

Bible Study

The Stewardship Life: Giving

“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32)

Prayer: Our Father, you have graciously given us all things. You gave us your Son to suffer and die for our sins. Forgive us that, in spite of this great gift, we still doubt your care for us. Teach us to find our confidence and security in you rather than in our possessions. Give us grace to share the blessings you’ve given us with others. Help us to be stewards who honor you through our living. Through Christ we pray. **Amen.**

As stewards under God’s grace, we are intended to be channels for the flow of his grace and mercy. We are to be providers of spiritual and material blessings to those around us. Many



people think of stewardship in terms of money only. Money is an important part of stewardship, but more correctly, stewardship refers to our life response to God’s love for us. Stewardship is a way of life that reflects our love for the Lord. As we recognize God as the Creator, Provider, and Controller of all things, the one who has shown his love for us on the cross, life takes on a new perspective. We can love because he has shown us how. We give, not because we should or ought to, but because Christ’s love compels us (2 Corinthians 5:14). God’s love for us is the only proper Christian motivation for giving. His love empowers our love to move into actions, including the action of giving.

This study will focus on one aspect of stewardship, that of giving financially.

The mandate to give comes from God himself, yet God does not require anything from us that he has not first given or done himself and what he does not equip and enable us to do.

1. What was God’s first gift? (See Genesis 1:1.)
2. What did he require of us relative to that gift? (See Genesis 1:28.)

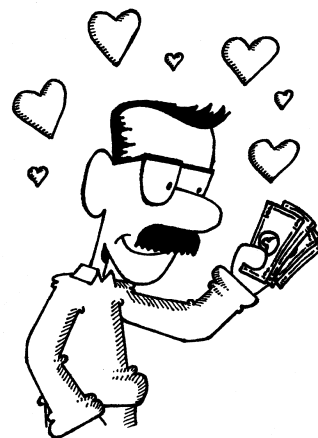
With these few words, God made us his stewards. He created the earth for our use and gave us the responsibility to care for it. Numerous times Scripture reminds us that all we have are gifts from God, and numerous times our responsibility as stewards of what God gives us is repeated.

God's Gifts– Our Stewardship

#	Scripture	God's Gifts	Our Stewardship
3.	Deuteronomy 8:18		
4.	1 Chronicles 29:14		
5.	Psalms 50:10-12, 14		
6.	Romans 12:6-8		
7.	1 Corinthians 4:1-2		
8.	1 Peter 4:10		

This is a nation that greatly admires the “self-made” man or woman, the one who, through his own efforts, starts with nothing and ends up with enough to make the world stand up and take notice. The Rich Fool of Luke 12:13-21 was such a man. Read the Parable of the Rich Fool.

9. What issue prompted Jesus to tell this parable?
10. To what did Jesus attribute the rich man's success? (See verse 16.)
11. To what does the parable infer the Rich Fool attributed his success?
12. Was it wrong for the Rich Fool to work hard and build up his assets?
13. What made the Rich Fool a poor steward? (Refer to the chart above, especially to #3 and #4).



This is a good time to ask ourselves some questions relative to this parable:

- † Do I acknowledge God as the one who has given me “*the ability to produce wealth*”?
- † Do I regard my income and my possessions as my own?
- † What is my goal in building up my assets? Do I want to “*Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry*”?
- † Do I consider what God would have me do with my possessions?
- † How can I be a steward who honors God with what I own?

Money: A Blessing or a Curse?

14. Money can be said to have two faces. Describe how money can be both a blessing and a curse.
15. Read Proverbs 30:8-9. How can money be both a blessing and a curse?
16. It has been said, “Nine out of ten people can handle adversity whereas only one out of ten can handle prosperity.” What is meant by that phrase?

17. What can money do for you?
- Proverbs 11:4
 - Matthew 16:26
 - Luke 6:24
 - 1 Timothy 6:9-10
 - Revelation 3:17



With all those negative remarks about money, we might conclude money is something to be avoided, yet we know that God gives only good gifts. We realize that the problem lies not in the money itself, but in our attitude toward it and use of it (Review 1 Timothy 6:9-10.).

18. What can money do for you?
- Genesis 13
 - 1 Chronicles 29:3
 - 2 Chronicles 24:10
 - Ezra 1:6
 - Acts 4:34-35
 - 2 Corinthians 8:14

To Tithe or not to Tithe

In the Old Testament God asked for an offering of one tenth. Through the prophet Malachi, God said that by not tithing, his people were robbing him (Malachi 3:8). Throughout the Old Testament, the command to tithe is given.

19. Exodus 23:19a --
20. Leviticus 27:30 --
21. Deuteronomy 12:6 --
22. 2 Chronicles 31:5 --
23. Nehemiah 10:35-37 --

The practice of proportionate giving continued into New Testament times.

24. Matthew 23:23 --
25. 1 Corinthians 16:2 --
26. 2 Corinthians 8:7-8 --



Reasons to Tithe

- ✠ Tithing binds us to God. Tithing makes us more aware of our dependence on God and of his gracious provision for us.
- ✠ Tithing helps us focus our priorities. It helps us to recognize God as being the center of our beings and our lives.
- ✠ Tithing makes us more conscious of our need to use all our resources wisely.
- ✠ Tithing draws us closer to our churches and fosters unity among believers.
- ✠ Tithing increases our faith which helps us to become more spiritually mature.



Biblical Givers and Non-Givers

#	Scripture	Giver	Non-Giver	What
27.	1 Kings 17:7-24	Widow of Zarephath		The last of her flour and oil.
28.	Luke 10:30-37			
29.	Luke 16:19-31			
30.	Luke 19:1-9			
31.	Luke 21:1-4			

Faith and giving are bound together. The Apostle James wrote at length on this subject. Comment on the following verses from his epistle:

- 32. James 1:27
- 33. James 2:14-17
- 34. James 2:18
- 35. James 2:21-24

Probably the strongest case for the need for us to give evidence of our faith through giving was made by Jesus himself as recorded in Matthew 25:31-46. Read that section of Scripture and discuss it.



Closing Thoughts on Stewardship of Money

- ✠ We can give without loving, but we can't love without giving.
- ✠ Stewardship begins with loving, not giving. Giving is a spiritual decision based on the one's spiritual maturity.
- ✠ Giving is based on attitude, not assets.
- ✠ "God wants to give us wealth; we must be careful not to settle for money." (Max Anders)

Closing Prayer: Lord God, we thank you for your Word, for it is Truth. It is our guide, our mirror, and a curb. Help us to give as you direct; help us to see ourselves through your eyes; and keep us from self-reliance and self-sufficiency. Thank you for your Son who has washed away our sins with his blood, so that you now see us through his righteousness. Give us grace to give even as he gave. In Jesus' name we ask it. **Amen.**

Bible Study Answer Guide

The Stewardship of Life: Giving

1. Genesis 1:1 – The heavens and the earth were God’s first gift.
2. Genesis 1:28 – God gave to humans the task to subdue and rule over the earth and what is in it.

#	Scripture	God’s Gifts	Our Stewardship
3.	Deuteronomy 8:18	The ability to produce wealth.	Our Stewardship.
4.	1 Chronicles 29:14	Everything.	Give generously.
5.	Psalms 50:10-12, 14	Every animal, bird, the world and all that’s in it.	Give God thanks.
6.	Romans 12:6-8	Gifts of the Spirit: prophecy serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing, leadership, mercy.	Use them according to the faith God gives us.
7.	1 Corinthians 4:1-2	God’s secret things (things we can know only as God reveals them).	prove ourselves faithful.
8.	1 Peter 4:10	Spiritual gifts to each believer.	use gifts faithfully, administering God’s grace.

9. Jesus told it to warn his listeners of the dangers of greed.
10. Jesus said, “*The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop.*” We know that the ground is God’s creation. Without God’s good ground, the Rich Fool wouldn’t have had such bumper crops.
11. The Rich Fool thought he was successful because of his own efforts. Notice how many times he used the words “I” and “my”.
12. No. Scripture urges us to work hard. See Proverbs 6:10; Ecclesiastes 10:18; 2 Thessalonians 3:10.
13. The Rich Fool was a poor steward because he did not recognize God as the owner of everything and the source of his wealth. In addition, he had no thought of helping others with his wealth or of giving a portion of it for the Lord’s work. All his thoughts and attentions were centered on piling up more for himself and then enjoying it by catering to his fleshly desires.
14. Money can be a blessing:
 - To support myself and my family
 - To allow me to enjoy the pleasures of life
 - To bring me satisfaction through using it to help others
 Money can be a curse:
 - To cause me to spoil myself and my family
 - To cause me anxiety related to protecting my assets
 - To cause me to grow even greedier and more miserly

To honor God

To honor myself

15. Proverbs 30:8-9 – Money is a blessing in that it enables us to support ourselves. Having too little of it can be a curse if we feel we must resort to stealing in order to eat, and having too much of it can make us forget God.
16. Personal response.
17.
 - a. Proverbs 11:4 – Wealth is useless at the end of life.
 - b. Matthew 16:26 – Money is of no value compared to our eternal salvation.
 - c. Luke 6:24 – Those who are rich in this life have already received their comfort. Refer to the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31.
 - d. 1 Timothy 6:9-10 – Greed leads to ruin. The love of money brings about all kinds of evil, including the loss of faith.
 - e. Revelation 3:17 – Money blinds us to our real condition.
18.
 - a. Genesis 13 – God gave Abraham great wealth. Abraham shared that wealth with his fatherless nephew, Lot. However, Abraham held that wealth loosely. That's how he was enabled to give up the best land for his flocks. He knew that God was his provider and that he didn't have to plot and scheme to maintain his wealth. Wealth enables us to help others.
 - b. 1 Chronicles 29:3 – David had great wealth and was eager to give of his treasures for the building of the tabernacle. Wealth enables us to give to our churches.
 - c. 2 Chronicles 24:10 – Joash was repairing the temple, and the people willingly brought enough contributions to fill the offering chest. Wealth enables us to give to the maintenance of our church buildings.
 - d. Ezra 1:6 – The neighbors assisted the exiles in the rebuilding of the house of the Lord. Wealth enables us to help our neighbors in their time of need.
 - e. Acts 4:34-35 – The early believers shared all their possessions with one another so that no one was in need. Wealth enables us to share with our brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - f. 2 Corinthians 8:14 – Paul is asking one church body to help another, and they, in turn, will reciprocate when the need is reversed. Wealth enables us to help Christians who may be far away and not personally known to us.
19. Exodus 23:19a – God commanded his people to bring the best of their firstfruits to the house of the Lord.
20. Leviticus 27:30 – God said that a tithe of everything belongs to him.
21. Deuteronomy 12:6 – A place was designated where God's people were to bring their burnt offerings, sacrifices, tithes, special gifts, freewill offerings, and the firstborn of their herds and flocks.
22. 2 Chronicles 31:5 – The people generously responded to the Law's demands and gave the firstfruits of everything. *"They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything."*

23. Nehemiah 10:35-37 – The people assumed responsibility for bringing the firstfruits of all their crops. They also brought the firstborn of their children and of all their livestock. In addition, they brought the tithe of all their crops.
24. Matthew 23:23 – Jesus affirmed the practice of tithing while condemning the hypocrisy which at times surrounded it. (The Pharisees were diligent to tithe but neglected to show mercy, justice, and faithfulness.)
25. 1 Corinthians 16:2 – The Apostle Paul wrote that each person should regularly set aside a certain amount of money according to his income for giving to the Church.
26. 2 Corinthians 8:7-8 – The Apostle Paul urged his readers to excel in all things, including the grace of giving. He stated that our giving reflects the sincerity of our love.

#	Scripture	Giver	Non-Giver	What
27.	1 Kings 17:7-24	Widow of Zarephath		The last of her flour and oil.
28.	Luke 10:30-37	The Samaritan	The priest; the Levite	Assistance to the wounded traveler.
29.	Luke 16:19-31		The Rich Man	Not even the crumbs that fell from his table.
30.	Luke 19:1-9	Zacchaeus		Half his possessions; paid back four times what he stole.
31.	Luke 21:1-4	The widow		All she had.

32. James 1:27 – Faith is evidenced by giving. We should give to support orphans and widows and others in need.
33. James 2:14-17 – There is no evidence of faith without giving. Concern shown only in words when action is needed is empty concern.
34. James 2:18 – Faith cannot exist apart from works (giving). Deeds witness to the presence of faith.
35. James 2:21-24 – Abraham was saved by faith which was evidenced by his act of obedience in the sacrificing of his son, Isaac.