

Financial Truths For Financial Freedom - 01 Stewardship

INTRODUCTION

- How many of you believe that prayer is important? Jesus said that My house shall be called a house of prayer. We are given much instruction in the Word of God about prayer. In fact there are approximately 500 verses on prayer in the Bible. BUT did you know that there are about 2000 verses giving us instruction about money. We have four times as much instruction in the area of our finances than in prayer. Obviously, our understanding and use of money is important to the Lord.
- How many of you believe faith is important? Faith involves everything we do in the kingdom. It is extremely important and there are 750 verses instructing us about our faith. Yet, this is roughly a third of the number of verses on finances.
- There are 16 of the 38 parables that revolve around money. Many of them deal with covetousness.
- 1 in 4 verses in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John speak about our finances. The gospels contain more warnings concerning the misuse of money than any other singular subject. Jesus taught more about money than any other subject.
- 1 in every 6 verses in the N.T. makes some reference to money.

In the next few weeks, we are looking at some of what the Lord has to say about our finances. We are calling this series: Financial Truths For Financial Freedom. Jesus said in John 8:31-32 "that My disciples shall know the truth and the truth shall set them free." He said in Galatians 5:1, "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery." God wants His people free in every area of our lives.

(John 8:31-32) "Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; {32} and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.""

(Galatians 5:1) "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery."

Freedom in our finances does not mean what freedom means to the world. To be financially free in the world's eyes means that you have enough money in the bank that you don't have to worry about working again. You can just kick back and enjoy yourself on the golf course or at the lake house.

Stewardship

Financial Freedom To God means:

- You are free from anxiety over finances.
- Your finances reflect that Jesus Christ is Lord of your life.
- Your hands are open and the Lord can add or subtract as He pleases.
- You have learned to be content whether you have much or have little.
- You are trusting God in your finances and are not trusting in your own ability to make money, or in your own bank accounts.
- You are following God's principles concerning finances.
- You are not in debt financially.
- You look forward to giving generously unto the Lord.
- Your money is a tool, rather than a master.

God not only wants His people free in their finances, He wants to pour out a blessing on His people. He wants to give to us "pressed down, shaken together, running over."

(Luke 6:38) "'Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.'"

Listen to the blessings in Deuteronomy 28 that He promises:

Deuteronomy 28:1-14 "'Now it shall be, if you will diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. {2} "And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you will obey the LORD your God. {3} "Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. {4} **"Blessed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock.** {5} "Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. {6} "Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. {7} "The LORD will cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they shall come out against you one way and shall flee before you seven ways. {8} **"The LORD will command the blessing upon you in your barns and in all that you put your hand to, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you.** {9} "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, as He swore to you, if you will keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and walk in His ways. {10} "So all the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of you. {11} **"And the LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your beast and in the produce of your ground, in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you.** {12} **"The LORD will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.** {13} **"And the LORD shall make you the head and not the tail, and you only shall be above, and you shall not be underneath, if you will listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I charge you today, to observe them**

carefully, {14} and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them."

God wants His people to be prosperous and successful. In Joshua 1:8 God charges Joshua with clinging to the Word of God. Moses has just died and Joshua is now going to lead God's people. God wants Joshua to be successful and to lead His people into the promised land. Listen to what he tells him.

(Joshua 1:8) ""This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success."

God has not changed His mind about His promises. God still wants His people to enter into His promised land, to be successful and prosperous. But, we will have to be careful to do according to what He tells us in our Life Manual, the Bible. Today, we are going to look at Luke 16 and we are believing God to give us a kingdom perspective in our finances. We want His truths to set us free.

THE TEXT: Luke 16:1-13 "Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and this steward was reported to him as squandering his possessions. {2} "And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' {3} "And the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. {4} 'I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the stewardship, they will receive me into their homes.' {5} "And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' {6} "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' {7} "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said^ to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' {8} "And his master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. {9} "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. {10} "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. {11} "If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you? {12} "And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? {13} "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.""

I. A Scriptural Look At God's Ownership

In this parable we have two primary characters, a certain rich man and his steward. The certain rich man represents God and the steward can represent any one of us. The certain rich man is the owner and the steward is merely the manager of the owner's property. It is very important that we understand that God is the owner of all things. Let's take a Scriptural look at God, the Owner.

A. He is Owner because He created us. Sometimes I see children fussing over a duplo block house that they have made. One will say to the other, "That's mine because I made it." He claims possession because he created the house.

We find the same principle working in patents. When someone invents something, he can patent his product. No one else can create and market that product without his permission. It belongs to him because he was the one who made it.

My father has been in the oil business his whole life. Nearly 50 years ago he developed a product in the oil business that is still being used today. My dad was working for Dresser Industries at that time and so they got the patent on the product. If he had created the product on his own, he could have got the patent and it would have been worth a substantial amount to him.

We find in Psalm 24 that God has the patent on the earth. It belongs to Him because He created, founded it and established it.

Psa 24:1-2 "(A Psalm of David.) The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it. {2} For He has founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the rivers."

He has the patent on us because He made us. Psalms 100:3 says that it is God who made us, and not we ourselves. Therefore, we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. We belong to Him.

Psa 100:3 "Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture."

Psalms 50 makes it very clear who the owner of everything in the world is. God says that every beast of the forest is His, the cattle on a thousand hills. Everything that moves in the field is His. He finishes by saying that the world is His, and all it contains. It belongs to Him because He created it.

Psa 50:10-12 ""For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills. {11} "I know every bird of the mountains, And everything that moves in the field is Mine. {12} "If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all it contains."

Stewardship

John tells us that all things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. Everything belongs to Him, because He created and made everything.

(John 1:3) "All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."

I read about a scientist that had a conversation with God. He stated that he no longer needed God anymore. He could clone people and do some miraculous things. He told the Lord to go somewhere else in the Universe and chill for a while. The Lord responded to the scientist that perhaps they should have a man making contest. The scientist replied, "OK, great!" But God added, "Now, we're going to do this just like I did back in the old days with Adam." The scientist said, "Sure, no problem" and bent down and grabbed himself a handful of dirt. God just looked at him and said, "No, no, no. You go get your own dirt!"

B. He is Owner because He bought us and redeemed us. As if it was not enough for Him to own us because He created us, He bought us and redeemed us.

A number of years ago a Christian man who had a ministry in Atlanta came by our property. As he walked the property, he told me that God had promised him that wherever he stepped, that land was his. He was applying a promise made to Abraham to himself. He claimed our property as his property. I told him that I had bought the property, and that it belonged to me. If he wanted to purchase the property from me, he was welcome to do that.

When Adam fell, he yielded himself to the control of Satan. He became a slave to sin. Satan now claimed the title to Adam. But the story does not end there. God created us for fellowship with Him. He knew what the cost was to purchase back that which had been lost. He loved us so much that He was willing to pay that price. So He gave His only begotten Son so that whosoever would believe in Him would not perish but have everlasting life. He bought us back or redeemed us with the blood of Jesus. Peter writes that we "were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

1 Pet 1:18-19 "knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, {19} but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

The author of Hebrews tells us that we have obtained eternal redemption through the blood of Christ. The redemption made with the blood of Christ is eternal, not temporal.

Heb 9:11-12 "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; {12} and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal

redemption."

When Jesus was gasping for air in His final moments on the cross, He said, "It is finished." The word finished is teleo, which means to complete, execute, conclude, or to finish. It was also used in accounting and meant "to pay in full." We belong to God because He bought us. He paid in full for our sins, and redeemed us. He now has the title to our lives.

John 19:30 "When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, "It is **finished (teleo)!**" And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit."

G5055. teleo; from G5056; to end, i.e. complete, execute, conclude, discharge (a debt):--accomplish, make an end, expire, fill up, finish, go over, pay, perform.

Paul writes in Corinthians that we have been bought with a price, and we are therefore to glorify God in our bodies, and we are not to become slaves of men.

1 Cor 6:19-20 "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? {20} For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

1 Cor 7:23 "You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men."

Isaiah the prophet writes that the LORD is our creator, and it is He who formed us. He goes on to say that He has redeemed us, and called us by name. Then, He finishes by saying, "you are Mine!" There is no doubt to His ownership.

Isa 43:1 "But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!"

C. He is Owner because He adopted us.

Karen and I have 10 natural children. We also adopted a little girl. We named her Magan Grace. We knew about the girl for a couple of months and sought the Lord for a name. When the mother gave birth to the girl, we were notified and went and picked up little Magan Grace. Magan means to be delivered over safely. This little girl was a crack baby who was delivered safely by the grace of God. The mother has 10 days to change her mind before the adoption papers are finalized. After a couple of days, we got a call from Peggy Cochran, who runs "In His Great Love." She notified us that the mother had changed her mind and we needed to bring the baby back. The adoption was cancelled, and we gave little Magan back to her mother. She kept her name. If the adoption process had been finalized, Magan would have been legally our daughter. However, since it was cancelled within the ten-day adoption period, Magan did not legally become our child.

Stewardship

When we receive Christ into our lives, God, the Father adopts us into His family. We become legally His through adoption. It is a sealed thing, a done deal. God is the owner of us through creation, redemption and through adoption. Paul writes in Galatians that we have been redeemed so that we might receive adoption as son.

Gal 4:5-7 "in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. {6} And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" {7} Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God."

Paul writes in Romans that we have received a spirit of adoption as sons and cry out, "Abba! Father! The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

Rom 8:15-16 "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" {16} The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,"

In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes that He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, and that we have been redeemed through His blood. The fact that we have been legally adopted and belong to Him through adoption is very clear.

Eph 1:5-8 "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, {6} to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. {7} In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, {8} which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight"

II. The Responsibilities of The Steward

A. Stewards give account. Our text says that the owner called the steward in to give an account. He had entrusted the steward with his possessions, and now he is calling him in to give account. One of the things a steward must do is give account from time to time.

(Luke 16:1-2) "Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and this steward was reported to him as squandering his possessions. {2} "And he called him and said to him, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward."

A steward is not the owner of the possessions; he is the manager of those assets. The dictionary defines a steward as "a person entrusted with the management of estates or affairs not his own; an administrator." The N.T. word, "oikonomos" literally means: house + to parcel out, especially food. The derived meaning is the manager of a household or household affairs; a manager. A steward is an individual who has been delegated authority by an owner to oversee his possessions, property and household affairs.

Stewardship

In Matthew 25:14-30 we find the parable of the talents, the one who had been faithful with the five talents, was entrusted with five more talents to manage for His master. Likewise, the one with two talents was given two more. But the steward who had only one talent and buried it, was reproved severely. The one talent that He had was removed from him and given to the steward with ten.

Mat 25:14-30 ""For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them. {15} "And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. {16} "Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. {17} "In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. {18} "But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master's money. {19} "Now after a long time the master of those slaves came[^] and settled[^] accounts with them. {20} "And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.' {21} "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.' {22} "The one also who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.' {23} "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' {24} "And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed. {25} 'And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.' {26} "But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed. {27} 'Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. {28} 'Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' {29} "For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. {30} "And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

All of us are stewards and will have to give account. Leaders in a local church will have to give account for their church members, those who have placed themselves under their care. Notice that the church members will also have to give account. If they have caused grief for the shepherds, it will not be profitable for them. We all have to give account.

(Hebrews 13:17) "Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

Stewardship

We will all have to give account for our actions, and for our words. Matthew tells us that we will have to give account for every careless word that we speak.

(Matthew 12:36) ""And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment."

Another thing that we will have to give account for is our spiritual gifts. Peter tells us that we are to be good stewards of the special gift that each of us have. We must be properly connected to the local body so that we can employ our gift in serving one another. We will give account for our stewardship of our gifts and talents.

(1 Peter 4:10) "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

B. Our stewardship is temporary. In the parable, the Owner is going to take away the stewardship. The Owner has given us the responsibility for a finite time period. Our earthly stewardship is going to be taken from us when we die. We are encouraged by the Lord to make wise use of the stewardship while we have it.

(Luke 16:2-3) ""And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' {3} "And the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg."

C. Our stewardship will have eternal consequences. We are encouraged to use it for eternal purposes. The unrighteous steward was praised by the Owner, not for the unrighteous actions that he took, but for his shrewdness in preparing a place for himself once the stewardship had been taken away from him. The Lord praises him and encourages us to use our wealth to make eternal friends.

(Luke 16:8-9) ""And his master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. {9} "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings."

D. Our Stewardship requires faithfulness. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 4 that it is required of stewards to be found trustworthy or faithful.

(1 Cor 4:1-2) "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. {2} In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy."

Stewardship

In this parable Jesus also tells us that stewards need to be faithful. He gives three principles of faithfulness. We must be faithful with little things. We must be faithful with unrighteous mammon or money, and we must be faithful with what belongs to others. Let's take a quick look at these three things.

(Luke 16:10-12) ""He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. {11} "If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you? {12} "And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?"

- 1. Stewards need to be faithful in little things.** If someone will not be faithful in little things, he will not be faithful with many things. Stewards need to be diligent and faithful in little things. A lot of people throw away pennies. Not me. I pick every penny up that I find. Pennies are the small things. If you cannot be faithful with pennies, who will entrust dollars to you. I roll my pennies and every so often I trade them in at the bank for dollars.

Our children need to be taught the faithfulness with the allowances they receive or with the income they receive from working. It will be natural for them to be entrusted with more riches as they learn to tithe and give offerings now with just a little. As we serve faithfully, more responsibility can be given. As we are faithful with our tithes and offerings on our current income, God can increase our seed for sowing and entrust us with more income.

2 Cor 9:10 "Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness;"

- 2. Stewards need to be faithful with money.** Jesus said that if we cannot be trusted with unrighteous mammon, how can we be entrusted with true spiritual things. One of the requirements we have to be on the worship team is to be a tithing member. One of the requirements to being in leadership is to be faithful in tithing. If we cannot be faithful in our use of money, the Lord said that He cannot entrust true riches to us.

In the church today, we are asking God for true riches. We are asking God for a mighty move of the Holy Spirit. We are asking Him for signs and wonders and miracles. But according to George Barna and other statisticians, the average giving by church members is 2.5 %. Why should God pour out true riches when we are not faithfully using our mammon? He would be violating His own principles to give us signs and wonders while we are being unfaithful. We need to repent of this so that God can begin to pour out His Spirit on mankind and we can see revival breaking out. It is imperative that we get this right.

- 3. Stewards need to be faithful with that which belongs to another.** If we will not take care of that which belongs to others, what reason does the Lord have for believing that we will take care of our own. We joke about renters and how they tear things up. There are not many renters who leave a property better than they find it. A Christian should always leave the property looking as good as he found it? Why? Because of the principle of being faithful with that which belongs to another.

This principle is used in raising up leadership in the church. If someone is not faithful in the vision of the church, why should leadership raise the person up in his own church or work. People need to faithfully serve another's vision so that God can raise them up at the proper time. There are many talented individuals with lots of potential, but there aren't many faithful people. I would much rather choose someone with less talent and gifting, but who has tremendous character and is faithful. He will impact the kingdom far greater in the long run.

Prov 20:6 (KJV) "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?"

- E. Stewards Must Serve God.** Jesus goes on to talk about how we cannot serve two masters. We cannot serve God and mammon. We must choose who we are going to serve.

Luke 16:13 ""No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.""

How do we know whether we are serving God or mammon? We can take a look at our pocketbooks and see if we are following God's commands. The Scriptures are full of principles to guide us in our finances. As stewards, there is no excuse for most of us for not walking in the truth. Here are a couple of the principles.

In 1 Samuel 8, we find the account of Samuel appointing his sons over Israel. His sons were dishonest and so the elders asked Samuel for a king to be appointed over them. Samuel is led by the Lord to tell them what that would entail. They would give a tenth of their crops. They would give a tenth of their flocks. He would take their daughters and sons and place them in his service. They would become his servants. The people heard this and still asked God for a king. This displeased the Lord.

It was common for kings in those days to require everyone to pay them a tithe. It not only met the needs of providing protection for the people, but it showed submission to their authority and rule. The principle of tithing goes beyond the Levitical law. It reflects who you are serving. It reflects who you are trusting for your protection. It reflects who you are submitted to and whose authority you are under. The nation of Israel wanted the king to fight their battles. They willingly chose to serve the king.

We can easily answer the question that Jesus raises about who you are serving, either God or mammon. Are you paying a tithe to your local storehouse?

1 Sam 8:1-20 "And it came about when Samuel was old that he appointed his sons judges over Israel. {2} Now the name of his first-born was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judging in Beersheba. {3} His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice. {4} Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; {5} and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations." {6} But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD. {7} And the LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. {8} "Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day-- in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods-- so they are doing to you also. {9} "Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them." {10} So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked of him a king. {11} And he said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. {12} "And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. {13} "He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers. {14} "And he will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. {15} "And he will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards, and give to his officers and to his servants. {16} "He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys, and use them for his work. {17} "He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants. {18} "Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day." {19} Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, "No, but there shall be a king over us, {20} that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.""

A few weeks ago I gave a message about honor. We are to honor the Lord with our wealth and from the first of all our produce. I gave some basic understanding about the tithe. In a couple of weeks Bill Lotgering will be sharing more on tithing, but from a different angle.

In addition to tithes, we are commanded to give offerings. Many Bible scholars estimate the total tithes and offerings that the people gave in the old covenant to be between 23% and 30%. If our righteousness and giving is to exceed that of the Old Covenant, we have a long way to go since the average church family gives only 2.5%. In reality, the average giving by non-Christians to charity organizations is less than 1% different than the giving by church

Stewardship

members. Our giving of both tithes and offerings should reflect that we are honoring and serving the Lord.

CONCLUSION

Luke 16:14-15 "Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at Him. {15} And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God."

The Pharisees who were lovers of money were listening to all these things, and they scoffed at Him. We have an opportunity to scoff at the Word of God today or to examine our hearts. We have a decision to make whether we are going to walk in the light of God's Word or walk in darkness. We can choose this day whom we are going to serve, either mammon or God. Are we going to be like Joshua and respond, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Josh 24:15 ""And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.""

"Alfred Nobel was a Swedish chemist who made his fortune by inventing dynamite and other powerful explosives, which were bought by governments to produce weapons. When Nobel's brother died, one newspaper accidentally printed Alfred's obituary instead. He was described as a man who became rich from enabling people to kill each other in unprecedented quantities. Shaken from this assessment, Nobel resolved to use his fortune to reward accomplishments that benefitted humanity, including what we now know as the Nobel Peace Prize.

Nobel had a rare opportunity—to look at the assessment of his life at its end, but to still be alive and have opportunity to change that assessment." (Money Possessions, and Eternity; by Randy Alcorn; page 151)

We have the same opportunity. We can look at God's word as a mirror. A mirror reflects the image of the person in it. As we look intently at God's word, we will see exactly where we are in relationship to our finances. We can see God's assessment of our attitudes and actions in the area of stewardship. We are told to look intently at His word so that we can abide by it and be an effectual doer. It also tells us that we will be blessed in what we do. We, like Alfred Nobel, have an opportunity to change the assessment of our lives.

James 1:25 "But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does."

Stewardship

DATE:

I hereby grant to the Lord my God myself and all of my money and possessions and all else I've ever thought of as mine, even my family. From this point forward I will think of them as His to do with as he wishes. I see myself as His steward and as such, I will do my utmost to prayerfully consider how He wishes me to invest His assets to further His kingdom. In doing so, I realize I will surrender certain temporary earthly treasures and gain in exchange eternal treasures, as well as increased perspective and decreased anxiety.

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This passage really bothered me for a long time. I did not understand the main point of the parable. I did not see why the Lord would praise the unrighteous steward. When I came to a place of understanding that the Lord was speaking about preparing for the rest of eternity, I appreciated this parable. This steward knew that he had a limited time to make preparation for his future. He knew that his stewardship was being taken away. So, he used the authority he had to reduce the amount that people owed the Owner. He did them some favors so that after his stewardship was removed, they would remember his kindness and take care of him. The point of the parable is that we are stewards on earth and we will all have to give account to the Lord at some point. We do not know if that is today, tomorrow, or eighty years from today. We will all have to give account. The question we must answer is, have we received Christ into our lives. Have we made preparation for our future while we have the opportunity? Once we die, it will be too late to receive Christ.

We are stewards and we must secure our future. We must use the talents and resources that God has given us to further the kingdom of God. We need to invest in winning people to Christ. We need to invest in discipling people. We need to invest our time and talents in things which are going to impact the kingdom eternally. We will all have to give account.

This morning, if you have not given your life to Christ, if you have not secured your future, let me encourage you to be a wise steward. Use the opportunity that you have right now to give your life to Christ. Ask Him to come into your life this morning.

Introduction

- There are approximately 500 verses on prayer in the Bible.
- There are about 750 verses on faith in the Bible.
- There are about 2000 verses on money.
- There are 16 of the 38 parables that revolve around money.
- One out of four verses in the gospels deal with money.
- One out of every six verses in the N.T. makes some reference to money.

Financial Freedom To God means:

- You are free from anxiety over finances.
- Your finances reflect that Jesus Christ is Lord of your life is.
- Your hands are open and the Lord can add or subtract as He pleases.
- You have learned to be content whether you have much or have little.
- You are trusting God in your finances and are not trusting in your own ability to make money, or in your own bank accounts.
- You are following God's principles concerning finances.
- You are not in debt financially.
- You look forward to giving generously unto the Lord.
- Your money is a tool, rather than a master.

God wants to pour out a _____ on His people. (Luke 6:38, Deut 28:1-14)

I. A Scriptural Look At God's Ownership

- A. He is Owner because He _____ us. (Psa 24:1-2, 100:3, 50:10-12, John 1:3)
- B. He is Owner because He _____ us and _____ us. (1 Pet 1:18-19, Heb 9:11-12, John 19:30, 1 Cor 6:19-20, 1 Cor 7:23, Isa 43:1)
- C. He is Owner because He _____ us. (Gal 4:5-7, Rom 8:15-16, Eph 1:5-8)

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II. The Responsibilities of The Steward

- A. Stewards give _____. (Luke 16:1-2, Mat 25:14-30, Heb 13:17, Mat 12:36, 1 Pet 4:10)
- B. Our stewardship is _____. (Luke 16:2-3)
- C. Our stewardship will have _____ consequences. (Luke 16:8-9)
- D. Our Stewardship requires _____. (1 Cor 4:1-2, Luke 16:10-12, Pr 20:6)
1. Stewards need to be faithful in _____.
 2. Stewards need to be faithful with _____.
 3. Stewards need to be faithful with that which _____ to _____.
- E. Stewards Must _____. (Luke 16:13, 1 Sam 8:1-20)

CONCLUSION (Luke 16:14-15, Josh 24:15, James 1:25)

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I hereby grant to the Lord my God myself and all of my money and possessions and all else I've ever thought of as mine, even my family. From this point forward I will think of them as His to do with as he wishes. I see myself as His steward and as such, I will do my utmost to prayerfully consider how He wishes me to invest His assets to further His kingdom. In doing so, I realize I will surrender certain temporary earthly treasures and gain in exchange eternal treasures, as well as increased perspective and decreased anxiety.

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