



Faith Aflame: 360 Degrees Fundamental #2

We are stewards of all we are and have and do.

Opening Prayer

Introduction

Norden C. Murphy, the editor of *Christians Doing Financial Planning*, writes: “Faithful Christian stewardship is not easy to practice. We are constantly in danger of being seduced by covetousness, which is the idolatrous worship of money and spiritual possessions...Our world insists that a person’s life does, in fact, consist in the abundance of things.”

Luke 12 describes the scene. A large crowd has gathered. Jesus is teaching when someone from the crowd says to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

¹⁴Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” ¹⁵Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

¹⁶And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. ¹⁷He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’”

¹⁸ Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.’ ¹⁹And I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’”

²⁰“But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’”

²¹ This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.”

- What was the rich man’s mistake?
- How is that mistake committed over and over again in our world? (Maybe in our own lives!)
- What does it mean to be “rich toward God”?
- Give some examples of how people have fallen for the satanic lie that “a person’s life consists in the abundance of things”?
- What is the end result of living this philosophy of life?



A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

*Almighty God,
we belong to You.*

*All that we have
comes from You;
our family and friends,
our health,
our possessions and energy,
our leisure and abilities.*

*Direct us to share
in the blessings
of giving
and the happiness
of receiving.*

*We ask this
in the name of
Jesus, Your Son, our Lord,
who lives and reigns
with You*

*and the Holy Spirit,
One God
forever and ever.*

Amen.

Christian stewardship consists of four fundamentals according to Karl Kretschmar in *The Stewardship Life*.

Stewardship Fundamental Number Two:

We are stewards of all we are and have and do.

Christian stewardship begins in the loving heart of God. It is the Father who created us. It is Jesus who redeems us. It is the Holy Spirit who works faith in us. God calls us into a life as His stewards.

A Christian steward is a child of God who realizes his/her role in life as a partner, a trustee, a manager, a caretaker or a temporary custodian of gifts that belong to God. The Christian steward...

- ✚ **receives** God's precious gifts gratefully
- ✚ **manages** God's precious gifts carefully and responsibly
- ✚ **shares** God's precious gifts with others generously
- ✚ **returns** God's precious gifts joyfully with increase

- What are some of the "precious gifts" that God entrusts to us?
- Which of the words used above (partner, trustee, manager, caretaker, temporary custodian) has the most meaning for you? Explain.

In the booklet "Christian Stewardship and Its Modern Implications" Paul Lindemann writes, "True stewardship comprehends the responsibilities of a Christian in all the many relationships of life. It takes into account every phase of human living...Man is carrying out God's design regarding him when he yields himself as an instrument to carry out God's world plan; otherwise his life is being mislived."

- What is "God's world plan?" (Check John 3:16 for help.)
- Why are some (perhaps even many) Christians misliving their lives?

Turner N. Clinard, in *Responding to God*, writes, "So we are stewards. Our stewardship is as broad as life itself. It concerns **life**, to be lived for God's glory and the good of people; **time**, a bounty from His hand to be wisely spent; **abilities**, the capacities with which He has empowered us, to be used in accord with His purposes and dreams for us—for us all." (page 15)

Action Item: What are some areas of your life, your time, and your abilities that you have kept from God? What do you plan to do about that?

Closing Prayer:

Provide time at the end of each session for questions, comments and group prayer. The prayer can take one of the following forms or be done in a way the group decides.

Adoration...
Confession...
Thanksgiving...
Supplication....

Praise...
Remember...
Ask...
Yield...

