

“As Good Stewards”

1 Peter 4:10-11

Stewardship is one of my favorite topics to preach. The most popular sermon on our church web-site is “3 Stewardship Priorities” (1,079 views).

A steward is a manager of whatever has been entrusted to him.

Our text verse refers to “**good stewards.**” **What makes a “good steward?”** Notice three things from our text:

- I. “As every man hath received the gift...”— Good stewards recognize they are **RECIPIENTS OF GOD’S GIFTS.**
 - A. Any good thing you receive in life is a divine gift (James 1:17— “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*”)
 - B. **Gifts are freely given** (something one gets for nothing). Everything I have, I have because of “*the manifold grace of God.*”
 - ➔ “*What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory...*” (1 Cor. 4:7)
 - ➔ Jesus said, “*Freely ye have received, freely give*” (Mt. 10:8).
 - C. The wide **Range of God’s gracious gifts.** **Gifts by the “truckload.”**
 - ➔ **ILLUS.** “**manifold**” means **numerous and various, of diverse kinds.** Most cars are powered by an “internal combustion engine.” Every automobile engine has two *manifolds*—An *intake* manifold and the *exhaust* manifold.

The *intake* manifold delivers a mixture of gas and air to the cylinders the engine has. The *exhaust* manifold collects the expended gases discharges them out the exhaust pipe. One manifold receives and the other releases.

Too often we regard stewardship simply as a matter of giving to God. **But** before we can give, we must receive. Therefore, stewardship is, in the first place, receiving God's gifts. Once received, those gifts are to be used for the glory of God who gave them. The steward needs an **open hand to receive** from God and an **active hand to serve** God with what he has received.

➔ What are some of **gifts** God has entrusted to us to use for His glory?

- **Salvation.** Salvation is a GIFT—We are saved to serve.
- **Talents** (music... art... technical... teaching... mercy... helps... leadership... encouragement... etc.)
- **Time**—Your most precious commodity. **Time is life.** The way you spend your time is the way you spend your life. Ephesians 5:16 says, “*Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*”
- **Treasure / Wealth.**

II. “...even so minister the same one to another...”— Good stewards understand there is a **REASON FOR GOD’S GIFTS.**

A. His gifts are not to be hoarded for our personal benefit/profit.

- ➔ Every believer’s task is to use his gifts to *evangelize* the lost and *edify* believers in the church.

Several years ago a body builder appeared as a guest on "The Merv Griffin Show." He stepped forward and flexed his well-chiseled muscles from chest to calf. The audience awed.

Griffin then asked, "What do you use all those muscles for?" Again, the guest flexed, and biceps and triceps bulged.

Griffin asked again, "But, what do you use those muscles for?" The body builder looked bewildered. He didn't have an answer expect to show off his impressive muscles before audiences.

I'm reminded that our spiritual exercises—Bible study... prayer... memorizing Scripture... etc. are also to be used for a purpose. They're meant to strengthen our capacity to serve God and win souls—not to impress how “spiritual” we may appear before others.

B. We are commanded, “*Neglect not the gift that is in thee...*” (1 Tim. 4:14).

C. Gifts are to be **used in the same way they were received**—FREELY. Jesus said, “*Freely ye have received, freely give*” (Mt. 10:8).

III. “...as good stewards of the manifold grace of God”— Good stewards assume **RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOD’S GIFTS.**

Our major highways are crawling with huge trucks, vans, and trailers. When we feel rushed stuck behind one of trucks, we

sometimes see them as a hindrance. We forget that **the drivers of these mighty carriers are stewards of a cargo**. Having collected all sorts of manufactured goods that is needed by people everywhere, they have only one aim: Deliver the goods in a timely manner.

As stewards, that is our job as well. We carry God's cargo of goods and we need to deliver them to the place where God wants them used in ministry.

- A. Our job is to "deliver the goods." God has given you and I a truckload of cargo as He wants us to deliver. Will you make sure they get to where God wants them used?
- In a S.S. Class
 - In Jr. Church
 - In the music ministry
 - In a Life Group
 - In G.R.O.W.
- B. Like any truck driver, we will be held accountable for what has been entrusted to our care. As a steward, **I will be held accountable before God** for how I used of the resources He has given to me (v. 5).

One pack of cigarettes in the State of Washington currently costs an average of \$9.37.¹ If a one-pack-a-day smoker quit smoking at age 30 and lived a normal life (70 yrs), he would save (wait for it!) **over \$134,000** at the current price of a pack. (Added bonus: A good portion of health)! That offer is too good to pass up!

- I wonder what difference it would if Jesus had to co-sign all our checks before they could be spent?
- C. *"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful"* (1 Cor. 4:2).

SUMMATION: Let me close by telling you about a young man who was saved from a life of deep sin. God changed his life. He began reading the Bible and going to church. He purchased many books to help in his study of God's Word. He later enrolled in Bible College.

¹ <https://www.fool.com/investing/general/2014/09/27/the-surprising-cost-of-a-pack-a-day-in-all-50-stat.aspx>

One day, as he sat at his desk surrounded by books, he began to think about all that he'd been given. He knew the books represented the dedication of men who sacrificed to pass on the knowledge of the Scriptures. He felt surrounded by *"the manifold grace of God"*— He had a home in heaven... a lovely wife... beautiful children... a good Bible education from great men of God.

A verse of Scripture came to mind: *"Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required"* (Luke 12:48). Those words lodged deep in his heart. He then prayed that God would have all of him there was to have.

Through the years he continued serve God wherever God would lead him. One day in 1986 he received a call to become the pastor of Bible Baptist Church in Port Orchard, WA. This morning he hears again those words: *"Whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."*

Since our text speaks of *"GOOD stewards,"* that also suggests the possibility of a BAD steward.

- A bad steward fails to see he is only a recipient of God's grace, and God owns everything he has.
- A bad steward sees no divine purpose in what he has been given.
- A bad steward doesn't recognize he will one day stand before God to give account of his poor stewardship.

Will you be a GOOD steward, or a BAD steward?