



Stewardship *-in-Action*

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TIME-TALENT-TREASURE

Stewardship is...

- an individual's responsibility to exercise care over possessions entrusted to him or her.
- the concept that mankind has an ethical responsibility to care for human life, animals, plants, and the environment as a whole.
- a theological belief that humans are responsible for the world, and should take care of it.
- the concept of responsible caretaking; based on the premise that we do not own resources, but are managers and are responsible to future generations for their condition
- taking responsibility for the survival and well-being of something that is valued.
- using every talent and repeatedly sacrificing desires to do the right thing. People must understand that Christians are called to be good stewards **all the time**, not just on Sunday morning. The meaning of stewardship, when it comes to relationships, means that a Christian is not taking another for granted, and instead, is giving 100% to the relationship. When it comes to money, using it and spending it wisely, in a way that would honor the Lord is the best course of action to become a responsible Christian.

To lead others to Christian stewardship, prayerfully study the qualities of the Christian steward and the biblical references to them.

1. A Christian steward is *compassionate*.

Christian stewards are caretakers and caregivers. They concern themselves with the distribution of gifts and resources so that all might benefit (Genesis 2:4-9; Matthew 14:13-21; Matthew 25:31-46; 1 Corinthians 12:12-28; James 2:14-17).

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it (1 Corinthians 12:27).

2. A Christian steward is *content*.

Christian stewards acknowledge that their strength comes from God through whom they can do all things regardless of how many or how few material possessions they have (Philippians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-10).

I can do all things through him who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13).

3. A Christian steward is *generous*.

Christian stewards give whatever is needed and whenever it is needed (Proverbs 11:24-29; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 12:13-21; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Timothy 6:17-19).

They voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints (2 Corinthians 8:3-4).

4. A Christian steward is grateful.

Christian stewards value what has been entrusted to their care and protect and preserve everything as if it were their own, yet acknowledging that the earth and all that is in it belong to God (Psalm 24; Psalm 92:1-4; Luke 16:19-31; Philippians 4:6).

*It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
to sing praises to your name,
O Most High;
to declare your steadfast love in the morning,
and your faithfulness by night (Psalm 92:1-2).*

5. A Christian steward is loving.

Christian stewards know that the Lord requires justice and kindness and humility, and they follow the two greatest commandments (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Micah 6:6-8; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:29-37; Luke 11:42; 1 Corinthians 13:3; 1 Corinthians 16:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Peter 4:8-11).

[The scribe asked Jesus] *"Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:28-31).*

6. A Christian steward is loyal.

Christian stewards serve God faithfully, remembering who they are, whose they are, and why they are here on earth (Matthew 6:19-21, 24; Luke 14:25-33).

"No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth" (Matthew 6:24).

7. A Christian steward is obedient.

Christian stewards obey God by setting aside a part of all their income for others (Deuteronomy 14:22-29; Deuteronomy 26:1-18; Malachi 3:6-18; Luke 18:18-30; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

[Jesus replied to the ruler]: *"There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." But when he [the ruler] heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich (Luke 18:22-23).*

8. A Christian steward is prayerful.

Christian stewards acknowledge the greatness and goodness of God through prayer, fellowship, study, worship, and reflection (Isaiah 40:28-31; Psalm 145; Jeremiah 29:11-14; John 6:25-40; Romans 12:1-21).

Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart (Jeremiah 29:12-13).

9. A Christian steward is responsible.

Christian stewards realize that caring for God's creation and wisely managing resources never ends (Genesis 1:28-30; Numbers 18:25-32; 2 Samuel 24:18-25; Matthew 28:16-20).

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded of you (Matthew 28:19-20a).

10. A Christian steward sacrifices.

Christian stewards follow Jesus' teaching to sacrifice what they have out of gratitude for their many blessings (Mark 12:41-44).

Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all that she had, all she had to live on (Mark 12:43-44).

11. A Christian steward shares.

Christian stewards have learned to distribute fairly so that none will be in need (Luke 19:1-10; Acts 4:32-35; Acts 20:34-35).

I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

12. A Christian steward is trustworthy.

Christian stewards can be trusted to make wise decisions concerning the resources placed within their care (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 16:10-13; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2).

Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy (1 Corinthians 4:1-2).

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Will Our Children Be Stewards? (Part I)

By David S. Bell

The United States economy exceeds [\\$13 trillion](#) annually. Individual spending, commonly referred to as [consumer spending](#), makes up seventy percent of this economy -- the gross domestic product. An even more staggering statistic is that eighty percent of product purchases are influenced by children! These figures calculate into a shocking realization that nearly *\$7.5 trillion of the U.S. economy is influenced directly by children.*

Children are learning about money. What are their sources of information? Parents are a major source of information. Yet, [a recent survey conducted by Synovate](#), a global market research company, suggests that giving is not a major component of parents' financial teaching and that only thirty-eight percent of parents teach children how to pay bills. Another primary and more constant source of information for children is media advertising. The average person, including the average child, is exposed to more than [5,000 advertising impressions](#) each day. Advertising is full of money messages.

Children's money values are influenced persistently by the underlying messages in advertising. *These money values will often be inconsistent with children's other values and potentially in direct conflict with Christian principles.* If children are going to adopt money values that are consistent with other faith values, then they must be taught God-honoring, biblical principles about money. The church has a tremendous opportunity, and arguably an awesome responsibility, to create a culture of generosity that advocates a proportional perspective between earning, giving, saving, and spending money.

Church leaders are often hesitant, perhaps even fearful, to talk with the congregation about financial principles. They avoid most money conversations based on the assumption that money talk is private talk. Yet, several of our money decisions are more obvious than we may think. Some choices are obvious to just about any one -- even strangers! What are some of these public displays? The cars that we drive, the homes that we purchase, the clothes that we wear, the frequency that we eat at restaurants, the vacations that we enjoy; in fact, many of our consumer purchases are public displays of decisions that we have made with how to spend money.

Sometimes the public display of our money decisions does not reflect spending, but *giving*. In order to bring some level of balance to children's perception about money priorities, we need to provide many more examples of giving than we currently demonstrate. Why? The hyperconsumer culture will provide money awareness to children in the absence of education from parents and faith communities. Church leaders are urged to provide opportunities for children to think about the intersection of money with their faith-informed values. We need to remind children that everything in life, including money, is a gift from God.



David S. Bell, former Director of Stewardship with GBOD, currently serves as Vice-President of Stewardship with the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan. You may contact him by visiting www.covenantquest.com. Copyright 2008 David S. Bell. Any local church, regardless of denominational affiliation, or any United Methodist organization may reprint this article provided that the author is cited

PSR – Back in Action

September 21st marks the beginning of another new year for our PSR program. St. Mary and St. Anthony collaborate to bring this wonderful program to our parish children. Both parishes are well represented in both the student enrollment and the parent/teacher volunteers. Many hours are spent selecting the curriculum, planning and teaching each class, preparing the children to lead a monthly prayer service, and meeting with each other to share ideas. What a great example of “stewardship... *in action* right here, at home!

Family Love

We express kindness and love when we show one another respect. Discuss actions that can be taken in each family member's daily life to reflect Jesus' way to offer love and respect. Develop a plan to hold one another accountable for these actions. Jesus reminds us that Christian stewardship involves taking care of others and ourselves. All that we experience in life is a gift from God. God calls us to be good stewards of family relationships.

Prayer: Help me to see when I can be the hands and feet of Jesus in my school, at home, and at church. Remind me to be a faithful steward by showing love and respect to others. In the name of Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.



CHECK IT OUT... www.globalyouthconnect.org

Global Youth Connect is dedicated to empowering youth to advance human rights and create a more just world.

We envision a world where the human rights of all people are equally respected, fully protected and universally realized. We also envision a world where all young people – regardless of nationality, ethnicity, religion, class, gender or other differences – are encouraged and empowered to non-violently claim their own rights and serve as advocates for the rights of others.

GYC's programs provide youth (ages 14-30) from a wide range of ethnic, national, economic and religious backgrounds with opportunities to enhance their ability to take action on pressing human rights issues. Our programs weave together: experiential training programs and workshops; skills development in grassroots organizing, conflict transformation, human rights activism and leadership; mentoring and technical support for on-going organizing efforts; on-the-ground experience in human rights organizations and doing human rights work; and connection to a global community of youth activists.

"We must be the change we wish to see in the world..." --Gandhi