

# Stewardship

There is no doubt that we live in a materialistic society. Such a statement is less a condemnation and more a description. “Things are in the saddle,” said Emerson in his day, “and ride mankind.” The observation is even more accurate about our own day. One of the unfortunate things about this is the fact that the church, caught in such a materialistic culture, often feels powerless to stand out against the materialism of the day and therefore ends up strengthening the acquisitive instinct.

A particularly unfortunate illustration of this is provided for some years ago by Charles Fillmore, who gave us his rendition of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm:



*The Lord is my banker, my credit is good. He maketh me to lie down in the consciousness of omnipresent abundance;*

*He giveth me the key to his strongbox*

*He restoreth my faith in his riches;*

*He guideth me in the paths of prosperity for his names's sake.*

*Yes, though I walk in the very shadow of debt.*

*I shall fear no evil, for Thou art with me,*

*Thy silver and Thy gold they secure me,*

*Thou preparest a way for me in the presence of the collector;*


*Thou fillest my wallet with plenty; my measure runneth over.*

*Surely goodness and plenty will follow me all the days of my life,*

*And I shall do business in the name of the Lord forever.*

That's an extreme example of the way in which a materialistic society can corrupt vital religion.

Don't be possessed by material goods. Place God first in your life and have trust

in his providence. Be a good steward and share your possessions with God and your fellow human beings. 


*We need to look at the total time we have available and begin with the fact that it's all God's and we have an obligation to use it wisely. We need to reorder the time we give for God's work. The rewards can be great.*



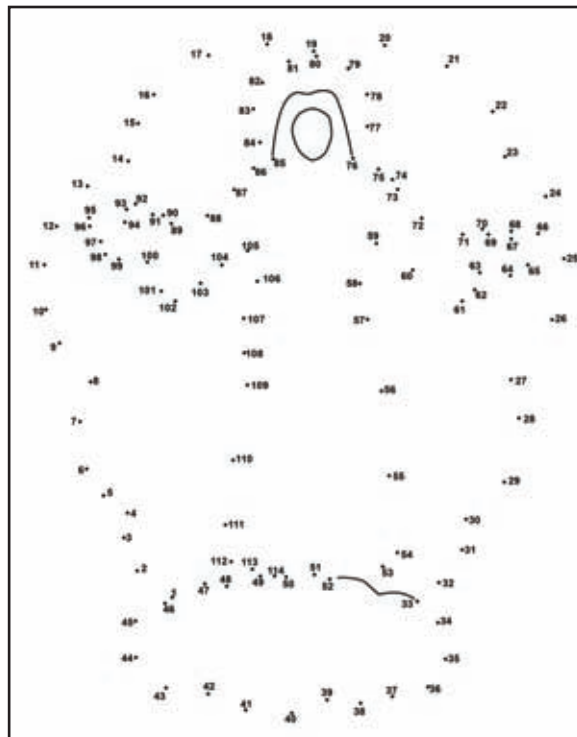


## Connecting the Dots

**R**emember dot-to-dot puzzles? By drawing lines from one number to the next, you wound up with a picture. It could be anything from Noah's Ark to George Washington!

By itself, each line means little. Even a large group doesn't show the total picture. Only when every number is connected can you see the design the artist intended. We know that God has a plan for our lives. What each Christian gives to him joins with the donations of others in the church. Together, they can form a wonderful pattern. Perhaps the "picture" is of people repairing a roof. Or, it may be one of someone driving a shut-in to worship. Leaving even one connection out of a dot-to-dot puzzle causes a gap. Although it may seem small, nevertheless, the picture is incomplete. We must remember that while God gives the "numbers," it is our responsibility to finish the pattern with time, talent, and treasure. 

*In looking to the coming year, remember that rooted deeply and firmly within scripture and our Christian tradition is the vision that we are expected to be faithful stewards of all we are and all we have. This can be done by making the best use of our talents, the time allotted to each of us, and the monies we possess. Stewardship must be seen as a life-long attitude and ever-deepening commitment.*






I used to treat time just like water. We've all brushed our teeth and left the water running. Or let it run for several minutes to get cold, instead of using some ice. In essence, we act like it will last forever.

A few years ago, a young man from our church died suddenly. The mourners packed the church and related how this man touched their lives with the love and truth of Christ. His use of time showed his faith. It wasn't all about him. He gave of himself.

It made me embarrassed to think of how I've wasted so much time on unimportant things. The Bible teaches us to "Build treasures in heaven" (Matt 6:22), not to get sidetracked by wasting time chasing or lusting after things that won't last.


#### A decision to invest time

The day of that funeral I made a decision to start investing my time. God led me to Men's Ministries and now I'm offering up my time to God as a thanks-offering.

Time is just like water, and yet it never stops running. It won't last forever. One day we'll give an account of just how we spent ours. Ask God today how you can invest in a Kingdom that will last forever. 

## New Years Resolutions

Here are six resolutions to help you be a better steward in 2026!

1. *I'll improve my stewardship of prayer by an unhurried talk with God each day.*
2. *I'll improve my stewardship of faith by reading good religious literature.*
3. *I'll improve my stewardship of life by practicing the presence of God and living the teachings of Christ wherever I may be ... whatever I may be doing ... always remembering my final accountability.*
4. *I'll improve my stewardship of time by eliminating the trivial and concentrating on the important.*
5. *I'll improve my stewardship of activities by using them more effectively for God and my fellow human beings.*
6. *I'll improve my stewardship of possessions by setting aside a meaningful percentage of my income and prayerfully dedicating it to the work of God's Kingdom on earth.* 

*The next time you are challenged by a needed task at church or in God's world, don't be concerned with talents; rather consider all the many capabilities that God has given and is giving you. Capabilities include the gifts of good health, inspiration and insight, which we receive from God.*



**“Things are in the saddle and ride mankind”**

R.W. Emerson

### **The Love of a Steward**

**T**here's an elderly gentleman named Joe Hollenbeck in our church in Glens Falls, NY, who often goes unnoticed. He can't sing, so he's not in the choir. His voice is rather shaky, so he's never led the prayer group.

What he does possess in abundance is love. Our Vacation Bible School has one hundred-fifty children. There he was blowing up balloons, serving ice cream, and helping clean up. He's always approaching newcomers with a warm handshake and a friendly, "It's really good to see you here. Hope you come back!" If you're hurting, he's the first one by your side at church to pray and give support. If you're experiencing hardship, he's right there to offer help with the grocery bill that week, even though his income is very limited. If a young couple needs a break from all their responsibilities, he's the first one to volunteer to watch the little ones so mom and dad can escape for a weekend.

He does all this without ever being asked. His loving acts of stewardship largely go unheralded, but never unappreciated. Whether it's time or money or abilities, all God asks is a willing heart. 