



# Faith Aflame: 360 Degrees

## Fundamental #4

### *The Christian Steward Leaves a Legacy*

#### Opening Prayer

#### Introduction

When a president of the United States approaches the end of his term of office he becomes concerned about his legacy. A legacy is defined as something handed down from an ancestor or a predecessor or from the past. Presidents are concerned about how history will treat them, how they will be remembered—either as a good president or as something else.

Christian stewards leave a legacy, too. Most of them will never be written about in a history book for future generations to study, but they do leave something behind.

Karl Kretschmar, in *The Stewardship Life*, says it this way: “The ends of stewardship are the glorification of God, the extension of the Kingdom, the relief of human ills, the salvation of the steward’s own soul.”

#### **Stewardship Fundamental Number Four: *The Christian Steward Leaves a Legacy***

Kretschmar’s explanation of the “ends of stewardship” is as follows:

#### **1. The Glorification of God**

“God first in all things’ is the watch word of Christian life. Stewardship can have no higher aim, and it must certainly have no lower. He who thinks of his own glory in his serving is not a good steward.” (page 55)

*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31*

*If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:11*

- How can a Christian steward “eat or drink” for the glory of God?
- How can a Christian steward speak “as one speaking the very words of God”?



#### **A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER**

*Lord God, You alone are the source of every gift, of the vast array of our universe, and of the mystery of each human life. We praise You and we thank You for Your great power and Your tender, faithful Love.*

*Everything we are and everything we have is Your gift, and after having created us, You have given us into the keeping of Your Son, Jesus Christ.*

*Fill our minds with Christ’s truth and our hearts with His love, that in His Spirit we may be bonded together into a community of faith—a caring people.*

*In the Name of Jesus, we commit ourselves to be good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us, to share our time, our talent and our material gifts as an outward sign of the treasure we hold in Jesus.*

*Amen.*

## 2. The Extension of the Kingdom

“The importance of performing our stewardship tasks for the extension of the kingdom of God, either directly or indirectly appears in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, which teaches that those who take no part in the work of the kingdom of God are practically idlers in the market-place. A philanthropy, therefore, which merely addresses itself to certain temporal ills of mankind, but leaves out of consideration the higher and more urgent needs of the human soul— builds hospitals, schools, or libraries, but not churches — may find favor with the world and even become spectacular, but it is not really good stewardship. No one can be a true servant of God and ignore or neglect God’s Kingdom of Grace on earth.” (page 56)

- How can we as individual stewards extend God’s kingdom?
- How can we as a congregation extend God’s kingdom in an Acts 1:8 way? (Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.)

## 3. The Relief of Human Ills

“As to man’s stewardship duty to serve his fellow man for the Lord’s sake, we need only quote Peter: *‘Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.’* (1 Peter 4:10) In obedience to this command a good steward will not only feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give shelter to the homeless, he will especially show to his neighbor that highest of all charitable consideration—a sincere concern for the salvation of the others’ soul.” (page 57)

- What gift(s) has God given you for service?
- How are you using them to serve both God and your neighbor?

## 4. The Salvation of the Steward’s Own Soul

“And to point out that man finally also owes it to himself to be a faithful steward, we refer to Paul’s admonition, Philippians 2:12: *‘Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,’* Not, indeed, as though any man could merit eternal life by any act or display of good stewardship, but rather that, having by faith in Jesus as his Savior received the ‘adoption of sons’ and become a child of God, he now walks as it becomes the children of God so that he may not again lose the inheritance which became his by the grace of God.” (pages 57-58)

**Action Item:** Which of the above “ends of stewardship” are you right on track to leave as a legacy to your children, grandchildren, friends, co-workers, etc.? Where do you need to focus attention? How will you do it?

**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...

