

Stewardship

Inspiring a deeper understanding of true giving

February 2021

Once there was a little village nestled securely in a valley between two mountains. Its people were very advanced compared with those who lived in the neighboring villages. They had learned how to build bridges, how to farm the slopes of the mountains, how to make laws to govern themselves, and how to write poetry about the beauty that surrounded them. They were indeed a clever people.

The villagers had a special treasure ... a chest filled with beautiful jewels. No one could remember just how or when the village had first come to possess the chest, except that it had been given to them as a gift from someone who had loved them very much. The villagers were very proud of their treasure. They took good care of it and even built a special room for it.

Life was good for the people who lived in the village, but one thing disturbed them. They longed desperately to share the beauty of the jewels with their children; to let them see the sparkling colors with their own eyes. But they could not. They had forgotten how to open the chest.

This was a very distressing situation, but the people rarely had a chance to address themselves to it. Their bridge-building, farming, law-making, and writing kept them very busy. However, one day they did hold a meeting to discuss the problem. Everyone agreed how very important it was for the children to be able to see the jewels with their own eyes and they drafted a strong resolution to that effect. But when they got around

to discussing how the chest might be opened, no one felt qualified to open it or had the time to try. Each year they passed a resolution about how important it was for their children to see the jewels with their own eyes. And yet each year no one felt qualified to open the chest or had the time to try.

The moral of this story is if you don't take time, it will take you. The trail of broken promises and commitments in our lives is paved with the excuse of not having time.

Stewardship is the experience of turning intentions into actions. Share your time and talents with others ... and don't forget committing some of both to your church. 

Time is a gift from God, to be used wisely, not frittered away. God allows us to choose how to use this gift. Do you use God's time for loving and caring deeds?



A Christian disciple is concerned about how he or she uses their time. The days and years at their disposal are a sacred trust. One who is faithful in the use of their time does not live in fear of the future, but constantly faces the question of whether or not they are making wise use of the years at their disposal. They ask themselves, "Am I being true to God if I devote all my time to work, pleasure and sleep, even if I do contribute my money?"

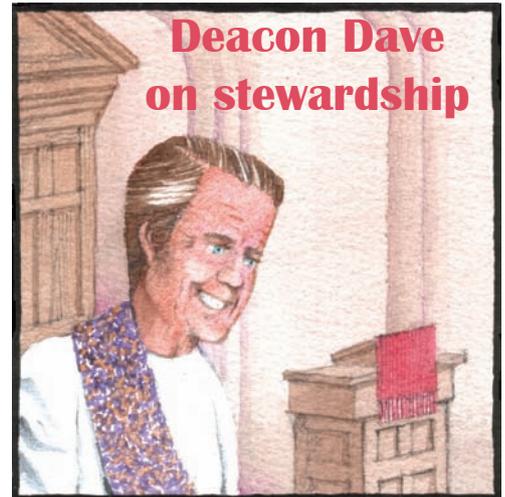
Active, Not Passive

Peter instructs us to prepare for the coming again of Jesus by being good stewards over all that God has given us.

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" 1 Peter 4:10.

Every person who yields to Jesus Christ receives from God some special ability or quality that can be used to build the church, so that the church may become more effective in its mission to reach and transform the world. If you have committed yourself to Christ, then God has committed to your care some special gift or gifts ... an ability, a talent, or a quality of personality to be used in his service.

I see the people I meet every day and know the Bible rings true on this. They are a gifted group of people. I see those who are great teachers of



God's Word. I see others who possess the spiritual gift of "exhortation," which means that they are great affirmers of others. Still others have the gift of "hospitality." People feel especially warm and at ease when they come to their home and they help newcomers to feel welcomed in their midst on Sunday mornings. I praise God for all of these people. Use well and often your gifts.

To all of Christ's followers special
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Never Enough

A concert pianist one evening gave a stellar performance, receiving a standing ovation as the curtain fell. Afterwards, a reception was held in his honor. As the crowd gathered around him, one woman, who was a pretty good pianist in her own right, gushed, "Oh, I'd give anything to play as you do!" The concert pianist looked at her and slowly replied, "No, I don't believe you would." A hush fell over the room. "Yes, I would," insisted the woman.

The pianist continued, "No, you really wouldn't. If you wanted to pay the price, you could play as well ... possi-

bly even better than I. It has taken me seven or eight hours a day, seven days a week for at least seven years to play as well as I do. You would give anything to play as well as I do, except the time. When you say you would give anything, you don't really mean it."

Are we really willing to do whatever it takes to help? Or, do we sometimes think, "Enough is enough. No more help. No more for missions. No more time for the church. It has to stop!"

But as Jesus' actions make clear, enough is never enough. Jesus is filled with compassion (as we usually are too), and then he acts on that compas-

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Becoming Partners in God's Work

My child, I've often heard your question ...
This message is my answer:

- ✠ You're concerned about the hungry in the world, millions who are starving ... and you ask, "What can I do?" **FEED ONE**
- ✠ You're haunted by the homeless poor who wander city streets ... and you ask: "What can I do?" **SHELTER ONE**
- ✠ You feel compassion for those who suffer pain, sorrow and despair ... and you ask: "What can I do?" **COMFORT ONE**
- ✠ Your heart goes out to the lonely, the abused and the imprisoned ... and you ask: "What can I do?" **LOVE ONE**

Remember this, my child ... two thousand years ago the world was filled with those in need, just as it is today, and when the helpless and the hopeless called out to me for mercy, I sent a savior. 

Stewardship Prayer

Creator God,

Life is your gift to me.

Through Baptism, you invite me

to share the gift of my life in service to others.

Be with me as I choose each day

to show your presence in our world.

Give me the courage and generosity

to respond to your love, to your call.

May we bring the Good News to those in need.

Keep us close to you.

Open the minds and hearts of many others

that they may accept your challenge

to build the Kingdom.

*We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. **Amen.***

Are you cheerful in your heart about giving your offering to the Lord, or is it a task?

Do you pray about the amount you give and respond to the extra blessings God has given you during the previous week?

If you receive a raise at work, do you increase your giving proportionately?

It is traditional to make an offering as a way to show our gratitude to the giver of all gifts.

Are we going through the motions, or is our heart in our giving?



Are we really willing to do whatever it takes?

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Deacon Dave...

gifts are given. They are given to be used in his service so that his church might proclaim his message of love, forgiveness, peace and reconciliation to a world that desperately needs to hear and respond. And as we serve his church and proclaim the Good News to the world, we will be preparing ourselves for his coming again.

Come, Lord Jesus. We're ready!
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Never Enough...

sion by being willing to help. The willingness to help, however, must be reinforced by our doing whatever it takes to help others. ✚



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