

Stewardship

Inspiring a deeper understanding of true giving

August 2021

Although Christ obviously shows preference for the poor of spirit and the little ones of this world, he was not giving anyone the right to sanction hatred, envy or dislike of the rich. It is true that the majority have to work by the sweat of their brow, even as the rich seem to get richer, with far more ease. This at times can cause resentment and anger when we see the disproportion all around us.

Steerage and first class

In the movie *Titanic*, those in steerage and those in first class give us a microcosm of the world divided into classes as we traverse the seas of life. We have to keep in mind that it also is true that many rich people are generous and have contributed great amounts for the common good. Therefore, there should be no generalization of the rich as though they were all no better than Dives was, in Luke 16:19-31.

Rather than envy the rich, Christ gives us the warning: First things first. Share what little or largess you have. Do not hoard your possessions ... whatever they are. When we die, all we have is ourselves, bigger and wealthier spiritually for having shared our gifts, or poorer for having settled for the here and now with nothing but the insatiable fires of greed to live with throughout eternity. *There is no bridging the gulf between steerage and first class once we break the thread here.*

There is always a payback

There is another thing to be considered here, largely overlooked. One might

call it a secret: “you can not really give anything away,” or the more familiar perhaps, “cast your bread on the waters, and it always returns.” While an immediate return is certainly not our main reason for sharing our material largess, the Lord shares for those who will see.

As a kind of built-in necessary out-



come of our sharing, we will find that we will receive here and now, in one way or another, a return. We are not speaking of that snugly warm and cozy “what a great boy am I” of a Tom Thumb, or that insistent voice within us that keeps shouting “nice going,” for those things we are only

Who owns our talents and how are we to use them until Christ returns to hold us accountable? You may have a talent sitting inside your heart that you can use to serve your church. Discover what the Holy Spirit is calling you to do with that ability!



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Using Your Potential

The story is told of two men who were caught stealing sheep. Their punishment was to be branded on the forehead, “ST” (sheep thief). One of the branded men unable to deal with his brand immediately moved to another area to live.

The one who stayed in the locality decided that he would show his townsfolk that he could change. As the story is told, many years later a newcomer in town, seeing the branded man, asked another person, “What does the ST mean?” “I don’t know,” he replied, “but knowing the man I think it stands for ‘saint’.”

**We are called not to be afraid of small beginnings,
but also not to fail to begin.**

What we have done, or what we have let ourselves become is of little concern to the Lord. What we decide to do with our God-given potential is the only concern. We have the potential, however small we may perceive it to be, to call to life the power of God’s Holy Spirit within our lives, that his light and life may shine through our words and actions. 

The work of the church can never be complete without your help as a member of the “team.” Everyone must work together to form a beautiful picture of what God can do through the ministry of your church. Each steward can find and fill his or her place.

Take the Time!

I could have walked right by him ... I was leaving church and had several things to do. But there he was just sitting with his head down. I’ve noticed recently he has the look of someone with a heavy heart.

“Feel like talking?” I asked as I sat in the pew in front of him. He talked about his marriage while I sat there listening. When he finished, I didn’t lecture him in Biblical truth, nor did I tell him what he should do. I showed he

mattered by just giving him some time. All the ‘important’ things I was rushing out to do suddenly seemed less urgent. I remembered a Men’s Retreat coming up in a few weeks and invited him to come along. I gently told him he’s not alone.

Too often, we get so caught up in the busyness of life that we miss the opportunities God has right in front of us. Ask God to use you in the life of someone else today. Just a little of our time can make a huge difference in the life of a hurting soul. Quite often, they’re seated in the pew right next to us. 

Mirrors and Windows

Mirrors and windows are both found in most homes and both made of glass, but differ in one very important way. Mirrors tell us about ourselves, while windows tell us about others.

Look into a mirror for even one minute, and you're almost guaranteed to see something you don't like. (I know I do!) It may be a crooked hair part (easily fixable with a comb) or a need to lose weight (not so easy, even with a gym membership), but our appearances are so important to us that we're likely to at least want to improve what we can.

Windows are different. Through a

window, we see the world around us. If we look long enough, we may well see something or someone that needs help. It may be the lawn of a shut-in that needs mowing. It may be a new neighbor we could invite to church. Maybe it's only a can lying in the gutter, which we could drop in our recycling bin. The question is, do we actually do any of these things?

If we all spent more time looking through windows instead of at mirrors, we could make the world a much better place. 

Steward of the Month

Is It Ever Enough?

Submitted by: Maynard Beatrice NE

As I entered the church, I saw a mother and her two children waiting for someone. I visited briefly with them. I knew why they were there. The food pantry was open for "business" for those in need. But, we didn't talk about that even though they seemed a bit nervous in just visiting.

I was there to donate to the food pantry to help pay for the needed food. When I saw the anxious looks in the mother's eyes, and more so in the eyes of her two children, and the smiles they greeted me with, I felt uncomfortable ... like a "meltdown" suddenly had hit me.

As I walked to the church office, I tore up the check I had written and re-wrote it for a larger amount. As I did that, I wondered if it would be enough, not only for the family I just visited with. What about the others that would be going through the same thing that day? Is it ever enough? The "moment of decision," I believe, was the urgency that God laid before me that day, and I am thankful for that faith experience. God did not allow me to say to myself, "I'll give more next time!"

It was an "attitude adjustment" moment for me and made me realize that God allowed me to be in that specific situation at that particular time and moment, and what a difference it made! 

***A**s part of their total stewardship, Christians are concerned about the dedication of their talents. They regard personal abilities to work and to lead as another evidence of God's loving care.*

In a spirit of consecration, they desire to have those talents utilized in business, in the home, in church, in such a manner that they will make a contribution to the Kingdom of God on earth. These priorities are important to them, including during the summer months.



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Although Christ...

expected to do as Christians, giving and seeking no rewards. The return may not come in the financial area, although we all may have experienced this at times. Indeed it may be in things so unassuming as a surprise thank you from someone, or a smile, or an unexpected release from one of our problems.

More important by far, it will be an awareness that we are truly doing for others what Christ has done and continues to do for us. There is always a payback, although we might not seek it. And all that is required is an openness to God's presence and a humble thank you to the Lord for giving us the opportunity and means to share and so identify with him. Seeking only God, we receive all. Isn't this reward in itself without waiting for later? It most certainly is! 



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