

Stewardship

Inspiring a deeper understanding of true giving

June 2026

Many years ago, a lad of sixteen years left home to seek his fortune. All his worldly possessions were tied up in a bundle, which he carried in his hand. As he trudged along he met an old neighbor, the captain of a canal-boat, and the following conversation took place, which changed the direction of the boy's life:

"Well, William, where are you going?"

"I don't know," he answered; "father is too poor to keep me at home any longer and says I must now make a living for myself."

"There's no trouble about that," said the captain. "Be sure you start right, and you'll get along."

William told his friend that the only trade he knew something about was soap and candle-making, at which he had helped his father while at home.

"Well," said the old man, "let me pray with you once more, and give you a little advice, and then I will let you go."

They both kneeled down beside the canal. The dear old man prayed earnestly for William, and then gave this advice: "Some one will soon be the leading soap-maker in New York. It can be you as well as anyone. I hope it may. Be a good man; give your heart to Christ; pay the Lord all that belongs to him of every dollar you earn; make an honest soap; give a full pound, and I am certain you will yet be a prosperous and rich man."

When the boy arrived in the city, he found it hard to get work. Lonesome and far from home, he remembered his mother's words and the last words of



the canal-boat captain. He was then led to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and united with the church. He remembered his promise to the old captain, and the first dollar he earned brought up the question of the Lord's part. In the Bible he found that the Jews were commanded to give one-tenth; so he said, "If the Lord will take one tenth, I will give that," and so he did; and Having regular employment, he soon became a partner; and after a few years his partners died, and William became the sole owner of the business.

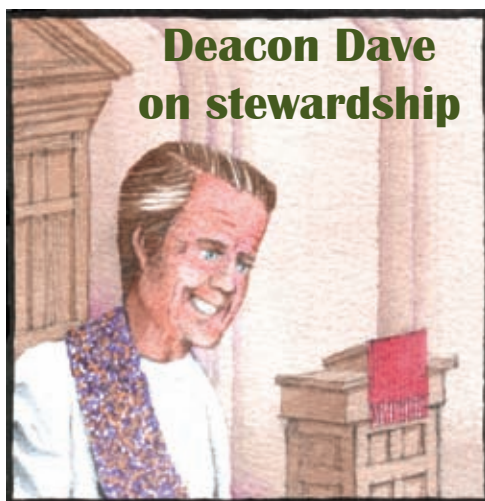
He now resolved to keep his promise to the old captain; he made an honest soap, gave a full pound, and instructed his bookkeeper to open an account with

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Love is faith in action. The two most important questions we can ask ourselves are "Whom do I love?" and "Who loves me?" We put faith into action by extending our concern for people beyond ourselves. We show our concern for others in our actions and relationships.




Many Christians are capable of making a great deal of money, and some of them do not use it wisely. They save it for some rainy day, or they squander it, or they hoard it. We need to ask ourselves constantly, "How much is enough; at what point do I say that this is all God wants me to have?" Once we know how much that is, everything God gives us beyond that is meant for somebody else.



**Deacon Dave
on stewardship**

There is a ministry leader in my parish who seemed discouraged. The class he was teaching was beginning to slide. I was asked to call him and gently lift his spirits. I knew God wanted me to exhort him, but it was tough for me. I was feeling tired myself and not too thrilled about encouraging someone else. I prayed about what to do and then called him.

I shared what a blessing he was to our church family and how those taking his class really enjoyed it. Several people commented on how his tenderness and transparency made them feel at home, not to mention closer to God. I listened to his hurts and frustrations. We talked and prayed and laughed for almost an hour. By the time we were finished, he couldn't wait to get back to his class and start anew!


I learned a lot that evening. Whether it's listening to a weary soul, helping our neighbor, or spending time with the sick or lonely, God is calling us to wash someone else's feet. We don't always feel like sharing our time or even ourselves with others. But at those very crucial times when we make ourselves available to someone else, God in turn fills up our tank and renews our inner strength. 



Tadpoles for Jesus

Our backyard pond became the center of activity for our young family. The kids loved to catch pond creatures as much as I did. As spring approached, our church began a building fund. Everyone wanted to give, including the kids. Brad, our six-year-old, had no source of income, so he created her own unique fund-raising plan. He would sell tadpoles!

I didn't want to burst his bubble (how much can you get for a tadpole anyway), so I helped him catch several. A few days later as we prepared for our church picnic, Brad gathered his items for the big sale: a pickle jar to hold the tadpole inventory and small white Styrofoam coffee cups so "buyers" could take their "purchases" home, hopefully still alive.

After we arrived at the picnic, he began his sale. I couldn't believe it. He actually sold those slimy creatures for a quarter each and made \$1.75! A buck-seventy five didn't buy much brick and mortar for our church building, but like the story of the widow's mite, Jesus must have looked on with deep admiration. When we give with pure motives, God takes great joy, regardless of the amount we actually give. 




The Good Steward

When they came to visit us, our friends, Jim and Ellen Murphy, arrived with flowers, a large bag of grocery treats, plus homemade cookies. That's typical! Once again we realized how generosity is so much a part of their lives.

They served as missionaries in South America for four years. From there, they returned to the United States; Jim as a pastor and author; Ellen, a PhD, currently a University teacher of nurses. Together, they actively support their local church, the world-wide church, and international humanitarian agencies. Their stewardship includes prayers, presence, and service. It also includes financial gifts.


Beyond their normal giving, they have paid for travel expenses to places such as Haiti, Africa, and India, in order to donate their time and talents there. They buy needed items for the eye clinics and hospitals they visit. They paid for the education of a young Inca Indian, while simultaneously educating their own children. Jokingly, they say they need one of their salaries to support their mission projects. But their projects are vital, and can even mean the difference between life and death for someone.

These are not financially wealthy people. But they are very wealthy in other ways. They have unique training, talents, and gifts which they share unselfishly. You and I are also unique. We too have our special abilities. Like Jim and Ellen, we can be kind, sharing, caring, unselfish stewards of all that God has given us. The choice is ours to make. 



Here is a word game that's fun to play while you're waiting. Think of a long word or short phrase, then write down as many words as you can from the letters in it. From the word "stewardship" you can make "ship," "draw," "sew," and more.

But that's only one way of looking at stewardship. Try thinking of it as a game some time, and see how many different ways you can "play" it. For food drives, besides donating canned goods, you could volunteer to take them to the local food pantry. To help the Sunday school, perhaps you could play the guitar, or cover for an absent teacher. To help the church expend, you might look into ways to spread the word about your congregation.

The possibilities are many, even if the members of the congregation are few. So the next time you have a minute, see if God will inspire you with some new way to give. 

ΑΩ

Insofar as we are responsible, whether it's a good year or not will depend to a very great extent on what we do with the very valuable commodity we have ... time. That is to say, on our stewardship of time, because stewardship is what we do with what we have. The differences come in our stewardship ... what we do with this vital dimension of our being. The question for all of us is never really "Do I have time?," but "What do I have time for?"



“God’s bountiful gifts are ours ... never ending ... everything we have ... the air we breathe, our jobs, our homes, our families, our faith.”

Beyond Our Asking

This past June, my husband and I celebrated our 32nd wedding anniversary. We received a card from my sister and her husband with a poem by Helen Steiner Rice entitled “Beyond Our Asking.” In part, it goes like this:

*More than hearts can imagine
or minds comprehend,
God’s bountiful gifts are ours
without end.
Whatever we ask for falls short
of God’s giving,
For his greatness exceeds
every facet of living.*

Read it again. Think about it. God’s bountiful gifts are ours ... never ending ... everything we have ... the air we breathe, our jobs, our homes, our families, our faith. All is a gift. How easy it is to forget ... to get caught up in our day-to-day tasks at our jobs, in our homes, with our families, in our faith. May the following prayer help us all to remember. ☩

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Many years ago ...

the Lord, and carry one-tenth of all his income to that account. He prospered; his business grew; his family was blessed; his soap sold, and he grew rich faster than he had ever hoped.

This is the story of Mr. William Colgate, who has given millions of dollars to the Lord’s cause, and left a name that will never die. ☩

