

Stewardship

Inspiring a deeper understanding of true giving

August 2022

Picture, for a moment, a small bug that has wandered into a plush mansion. It makes its way to the living room and crawls onto a multicolored Persian rug. Suddenly, it finds itself amid a kaleidoscope of brilliant hues. As the bug travels from one area of the rug to another, its mood and feelings are affected by each particular color.

The bug first enters a red section. The surrounding crimson atmosphere makes it angry, uptight, ready for a fight. It crawls into a blue area and becomes calm and peaceful. In yellow, it feels cowardly. In white, unclean and unworthy. Back to red, and it's angry again.

It looks like our bug is headed for a nervous breakdown!

Poor little bug. If only it could benefit from another viewpoint ... staying above it all. Up there, it could see how the many colors weave themselves into a magnificent, harmonious pattern.

Don't you feel like that wandering bug sometimes ... snowed under by the financial problems of the moment? Is each problem pulling you in a different direction?

If so, you have fallen victim of the modern lifestyle of easy-come, easy-go. Little thought is given to wise stewardship and the committing of resources to anything other than the immediate needs. Even if you wanted to, you have nothing left to contribute after trying to stretch your finances from week to week.

Are you putting God last, giving God nothing? If so, it is unfortunate that you

can't put your obligation to God first ... setting aside a definite portion for his kingdom's use.

Improper use of money is a trap. Avoid this trap ... stay above it all! ☩

There is a wide choice of things that you can do for God and neighbor, in and through your church community if you have the good will. With good will you also find the necessary time for such projects, even though you may have to cut and pare in other directions.





The Generous Farmer

There once was an old farmer who was constantly bragging about how generous he would be if he were only rich. One night God sent an angel to test him.

The angel asked, "If you had \$1 million dollars, would you share some with God?"

"Of course I would," answered the man without hesitation.

"If you lived in a mansion, would you let God have a room?" the angel asked. Again the man quickly answered, "Absolutely."

Finally, the angel asked, "Would you let God use your old horse out back?" The man thought for a long time and finally answered, "No." "Why not?" asked the angel. The man answered, "Because that horse is the only one I have and I need him."

You see ... it is more difficult for many people to be generous with things that we actually have than it is with riches they hope to have someday! 

We need not give up the pleasures and luxuries of this life. God does not call us to be ascetics, but does call us to a right sense of proportion in administering our substance.

The question is: "If I have this for myself, then what should I do for God?" This is the question into which the whole matter of stewardship resolves itself.

O Lord, giver of life, I know that all I have received is from your hand.

Gracious and loving Father, you call us to be stewards of your abundance; caretakers of all you have entrusted to us. Help us to always use your gifts wisely and teach us to share them generously. Send the Holy Spirit to work through us, bringing your message to those we serve.

May our faithful stewardship bear witness to the love of Jesus Christ in our lives. We pray with grateful hearts, in Jesus' name. Amen



Through the Stained Glass...

You will never be in a better position to tithe than you are today. Whether you can tithe has relatively little to do with the amount of your income or the number of your financial obligations. The person who says “After I pay all my bills, I can’t afford to tithe,” is telling the truth. He or she simply has the cart before the horse. None of us could afford to tithe with what is left. Tithing is a matter of putting first things first, taking our tithe out first, and then managing the rest of our income in a way by which we will still pay all our bills. And this is easier than you may think.

Strangely enough, the decision to

tithe is seldom made by sitting down with a pencil and paper. More often it is made by kneeling down with an open heart. The decision to tithe has very little to do with a mathematical formula. It has a great deal to do with a right relationship to God. Most tithers began the practice the day they finally realized that their possessions, their money, their very lives were not their own, but God’s.

No one can talk you into really believing this. Worship, prayer, and some mature Christian thought are the paths that sooner or later will lead you right into the heart of this inescapable truth.

Once you see God at the very center of your life, tithing will make sense. You will understand your responsibility to manage 100% of your money, your time and your ability as a trust from God. Then 10% of your income, dedicated to the owner, may seem to be all too little.

Tithing is a spiritual adventure. It is the beginning of a deeper, richer relationship with God. 



Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Something has occurred to me as a result of tithing that I am surprised I had never thought of before. It has to do with perspective; seeing something in its proper relationship to something else.

Our family was returning from a trip to Northern Michigan one night, the SUV fully loaded with children and gear when we had a flat tire. We had

to unload the car to get at the spare, then change the tire in the dark, load up again, reassemble the kids and finally get underway. Underway for about three miles, that is, when we had another flat. And this time NO SPARE. Mind you it was late at night. Also it started to rain as I stood on the highway trying to wave down a passing car. This took almost a half hour.

Well, I got to the next town, thirteen miles away. But by this time all the gas stations were closed, except one. The attendant agreed to call his assistant and get him out of bed to drive the tow truck, but every time he approached the phone to call, it seemed that the bell rang and another car pulled up to the gas pumps. Of course, the driver would

Too often we fail to understand that Christian instruction about money is one of the best opportunities we have to teach our children about God’s love for us, and God’s ownership of all things.

The way we use money is an extension of our personal characteristics.

By teaching our children the Christian use of money, affording them control of money and the need to make decisions about money, we also confront them with the meaning of discipleship and Christian stewardship.



“At that moment life was miserable, depressing, one problem after another. AWFUL! But then for some reason I imagined telling my friends about the experience later. And we were laughing ...”

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want his oil checked as well as gasoline and then gave the attendant a credit card, which he would have to bring into the office to fill out a form and then get the customer’s signature.

Two and a half hours from the time we had the first flat I was riding in the tow truck through the rain and darkness to our car. We had to be towed into town to repair one of the tires or else buy a new one and put it on the car before we could continue driving home.

It was in the darkness of the tow truck, neither the driver nor myself talking, that I started to think about perspective. At that moment life was miserable, depressing, one problem after another. AWFUL! But then for some reason I imagined telling my friends about the experience later. And we were laughing ... laughing hard!

Well, if you can laugh about something later, it can’t be too tragic. Then it occurred to me that if at the time of a disagreeable or disappointing situation you could see yourself later laughing at it, or thinking nothing of it, then the situation would cease to be disagreeable. You can laugh, smile or cry if it makes

you feel better, but at least you won’t take it so seriously or tragically.

Maybe it is the tithing principle of putting first things first that helps you get a proper perspective about things, as well. 

E. A. Briggs



“You know the disaster stories ...

‘The Poseidon Adventure’, *‘2012’* and *‘The Day After Tomorrow’*?

Well, there’s another one for you ... it’s called *‘The Sunday Collection’*.”



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