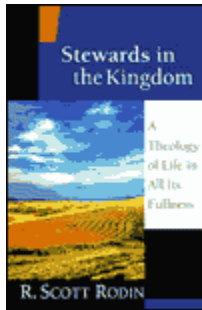


Faith Aflame: 360 Degrees



Living as God's Child Relationships

Session Two – Part Two



Some have suggested that the terms “steward” and “stewardship” have become loaded with so much baggage that new words should be used.

- What new word or words would you suggest?

R. Scott Rodin writing in *Stewards in the Kingdom* argues against using substitute words for stewardship. He says, “The positive reasons to use the term include its biblical foundation...The term is also rich in its ability to demonstrate its relational character.” (page 29)

That relational character is demonstrated on four levels:

1. **The term immediately identifies the steward as one who is not the rightful owner of that which is to be stewarded.** “Stewards,” Rodin notes, “are by definition not owners, but they have a relationship with the owner in order to be a faithful steward.”
2. **The term denotes a relationship between the steward who cares for the resources of the owner and those for whom those resources are meant.** Rodin writes, “The biblical steward invested the resources in the lives of those to whom the owner was inclined. Therefore, there is a necessary relationship between the steward and the recipients of the resources being stewarded.”
3. **There is a relationship between the steward and the steward’s own needs.** Rodin explains that “while the resources are not owned by the steward, the steward is expected to live from the resources and in that way be a steward to himself or herself. There is a self-stewardship implied in the term.”
4. **There is a relationship between the steward and the resources themselves.** Rodin states, “Here issues of control, power, materialism, exploitation, waste, harvest and dominion need to be discussed. Here the steward faces the temptation to act the part of the owner. Here is where the dark side of ownership is manifested, and stewardship is abandoned. The term steward carries the identification of one who draws clear lines between investing and exploitation, between management and control, between caretaking and domination, between use and waste. Here the term steward is most poignant and most challenging.” (From page 30 in *Stewards in the Kingdom* by R. Scott Rodin)

Joyful Stewardship

Carl W. Berner Sr. writes in *The Power of Pure Stewardship*, “Stewardship cannot exist in isolation. It is a reservoir fed by many streams, a cable of many strands, a diamond of many facets. Born out of the heart of God, energized by faith, sustained by hope, inspired by love, nurtured by the Spirit, this holy virtue weaves into the tapestry of time the record of a richly productive life.” (page 45)

Berner goes on to list the ingredients for joyful stewardship. Those ingredients include:

The Joy of Worship

“The worship of God,” Berner writes, “is man’s noblest work. Joyful in its very nature, worship should be regarded as our primary privilege...Our stewardship of life will be as high or as low as our appraisal of God’s worth...Life without God is not life at all but mere existence...The person who has the worship of God in his heart will show it not only in words but also in the works of his hands and in the love errands of his feet.” (pages 45-46)

The Joy of Living in Love

“Dedication to a great cause makes a great life. The love of God, inspiring a burning zeal to share that love with a world that will die without it, gives the greatest motive for the adventure of Christian love...By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:35” (pages 48-49)

The Joy of the Redemptive View of Life

“Love is the essential character of the new self. God has created, redeemed, and sanctified us for love. By sending His Son on a rescue mission for our redemption, God expressed His redemptive love for us. Under the power of redemptive love we belong to God and we belong also to the people whom God loves...Money spent on extravagances and personal luxuries will rise against us in the day of judgment if given precedence over the withholding of God’s share for His redemptive mission.” (pages 50-51)

The Joy of Worthwhile Achievements

“Every Christian should try to be the person God intended him to be, ‘You are the salt of the earth,’ and ‘you are the light of the world,’ Jesus said (Matthew 5:13-14). Salt and light penetrate. Salt drives out impurity, and light dispels darkness. If, however, salt loses its saltiness and light is covered up, both become useless...Boredom vanishes when earthly hours are filled with the music of life attuned to the ecstasies of eternity. In terms of everyday living this means that a Christian steward is never off duty...This does not mean that we must always be on our knees repenting, praying, or reading the Bible. It means that, wherever we are or whatever we are doing, we belong to God and are in His service.” (page 54)

