

Whole-Life Stewardship

YOUTH BIBLE STUDY

- **Questions to Consider**
 - What is stewardship?
 - What is a steward?
 - What are the tasks/expectations of a literal steward (in Bible times and more recent)?
 - What comes to mind when we think of being good stewards? (Money management, time management)
 - Are there other areas (just as important) that God has entrusted into our care as stewards?
 - What do the words "whole-life" actually mean?
- **Definitions**
 - "stewardship" – the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care
 - "steward" – a man employed in a large family, or on a large estate, to manage domestic concerns, supervise other servants, collect the rents or income, keep accounts, etc. (Webster)
 - a steward manages the possessions of someone else
 - Bible definition of "stewardship" – using and managing all the resources God provides for the glory of God
 - Stewards in Bible times – "usually a servant, sometimes a slave, who had earned the respect and trust of the master of the house. This trust was so complete that the master would turn over the entire operation of his estate to this individual. What is even more unique about this relationship was the fact that the steward essentially assumed the power and influence of his master and lived much the same lifestyle. As long as the steward remained faithful, he was allowed to continue these special privileges."
(<http://www.cuttingedge.org/articles/p112.htm>)
 - "Stewardship is a way of life for the Christian, including possessions, opportunities, relationships, and all of God's creation" (author unknown).
- **Stewards in the Bible**
 - **Eliezer of Damascus**
 - Abraham's steward (Genesis 15:1-3)
 - If Abraham had no son, Eliezer would be the heir (Genesis 15:2 AMP)
 - He ruled over all that belonged to Abraham (Genesis 24:2)
 - He was entrusted with the responsibility of choosing a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:4)
 - Observations about Eliezer's stewardship
 - faithful
 - trustworthy
 - a good manager (Abraham was very wealthy)
 - **Joseph**
 - Potiphar's steward ("overseer"; Genesis 39:4)
 - Joseph was in charge of all that Potiphar owned (Genesis 39:8)
 - Question: was Joseph in a steward-like position when made 2nd ruler to Pharaoh?

- Note: Joseph later had his own steward (Genesis 39:4-5; 44:1, 4).
- Observations about Joseph's stewardship
 - faithful
 - obedient
 - good moral character
 - honest
 - trustworthy
 - wise management ("And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man"; Genesis 39:2)
- **Melzar** ("overseer" or "steward"; Daniel 1:11 AMP)
 - entrusted with the training and feeding of the young men preparing for service to King Nebuchadnezzar
 - Interesting observation: he was entrusted with people instead of things
 - Observations about Melzar's stewardship
 - Compassionate (Daniel 1:9)
 - Fair; willing to listen (Daniel 1:12-14)
- **Shebna** ("treasurer"; Isaiah 22:15)
 - "steward" (AMP)
 - Shebna was in charge of the city's money
 - steward over one area (money)
- **New Testament Stewards**
 - "Every household of distinction seems to have had a steward in charge" (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/steward/>)
 - **Chuza** (Herod's steward; Luke 8:3)
 - **Stewards Mentioned in Parables**
 - Laborers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16)
 - Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-13)
 - **Stewardship Principles Found In ...**
 - The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)
 - three servants given 5, 2, and 1 talents
 - servants with 5 and 2 multiplied; servant with 1 buried his talent
 - The Parable of the Minas (Luke 19:11-27)
 - 10 servants given 1 pound each
 - 1 servant gained 10 pounds
 - 1 servant gained 5 pounds
 - 1 servant wrapped the pound in a napkin
 - The Parable of the Wicked Husbandman (Matthew 21:33-46)
 - vineyard – "let it out" to the husbandmen
 - owner sent his servants (abused) & his son (killed)
 - The Parable of the Watching Servants (Luke 12:35-40)
 - "Who then is that faithful and wise steward" (verse 42)
 - watchfulness and preparedness of servants praised
 - "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Corinthians 4:1)
 - bishops, ministers, pastors are considered "the steward of God" (Titus 1:7)

- gifts are to be used to serve others as a good steward (1 Peter 4:10)
- **Basic Principles of Stewardship**
 - **#1 – God owns everything; we own nothing**
 - the earth and all that live there (Psalm 24:1)
 - silver and gold (Haggai 2:8)
 - animals (Psalm 50:10)
 - our body (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
 - "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." (1 Timothy 6:7).
 - "There are no U-Hauls behind hearses" (John Piper).
 - **#2 – God is the owner; we are the managers**
 - what does it mean to "manage"?
 - take charge of
 - influence
 - handle in a way that pleases the owner
 - making every decision concerning God's property with this in mind
 - "What would Jesus do?"
 - must acknowledge that God is the owner and He needs to be consulted concerning how to manage His resources
 - **#3 – We will have to give an account**
 - Matthew 24:46 – "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing."
 - Luke 19:15 – "And it came to pass, that when he was returned . . . then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading."
- **Stewardship Requirements**
 - "Faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2; Matthew 24:45; Matthew 25:21)
 - "Blameless" (Titus 1:7)
 - free of blame, morally pure, "holy" (Colossians 1:22)
 - living free from sin
 - In other words, "faithful Christians"
 - Consider what is NOT listed as a requirement (talented, rich, beautiful, privileged)
- **Areas of Stewardship Responsibility**
 - **Talents & Gifts**
 - not the same thing
 - natural-born talents or having a natural ability
 - "a special ability that allows someone to do something well" (Merriam-Webster)
 - "a natural aptitude or skill" (Oxford Dictionaries)
 - musical ability, writing, artistic, good with numbers, photography, cooking, listening, story telling, problem solving, athletic, detail organization, technology, positiveness, conflict resolution, working with children, editing, handling money, research, inventing, etc.
 - spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians, Chapter 12, and Romans, Chapter 12)
 - "God-given ability to fulfill your purpose in the body of Christ" (Bible.org)

- wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, prophecy, discernment, mercy, helps, ministering, exhorting, giving, evangelism, leadership, pastoring, teaching, administration
- every Christian is given at least one gift
 - "dividing to every man severally as he will" (1 Corinthians 12:11)
 - gifts are given "severally [specially assigned]"
 - "according to his several ability" (Matthew 25:15)
 - gifts are given according to one's ability (what they can handle)
- not everyone has the same gifts
 - "gifts differing" (Romans 12:6)
 - "diversities of gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:4)
- talents & gifts not given for self-edification
 - "profit withal [for the common good]" (1 Corinthians 12:7)
- (discuss/consider how to discover and develop talents & gifts)
 - be saved
 - do the basics
 - add new areas of service
 - seek God (and Godly counsel)
 - "desire spiritual gifts" (1 Corinthians 14:1)
 - "neglect not the gift that is in thee" (1 Timothy 4:14)
- **Money**
 - **Parable of the Talents** (Matthew 25:14-30)
 - each man was entrusted with a sum of money (talents)
 - why weren't they given the same amounts?
 - "several ability" (verse 15)
 - did the master give according to how much he knew each man could handle?
 - are there reasons God doesn't make all of us millionaires?
 - might we not be able to handle it?
 - later, with more spiritual growth and maturity, might God give us more?
 - all were expected to put it to good use
 - Note: principles in this parable can also be applied to talents & gifts
 - **Purchases**
 - God is ready to be our financial advisor
 - Praying about purchases (small and great)
 - being a good steward is managing God's property for His glory
 - hoarding – unwise purchases
 - what if I'd been talking to the Owner (money) before I bought those things?
 - **Tithing Principles**
 - can we delay or not pay our tithe and still be considered faithful stewards?
 - O.T. – tithe was at least 10 percent
 - minimum standard
 - as high as 33 percent (additional: support Levites, temple and feast days, etc.)
 - N.T. – "when you give" (Jesus said this; it is current, not O.T. only)

- teach tithing to our children
- **Giving to Others**
- **Saving, Investing, Setting Goals**
- **Being Aware of What You're Spending** (budgeting)
- Discuss/Consider:
 - What might be other ways we can be good stewards of money?
 - Scriptures that come to mind about money management
 - the woman of Proverbs, Chapter 31
- **Time**
 - **Parable of the Minas**
 - all were given the same amount
 - we all have 24 hours each day to manage – same amount of time
 - cannot stockpile or save our time; must spend it
 - we have more time-saving devices than ever before
 - how are we budgeting (managing) our time?
 - "killing time"
 - "wasting time"
 - "pressed for time"
 - "no time for _____" (blank = things you should do, but procrastinate on)
 - how could we become better time managers?
 - question:
 - is leisure time poor management?
 - Common Attitude: "You aren't really serving the Lord unless you consistently push yourself to the point of fatigue." (Bible.org)
 - The Highway of Holiness has a ditch on both sides (too lax and too busy)
 - the devil does not care which ditch he gets you in – both take you away from the highway
 - Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3
 - there are seasons, or appointed times
 - Psalm 90:12 – "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."
 - living with eternity in view
 - life is but a vapor
 - what does it mean to "number our days"?
 - time management = balance (fun and work; laugh and cry)
 - Ephesians 5:16 – "redeeming the time"
 - making the most of your time
 - use your time well
- **Possessions**
 - Age of consumerism
 - things not made to last
 - need for the latest and greatest
 - never satisfied
 - what does good stewardship of our possessions look like?

- not a miser
- not a spendaholic
- "let your moderation be known" (Philippians 4:5)
- "godliness with contentment" (1 Timothy 6:6-8)
 - does not mean that you cannot have dreams of better things
 - do all to the glory of God
- taking care of what we have
 - last longer
 - old saying – "a stitch in time saves nine"
 - mending a hole when it's small versus waiting until it's much bigger
 - learning how to use leftovers
 - maintenance of vehicles, appliances, homes
- looking at our possession with a realization of who truly owns them
 - "this is God's house, car"
 - "these are God's clothes, shoes"
 - "this is God's cellphone"
 - "I'm to take care of God's possessions"
 - with these thoughts in mind, would we spend less time or more time on certain things?
 - how might this affect our purchases? our maintenance, cleaning, care?
- **Relationships**
 - God has given us parents, siblings, friends, spouses, co-workers, church family
 - how does God want us to manage those relationships?
 - love, patience, longsuffering, restitution, apology
 - parents
 - love, respect, time, affection
 - siblings
 - tolerance, listening, reaching out
 - church family
 - patience, prayer, food, cards, call/text
 - remind yourself – "this relationship was given to me by God; how should I interact with this person as a good steward?"
- **Body**
 - 1 Corinthians 6:19 – "Ye are not your own"
 - we are given ONE body to manage (dress, feed, care for)
 - how do we dress it?
 - what do we feed it?
 - how much sleep do we give it?
 - where do we allow it to go?
 - Discuss/Consider
 - self control
 - purity
 - eating healthy
 - dress standard

- tattooing (graffiti on God's house)
- language (tongue is part of the body)
- **Soul**
 - three-fold being: body, soul, and spirit
 - the soul is the real you
 - the soul lives forever
 - God gave it; how are we taking care of it?
 - Consider the following verses regarding caring for one's soul:
 - "humbled my soul with fasting" (Psalm 35:13)
 - soul "rest" (Matthew 11:29)
 - love God "with all thy soul" (Matthew 22:37)
 - "in your patience possess ye your soul" (Luke 21:19)
 - feed it; have a healthy soul (3 John 1:2)
 - soul needs to be in subjection to God (Romans 13:1)
 - purify it by being obedient to the truth (1 Peter 1:22)
- **Mind**
 - how are we taking care of our mind?
 - what do we allow it to think on?
 - are they healthy or unhealthy thoughts?
 - Consider the following verses regarding caring for one's mind:
 - love God with all your mind (Matthew 22:37)
 - "made their minds evil" (Acts 14:2)
 - "received the word with all readiness of mind" (Acts 17:11)
 - "serving the Lord with all humility of mind" (Acts 20:19)
 - "a reprobate mind" (Romans 1:28)
 - a mind that cannot be reasoned with
 - "be carnally minded" or "be spiritually minded" (Romans 8:6)
 - "a willing mind" (2 Corinthians 8:12)
 - "being ... of one mind" (Philippians 2:2)
 - "earthly" minded (Philippians 3:19)
 - "vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (Colossians 2:18)
 - "corrupt mind" (1 Timothy 6:5)
 - "a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7)
 - "be sober minded" (Titus 2:6)
 - "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8)
- **Faith**
 - "God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3)
 - faith is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8-9)
 - Hebrews 11:1 tells us what faith is
 - "substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"
 - "belief in and devotion to God"
 - "without faith it is impossible to please him" (Hebrews 11:6)
 - how to manage (nurture and build) the faith given us?
 - allow trials to work for good ("trying of your faith worketh patience"; James 1:3)

- your faith can grow ("groweth exceedingly"; 2 Thessalonians 1:3)
- ask for help
 - "I believe; help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24).
 - "Increase our faith!" (Luke 17:5).
- **The Word**
 - Word = Bible, Christ
 - "In the beginning was the Word ... and the Word was God" (John 1:1)
 - the Word came to us at great cost (Calvary; printed Word - martyrs)
 - how are we managing (caring for) the Word?
 - read, study, meditate on, treasure, obey, share
- **The Gospel**
 - What is the Gospel?
 - The Great Commission
 - evangelism
 - witnessing
 - we have been given the Gospel (not for ourselves only)
 - how are we managing it (learning, sharing) to God's glory?
- **Heart, Environment, Community**
 - (Discuss/Consider stewardship of these areas)
- **Love**
 - we love Him because He first loved us
 - how do we share (manage) the love of God with others?

Additional Resources

- Youth Sunday School Lessons: Whole-Life Stewardship (PrintableLessons.com – "Youth Lessons")