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Published

23:05:00 31.05.2014

This is the end or (bottom line) of the matter: fear God and keep His commandments. The two ingredients: the fear of God and keeping His commandments (obedience) are vital to our study of stewardship as they form the foundation or the basis for the operations for our study subject. The fear of God is the worshipful reverence for God that leads us not only to depart from sin (as it does not please God) but it engenders an attitude of worship and love for God. Obedience to God implies doing what God wants with the right motives and focus.

The purpose, principles and practise of stewardship are very vital to our life's achievements. God's expectation of mankind can be summarised by the word: Stewardship. Faithfulness in stewardship is the pass mark for promotion and increase. To be a good steward of anything you must know the purpose of the thing. What was in the mind of the giver in the first place? Then you must know your purpose where the thing is concerned and what your own purpose is. The next thing is your motive and then your focus.

If the foundation blocks for stewardship can be seen as the fear of God and keeping His commandments, then the building blocks can be seen as accountability and transparency. These are towards the right parties in any matter. Not everybody needs to know your business. The other building blocks will be wisdom, that produces diligence and wise investments of resource, as well as intelligent planning, time management and goal setting that accomplishes more than the goals set.

In Mathew 25:14-30, we read about the parable of the talents where the master gives 5, 2 and 1 to each of his servants according to their abilities. They engaged in the investment of the talents, applied themselves with diligence and made profit according to their abilities. They invested in themselves and made investments with their master's talents, engaged all their skills of management, marketing, sales and public relations to see to it that the master's investment yielded an increase for the master. Instead of receiving it from them after they invested the talents, he gave more to the more successful ones. They had more for being successful. To him who has more will be given. That is a kingdom principle. A greater opportunity to serve comes to the faithful ones. To the unfaithful one, there was not only a loss of opportunity but of what was entrusted to the servant.

How do we work this principle into our lives to enable us walk in the benefits that accrue to owners with a stewardship mind-set? The purpose of stewardship is maximisation of potentials. The goal of stewardship is increase and the process builds character, generates influence and produces increase in capacity. The steps are these:

1. Something(s) is (are) committed to your care;
 2. You are expected to interact (invest or engage in) with the commodity;
 3. Your interaction will be a function of your understanding of the Giver's intention for the thing (item of gift) given to you.
 4. Your interaction is expected to bring satisfactory results that will bring pleasure to the giver.
 5. You can expect to receive more or have increase (promotion) in what you have been faithful over.
- Somebody once defined faithfulness as that which you become when commitment is no longer convenient. When faithfulness is no longer convenient, you can be said to be loyal. I will add and you are doing it with joy!

Everything we are, or have or ever hope to be all come from God. Our faithfulness will determine if we will ever become all we are meant to be. We are expected to be faithful to the truth we know, the relationships we have and the very life we live. Our body is His temple; our minds were designed to function maximally within certain Godly boundaries, and every part of our lives demands our faithful stewardship, this includes our sexuality. We need to learn to use what He has given us for his glory. We will derive pleasure that will be pleasing to Him as well. Remember that there is a way that seems right to a man but the end of it is destruction. This only happens when we are not doing things that please God and we seem to be enjoying it. Sexual integrity demands faithful use of our sexuality within the context of marriage and even that not as a tool of punishment but an adventure of love.

We also need to steward our responsibilities, relationships and privileges and opportunities. Kingdom responsibilities demand faithful stewardship. Stewardship demands work and time spent in building these relationships and taking full advantage of our opportunities to maximise the potentials discovered and developed. Life's lessons are learnt well and applied in the heart of one who has embraced ownership with a stewardship mentality. Whatever God gives you becomes yours but you need to work with it as a steward under God so He can teach you how best to engage with the gift and how to get the best out of it as well as honour him as the Giver of every good gift. To be a good steward you must do these things: Know your source, respect your source, honour your source by recognising His purpose for giving what He gave; apply yourself to the study, understanding and application of the principles that govern the operation of God's kingdom where the gift is concerned; apply yourself to the sacrificial doing of what it takes to do what is right in God's sight where the gift is concerned; (This may call for self-denial just to be right with God's kingdom principles). Have faith in God that He knows what He is doing and He is helping you do what you are supposed to be doing, use this process to build intimacy with God so you can know Him better in the process. He is good and His mercy endures forever! His plans are higher than yours and He has your best interest at heart. If you truly respect God, you will honour His delegated authority in your life. Finally expect increase blessings and promotion from God and people will see these and recognise the doing of God in your life. Your life will give Him glory.

Things to have stewardship mentality about include: your eyes, (watch what you allow yourself to behold), your body (watch what you put into it and how you use it), your sexuality (don't tamper with the power of your sexuality with the wrong person), your time (when it is lost, it can only be redeemed through God's wisdom), your marriage relationship (time spent with spouse should be good investment in the marriage), your talents and gifts (engage them correctly for increase to come), your career, your other responsibilities, (increase in capacity comes through faithful use of our God-given responsibilities. The list is endless, ask the Lord to open your eyes to see other areas where you need accountability, transparency and faithful stewardship in your life. May the Lord help us all. Amen!

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