

Biblical Stewardship Principles

1. God is the giver of all that we have. What we possess is not earned, but is a gift from God.

Moses said to the people of Israel in the wilderness, before they went into the land of milk and honey, “Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth.” (Deuteronomy 8:17-18)

Paul writes to the Christians in Corinth, “What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?” (1 Corinthians 4:7)

2. We are accountable to God for what we do with what he has given to us. We are managers, not owners.

In the parable of the talents, ‘After a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.’ To two of the servants he said, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.” But to the third he said, “You wicked and slothful servant!...So take the talent away from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.” (Matthew 25:14-30)

As Paul puts it, “It is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.” (1 Corinthians 4:2)

3. One aspect of being a trustworthy steward is giving. Our decisions about possessions are spiritual decisions. Giving brings us closer to God.

Jesus said, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Luke 12:32-34)

4. As we give, we are called to tithe, to return 10% of what he gives us.

“All the tithes of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord’s; it is holy to the Lord.” (Leviticus 27:30)

Jesus said, “Woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.” (Luke 11:42)

5. The motive for giving to God is thankfulness. God wants us to give with joy.

“What shall I render to the Lord for all his bounty to me?...I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving.” (Psalm 116:12, 17)

“Each one must do as he has made up his own mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)

6. God calls us to give so that we might experience the quality of life that he wants for us.

Moses said, “Be careful to heed all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you for ever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God.” (Deuteronomy 12:28)

7. After we know why we give, then we can focus on the ones who receive what we give to the Lord.

“You shall give to your [poor brother] freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him; because for this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. For the poor will never cease out of the land; therefore I command you, You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in the land.” (Deuteronomy 15:10-11)

“You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God; for the rendering of this service not only supplies the wants of the saints, but also overflows in many thanksgivings to God.” (2 Corinthians 9:11-12)

Principles of a Parish Stewardship Program

1. There is committed leadership. The stewardship commitment of the congregation will never exceed the communicated stewardship commitment of the Clergy and Parish Council.

A. The Clergy are committed to giving out of thankfulness, with the Biblical tithe as the minimum standard for their own giving.

B. All members of the Parish Council are committed to giving out of thankfulness, with the Biblical tithe as the minimum standard for their own giving.

2. The budget is not presented as the basis for giving; pledges are not sought to meet the budget.

3. There is a commitment to increase the percentage of the budget for mission outreach outside the congregation, with the goal of “50-50 giving.”

4. There are identified financial mission goals for the congregation, based on answering the question, “What is Jesus Christ calling our church to do?”

5. There is in-depth stewardship education throughout the year. This is done through as many vehicles as possible: preaching, teaching in a variety of contexts, lay witnesses, newsletters, new member classes, special seminars, etc.

6. Annually, there is a renewal of commitment to these principles and evaluation and redesign of the education program.

The Rt. Rev. John A. M. Guernsey
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