

Stewardship Conversation Six

THE ISSUE: Stewardship and Money

“Research and experience has brought me to the conclusion that the church has lost its passion for stewardship and that theologians have not provided a compelling theology to help the church regain it. To some extent, the whole discussion of godly stewardship has been taken off the table in most churches and ministries. Pastors do not like to preach about it, nor do parishioners like to hear about it; few people write about it, and even less read about it. An effective wedge has been driven between the spiritual and the material. We do not talk about religion at social gatherings and we do not talk about money in the church.

The results of this deepening gulf are found in the rise of ineffective and un-Christian fundraising practices that have led to the growing number of financially strapped churches and ministries. The continuing fear and consequent disaffection by churches to the whole subject of stewardship has opened the door for the stranglehold that materialism and consumerism now have on God’s people. Studies continue to show that the spending practices of self-professing, born-again Christians vary little from those who claim no role for religion in their lives.

The place to begin to turn the tide is in the education of our pastors, lay leaders and ministry professionals...It must start with a reeducated and transformed Christian leadership. It must be built on a sound and compelling theology and it must return the concept of the godly steward to the daily vocabulary of Christian life and worship.”

-R. Scott Rodin, *Stewards in the Kingdom: A Theology of Life in All Its Fullness*.

Talking It Over

- Rodin suggests that the place to begin to foster stewardship renewal or renaissance is with the leaders of the congregation. What do leaders of congregations need to understand about stewardship if a renaissance is to happen?
- One of the reasons given for lack of interest in stewardship is that leaders see it as an institutional issue instead of a spiritual issue. How is Christian stewardship a spiritual issue?
- Does God care about how leaders of congregations manage the money entrusted to them? Explain.
- How can leaders be helped in managing what is entrusted to them?
- Stewardship is about all of life. It is also about money. What is your philosophy of money?
- What did Jesus have to say about money?
- What did Martin Luther say about money and possessions in *The Large Catechism* the First Commandment?

Putting It Into Practice

What practical helps or resources would you suggest for the congregation to assist them in the management of all that God has entrusted to their care?

Digging Deeper

Consider the following questions about your own money management:

What example should a pastor set for the congregation in the area of money management?

How much of the income you receive is returned to the Lord and His work through the local congregation? How do you determine that?

Do you have a family budget and do you live by it?

Participate in a financial planning workshop if possible.

