

BECOMING A GIVER!

A Bible Study Series of The Mt. Zion Church

LESSON 2: The Stewardship Issue

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Introduction: In the previous lesson students will recall the emphasis on the supremacy of God. Man did not create God. God created man and everything else. The desire for a unique relationship with man is structured in familiar terms that we often use. Lord and servants. Father and Children. Shepherd and Sheep. Each of these represents a leader and follower order. He is leader. We are follower. In His role, God rightfully commands and directs our lives. This does not mean we do not have choice. It means we have choice within parameters. If we function within the Lord's parameters (His will) we are obedient. If we do not, we are disobedient children and sheep who have gone astray.

The following lesson was written with the intent to help students understand that God has blessed each of us to be managers of His resources. As managers, we utilize the resources for the purpose for which they were intended but we do not own the resources nor can we decide to create a different purpose for what God has intended. Enjoy!!!!



Warm-Up Activity: Have a conversation with a partner about budgets. Discuss the following questions.

1. Do you have a written budget that you utilize monthly?
2. What are some of the most expensive items on your budget?
3. How do you feel when something throws your budget out of order?

What do the numbers tell us?

In Missouri as of May 2024, the average American employee earns \$59,384 per year pre-tax. The average American household has just under \$ 9,000 in savings (not including retirement or investment accounts). The problem!!!!!! The average African American family has \$ 2,100 in savings (Survey of Consumer Finances, 2022).

If this is our reality, then what is happening with the resources that God has given us?

What Does the Bible Say?

Proverbs 22:7

⁷ The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender.

Romans 13:7

⁷ Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

I Timothy 5:8

⁸ Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

The scriptures address our finances in a number of ways from debt to paying our bills and to even providing for our family. The implied idea in each verse about finances deals with how to utilize finances correctly or the impact of incorrect usage of finances. This is important as we understand the term steward.

STEWARDSHIP = the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.



Key # 1: We Are Stewards

- A good steward utilizes God's resources, in this case, finances, according to God's commands.
- A bad steward utilizes God's resources, in this case, finances, not according to God's commands.

- What are some areas of life where you have stewarded or managed people or departments? What were your responsibilities?
 - What do you know about stewarding or managing?

5 Scriptures About Proper Stewardship

1. Genesis 14:14-20

First example of tithe being given because of the Lord's goodness

2. Genesis 28:10-20

Jacob at Bethel

3. Proverbs 3:9-10

Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

4. Matthew 23:23

²³ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice, mercy, and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

5. Leviticus 27: 30

³⁰ ““A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.



Key # 2: We Dishonor God When We Reduce What we Owe Him and What He Deserves to Less than a Dime!

The first part of this lesson was a delving into scripture to understand how people gave and examples of tithing appears. This part of the lesson gets to the heart of the matter. I want to argue that tithing is not about your concern for money. I know it is not for me because I will pay and have paid ridiculous amounts of money for a hamburger if it is good enough. (True Fact) Further, we spend God's resources in places that make sense to us and think nothing of it.

The question we must answer is what does God mean to us?

Where are some places where you have spent extensive amounts of money and had no problem with the expenditure because of what that purchase represented?

Matthew 6:21 clearly indicates that where our treasure is, there will our heart be also. The implication is that whatever we treasure, we will also put our heart (emotional center) in that place. Do you treasure God? The key to understanding where our treasure is always can be seen in what we do and not what we say.

- Do I treasure God in my relationship with my wife? Then I will honor God by caring for her.
- Do I treasure God in my career? Then I will use my career as a place to show others who He is and work as unto the Lord.
- Do I treasure God in my financial resources? Then I will use the resources to honor God recognizing that I am a steward of His resources.

Do We Think of Tithes and Offerings as Just Another Bill or Worship?

Discuss with a partner how you perceive the Lord's expectation of us as givers. Consider the following questions:

- How would you help someone change their thinking about the Lord's expectation in giving?
- How does this expectation identify the maturity of your faith?
- How can one be an obedient giver and still lack an appreciation for God's expectations in our giving?

Closing thought: When I give tithes and offerings, I should recognize that I am blessed to have! Why? Deuteronomy 18: 8 reminds us: But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. Therefore, even the energy and strength we have to do work was a gift from God! How could we ever downplay and debate whether He is worth a dime out of every dollar?

If your budget is out of order, how can you rewrite it to line up with God's plan for your stewardship of His resources? Will you do it?