

The Power of One – The Stewardship of Life

Introduction:

1. Show me a cause worth dying for, and I will live for it for the rest of my life.
2. Indeed, there is a cause worth dying. It is worth living fully embracing the cause of Christ because its fruit will be eternal.
3. Its everlasting consequences, experienced today and in the coming age, will be the determining factor in many lives.
4. We are living in a time foreseen by the prophets of old.
5. *A definition of Stewardship. In a biblical context, it refers to the responsible management and care of resources, talents, and opportunities that God has entrusted to individuals. It encompasses all areas of life, including time, finances, abilities, relationships, and the environment. The concept is rooted in the understanding that everything belongs to God, and humans are appointed as caretakers of His creation.*
6. I have a hard time thinking of a more important word to describe how God wants us to live and give our lives on this earth.
7. I want you to think with me for a moment – I am going to ask you a few questions:
 - What are the implications of the commandment in **Matthew 28:19**: ***“Go and make disciples of all nations*** -the Amplified bible adds this, ***“Help the people to learn of Me, and obey My words.”***
 - And what about **Mark 16:15**: ***“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all nations.”*** - Essentially, the same command is repeated.
 - Then, in **Acts 1:8**, just before Jesus’ ascension, He said to those gathered, ***“You will receive power and ability when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses to tell people about me both in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth.”***
8. So, the vision we have for this church for 2025 and beyond is **REACHING ONE BILLION PEOPLE BY 2033** – the above three scriptures are saying?
9. We are joining thousands upon thousands of other churches and organizations worldwide to reach people for Christ.
10. I don’t know what other churches or organizations will be doing, but I do know it is on our hearts to be part of that ingathering of people for the Kingdom.
11. It matters not if we reach 20 or 50 or 100 or whatever number this year; what matters is that we have been obedient to Jesus’ mandate, as we read in Matthew, Mark, and Acts.
12. And it is not about numbers – it is about souls whose lives have been changed for eternity.
13. William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, said, ***‘Not called!’ did you say? ‘Not heard the call. Put your ear down to the Bible, hear Him bid you go, and pull sinners***

out of the fire of sin. Put your ear down to the burdened, agonized heart of humanity and listen to its pitiful wail for help. Stand by the gates of hell and hear the damned entreat you to go to their father's house and bid their brothers and sisters and servants and masters not to come there. And then look Christ in the face, whose mercy you have professed to obey, and tell Him whether you will join heart, soul, body, and circumstances in the march to publish His mercy to the world."

Understanding Stewardship:

1. In **Luke 12**, we read: "***The Lord answered, 'Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth; he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose the servant says to himself, "My master is taking a long time in coming," and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he doesn't expect him and at an hour he isn't aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers. From everyone given much, much will be demanded; and from the one entrusted with much, much more will be asked" (Luke 12:42-48).***
2. Most modern translations no longer use the word "steward" but "manager."
3. The Greek word for manager or steward is *oikonomos*: *oikos* means "house," and *nomos* means "law."
4. Notice also that if the servant or steward did a good job while the master was away, that steward was rewarded; if the steward slacked off, the punishment was severe.
5. Also, it's important to see that the steward didn't own anything.
6. So, stewardship is taking care of what belongs to God for the good of others.
7. Example of buying a used car from a rental company
8. Borrowing a tool from a friend
9. Everything we have actually belongs to God; we're just stewards.
10. The more we come to know God personally, the more we recognize that we are stewards of what belongs to God for the benefit of others.

Five Areas of Stewardship:

We must see how far-reaching stewardship really is.

The Gospel, or good news, of Jesus Christ.

- "Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and *oikonomos* of God's mysteries" (1 Cor 4:1).

- With every use of oikonomos you discover that the most common use of "steward" is that we're stewards of the good news – we are stewards of the gospel for those who have not heard the good news.
- We must ensure that others, both today and in the future, know what God has done in and through Christ.
- Others have stewarded the gospel for us; we're to steward the gospel for others.
- We have spoken about the **Power of One** during the last two times I have spoken.
- Someone took the time and effort to share the gospel message with you; therefore, you have an obligation to share it with someone else, starting with your family and those who are near and dear to you.

Relationship Stewardship

- Jesus was asked, "***What is the greatest commandment?***" (***Matt 22:36***)
- His answer to this practical and sincere question is particularly revealing because it involves what is clearly one of the most important aspects of our human existence—our relationships. Jesus' top two greatest commands concern (1) our relationship with God and (2) our relationship with our fellow human beings.
- It would not be an exaggeration to say that healthy human relationships are one of the major themes of the New Testament.
- Let me give you my top 10 positive "*one another*" commandments:
 - *Love one another (John 13:14)*
 - *Forgive one another (Ephesians 4:32)*
 - *Live at peace with one another (Romans 12:16)*
 - *Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)*
 - *Be patient with one another (Ephesians 4:2)*
 - *Honor one another above yourself (Romans 12:10)*
 - *Accept one another (Romans 15:7)*
 - *Encourage one another (I Thessalonians 4:18)*
 - *Teach one another (Romans 15:14)*
 - *Serve one another (Galatians 5:13)*
- If we are honest with ourselves, consistently practicing just numbers one and two would radically transform our relationships.
- The key to successful human relationships is rooted in love and forgiveness.
- A well-known and respected Christian psychiatrist said something so profound: "*Ninety percent or more of all counseling could be eliminated entirely if people would learn to forgive.*"

- **Matthew 6:12: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."**
- **Matthew 6:14-15, For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But your Father will not forgive your transgressions if you do not forgive others.**
- My counsel to you concerning those who have sinned against you (no matter how far back the transgression goes) is to "let it go"

Money – the Love of money is the root of all evil:

- I say money, but it is the material resources God has entrusted us.
- **1 Timothy 6:17-19 "Tell those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which will soon be gone. But their trust should be in the living God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and should give generously to those in need, always being ready to share with others whatever God has given them. By doing this, they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may take hold of real life**
- Then, as part of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says in **Matthew 6:21, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**
- Remember our understanding of stewardship: taking care of what belongs to God for the good of others.
- Bellevue Church example

Spiritual Gifts:

- Each person in the body of Christ has been given spiritual gifts to be used in ministry for the common good.
- Let's examine a wonderful passage: "**Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received" (1 Peter 4:10).**
- The Greek word for grace is charis.
- **Matthew 20:25-28 says: "But Jesus called them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in high positions use their authority over them. It must not be this way among you! Instead, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."**
- Let me briefly comment on the word "slave." It indicates not just a servant but someone who gives up their rights and willingly places others' needs above their own.
- Alan Ross

Time – a major area of Stewardship

"Live life, then, with a due sense of responsibility, not as people who don't know the meaning and purpose of life but as those who do. Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days" (Eph. 5:15-16.).

– Christian magazine survey.

- The real test of your beliefs and values is what you do with your time.

- Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Susanna Wesley.

– John and Charles Wesley.

– The Power of One – one mother

- If we don't have time to glorify God in worship regularly, to gather with others in community, to grow as disciples of Christ, to give to others in ministry through our spiritual gifts, if we don't have time for one face-to-face hour with those we love the most; and if we don't have time because we're working 50-60 hours a week earning money, what does that tell us about our values?

- It's about wisely managing and caring for the gifts of God for the good of others, the gifts of God's grace, our relationships, our money, our spiritual gifts, and especially of our time.

- So, what is one way this week you might seek to become, by God's grace, a better steward of what God has so richly given you in Jesus Christ?

- Secondly, I want to challenge you about forgiveness.

– Finally, as you steward all we have spoken about, recognize you have the Power of One within. Christ Jesus, our hope of glory, and as you steward your life, you will fulfill the commandments of Christ in Matthew 28, Mark 16, and Acts 1, and influence those around you for the Kingdom.