Stewards by God's Design: The Three R's of the Christian Steward

Relationships – Responsibilities - Resources

Martin Luther viewed Paul's letter to Titus as a kind of Table of Responsibilities. In his introduction to the book he writes, "In **chapter 1** he (Paul) teaches what kind of man a bishop, or pastor, ought to be, namely, one who is pious and learned in preaching the gospel and in refuting the false teachers of works and of man-made laws…In **chapter 2** he teaches the various estates—the older, the younger, wives, husbands, masters, and slaves—how they are to act, as those whom Christ, by his death, has won for his own. In **chapter 3** he teaches Christians to honor worldly rulers and to obey them. He cites again the grace that Christ has won for us, so that no one may think that obeying rulers is enough, since all our righteousness is nothing God."

My Responsibilities at Home

We belong to Christ. We are His children. Robert Kolb writes in *Teaching God's Children His Teaching,* "Being a child of God entails carrying out the responsibilities which He has structured among us in the midst of His creation." These responsibilities are described as four estates or situations. They are: home, occupation, society and congregation. In each of these areas we have responsibilities. Martin Luther gives guidance in his Small Catechism in what he calls "The Table of Duties." Kolb writes, "These responsibilities consist of whatever actions are necessary for the proper care and the supporting, sustaining love and concern which is vital for human life, for the well-being of the whole creation." Page 8-3

The family is the basic unit and building block of society. For society to flourish as God intends it to flourish the family must be healthy. Robert Kolb states, "The home bears the weight of the entire society." We are to steward life in the home according to God's design.

What do the following passages say to husbands?

- 1 Peter 3:7
- Colossians 3:19

What do the following passages say to wives?

- Ephesians 5:22
- 1 Peter 3:5-6

What does the following passage say to parents?

- Ephesians 6:4

What does the following passage say to children?

- Ephesians 6:1-3

Martin Luther argued that of the four orders the family was the least appreciated and most disparaged in his day. Is this still true today? Explain.

Luther also held that marriage and family life were the foundational order established by God. Marriage is the center of this estate. All the other orders—work, society, and church—flowed from this first and most important order. Do you agree? Explain.

Luther believed that all authority derived and developed out of the authority of parents and not the other way around. Is that how most people in positions of authority view it today? Explain.

"Household," writes John Pless in *Praying Luther's Small Catechism*, "is inclusive of not only the nuclear family but also of all those who live and work under the same roof." Who are some others that might be included?

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