

=PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING=

Lesson 10

The Christian and Stewardship

AIM: to teach my pupils proper stewardship and what it means.

POINT OF CONTACT: Ask the class if they ever borrowed something from another person. Find out what it was, how long they had it, in what kind of condition they returned it, etc. Explain to them that they were stewards. A steward is one who has borrowed another's possessions. His stewardship of those possessions is how he handles what he borrowed.

I. THE MEANING OF STEWARDSHIP.

1. The word "stewardship" conveys the idea of "house management." The steward is not the owner of the house; he does not possess the estate he manages. It is property owned by another but used by the steward. The parallel here is that God owns everything; man is using God's earth, God's air, God's sunshine, God's food—in fact, everything that man has on earth belongs to God. It is not ours; hence, we are stewards of it.
2. The word "stewardship" also conveys the thought that we are to put to use what we have that belongs to another. The important question is not, "What have you?" It is, "What are you doing with what you have?"

II. WHAT WE CAN DO WITH OUR STEWARDSHIP.

1. We can fail to use it. God will not hold one accountable for failing to develop gifts he does not possess, but He will hold one accountable for refusing to utilize the talents that he does have. So many times we are tempted to believe that our gifts are useless unless they are BIG gifts! If God does not give us a beautiful voice or outstanding administrative ability, we are prone to let our talents go to waste. We are not just to be good stewards of big gifts but of all gifts. Was it not a rod in the hand of Moses that turned back the waters of the Red Sea? Didn't David slay Goliath with a pebble and a sling? We must use what God has given us, regardless of how small the gift.
2. We can misuse it. Whereas the first person did not use the gift at all, some people take the gift and use it for the wrong purpose. The voice that sings the praises of God should not be used in a night club. The gift of speaking could be used to preach the Gospel, but it might also be used to propagate some cult. The hand that could be used to provide medical healing on the mission field might be used in abortive operations. In other words, many are misusing gifts that God has given them.
3. We can use to the glory of God the gifts He has given us. The child of God should cultivate and develop whatever God has given him and use it so as to benefit God's work and program. Everything we have is a gift of God. We must use it in a right way. The Bible says that someday we must account for our stewardship. Romans 14:12, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." I Corinthians 3:13, 14, "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire...If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward." In other words, we have been left as stewards of God's possessions. He has loaned them to us. He is coming back again. We will receive rewards eternally for how we handle His properties.

III. AREAS OF STEWARDSHIP.

1. Time. All men have this gift. We each have 24 hours a day. Each one of us has 60 minutes to the hour and 60 seconds to the minute. This gift cannot be laid up for future use. We have it only today. Yesterday is gone forever and can never be regained. Tomorrow never comes. Hence, we should spend time in prayer, Bible study, witnessing, etc. so that when the Owner returns, we shall have used His gifts wisely!
2. Talents. Every Christian should find what his gifts are and use them to the glory of God. If one can sing, speak, write, if one is possessed with a good mind, or whatever he may have, he must utilize it to the glory of God.

3. Tongue. God has given us a tongue. James 3:6, “And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.” The stewardship of speech is tremendously important. With the tongue, reputations may be ruined, wounds inflicted, and people’s lives damaged. Let us be good stewards as we use the tongue that God has given us.
4. Our treasures.
 - 1) God’s command for giving.
 - a. God commands it. Malachi 3:8-10.
 - b. Jesus commends it. Matthew 23:23.
 - c. Love demands it. Romans 13:10.
 - 2) God’s plan for giving. I Corinthians 16:2.
 - a. The person. “...let every one of you....”
 - b. The place. “...lay by him in store....”
 - c. The proportion. “...as God hath prospered him...” The proportion mentioned in the Bible is the tithe. The word “tithe” means “tenth.” From the day of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, tithing has been God’s plan for promoting His program. Four hundred years before there was ever a law, Abraham was tithing, and Isaac and Jacob were tithing. Throughout the history of the Old and New Testaments, the tithe has been God’s plan for giving.
 - 3) The blessing of tithing.
 - a. It gives us the peace that we have not robbed God. Malachi 3:8.
 - b. It lifts the curse of God from us concerning finances. Malachi 3:9.
 - c. It opens the windows of Heaven to us. Malachi 3:10b.
 - d. It enables God to bless us. Malachi 3:10c.
 - e. It gives us eternal rewards. Actually the money we give to God is simply a trust fund and savings account that cannot be drawn upon until we get to Heaven. Matthew 6:19-21.
 - f. It makes us partners with God in the greatest business in all the world.
 - 4) The way to tithe and give.
 - a. We are to give regularly. I Corinthians 16:2. Notice the words, “Upon the first day of the week.”
 - b. We are to give cheerfully. II Corinthians 9:7. The word “cheerful” in this verse means “hilarious.” Actually it means, “jumping up and down, clicking your heels for joy.”
 - c. We are to give ourselves first. II Corinthians 8:5.
 - d. We are to give our money and also our lives. II Corinthians 8:5-7. God cannot be bought off, neither can God be pleased if we give Him other things and not our money. Well-rounded giving of ourselves, our talents, our time, and our money pleases our Saviour.