they live and the way they give. The widow chose God's way over her own. She chose to instead "store up...treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal" (Matthew 6:20, ESV).

This verse teaches several powerful lessons that we can apply to our daily lives. One major takeaway is the importance of accountability. We are all held accountable for how faithfully we manage our responsibilities. In our workplaces, homes, and communities, we have the opportunity to reflect God's love through our actions. We can choose to act with honesty and integrity instead of cutting corners for personal gain.

"For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required" (Luke

12:48, NKJV).

"I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds" (Jeremiah 17:10, ESV).

God has individually blessed us with resources. We cannot shift our stewardship responsibility to others. He has made us individual stewards, and we are accountable to Him.

## **6. Principle of multiplication**

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it." Genesis 1:28a

A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:7-9

How much growth we see is often based on how much we are willing to give of our time, spiritual gifts, and other resources. For example, if a Christian stops investing in their church community, they will often begin to feel disengaged and withdrawn. Or, contrarily, if a couple decides to intentionally put time and effort into their marriage, their relationship will have a much better chance of growing.

## **7. Principle of planning**

The plans of the diligent lead to profit as

surely as haste leads to poverty. Proverbs 21:5

Strategic planning is a key aspect of responsible stewardship. If we follow God's instructions, we can develop wisdom that provides us with thoughtful foresight and strategic thinking in stewardship. It's important for us to set goals, make informed decisions, and consider the long-term consequences of our actions.

For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11

## **8. Principle of sacrifice**

Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. Mark 8:34

The Bible is full of stories, illustrations, and parables regarding giving up something valuable for a higher purpose. Jesus exemplified this with his ultimate sacrifice on the cross. He demonstrated how we are called to prioritize God's kingdom over our own personal desires and comfort.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Ephesians 5:25

Sacrifice also extends to our personal relationships. The Bible clearly teaches that we must sacrificially love and serve others, recognizing that true stewardship involves selflessness and a willingness to invest time, energy, and resources for the

benefit of others.

### **Examples of Stewardship In The Bible**

Maybe you're wondering, "What are some good examples of stewardship?" There are many! Let's look at some examples of good and bad stewardship in the Bible.

1. Noah was a good steward of the construction of the boat and rescuing animals & people from the coming flood.
2. Moses, a good steward, was given

stewardship of Israel, to lead them out of Egypt and through the desert.

3. Judas was given stewardship of the money that Jesus and the other apostles had. He was a pretty bad steward.. not only of the grace God had given him to be in His presence but of the money too.

4. Joseph's story teaches us valuable lessons about stewardship, leadership, and faithfulness. His example encourages us to manage our resources wisely, plan strategically, and lead with compassion and integrity.

### **Conclusion**

We are all held accountable for how faithfully we manage our responsibilities. In our workplaces, homes, and communities, we have the opportunity to reflect God's love through our actions. We can choose to act with honesty and integrity instead of cutting corners for personal gain.