

**THE** **A**  
**B**  
**C**'S  
**OF**  
**STEWARDSHIP**

H.O.S.T. Workbook





## The ABC's of Stewardship

Attitude: The response of a successful steward

# Engage

Think of someone you admire and respect. What are some of the qualities and characteristics that draw you to this person?

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Have you ever met someone who had, what the world would consider, success? They had skill, talent, ability and good looks, but as a person, you would rather not associate with them? What put you off?

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## The ABC's of Stewardship

Attitude: The response of a successful steward

# Develop

In life, qualities of attitude usually draw people more than appearance or skill.

God looks at us in much the same way, and there are qualities He wants to bring out in us.

In our relationships with others, what we say or do is often not nearly as important as how we make them feel. How does God feel about us? We can actually do a good thing, but with a bad attitude. For example: It's your birthday, and a guest you've invited comes in and just tosses your gift on the table and never says a word to you. How does that make you feel? Even if their gift was that thing you most wanted, would you value it like you would if it were given with the right attitude? Would you even accept it?

In this first week of the series, we'll be covering three attitudes of stewardship:

1. What's yours is mine, and I'm going to take it.
2. What's mine is mine, and I'm going to keep it.
3. What's mine is yours, and I'm going to give it.

## Defining STEWARDSHIP

(Miriam Webster)

**1:** The office, duties, and obligations of a steward

**2:** The conducting, supervising, or managing of something; *especially*: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care <*stewardship* of natural resources>

Strong's concordance

O.T. Stewards: 8269

N.T. Steward: 2012, 3621. Stewards: 3623, 8269. Stewardship: 3622.

A head person of any rank or class, general, governor, keeper, lord, master, principal, ruler, steward.

A commissioner i.e. domestic manager, guardian.

To manage (a house i.e. an estate). Administration (of a household or estate); specifically a (religious) "economy"- dispensation, stewardship.

A house-distributor (i.e. manager), or overseer, i.e. an employee in that capacity; by extension, a fiscal agent (treasurer); figuratively a preacher (of the gospel), chamberlain, governor, steward.

## The ABC's of Stewardship

Attitude: The response of a successful steward

So we can see then that a steward is a manager of resources, principally those belonging to another, whom in our case is God. And God is not impressed with our good looks and talent, only in how we manage what he has given into our care, or stewardship.

Author John Maxwell put it like this: The stewardship God desires is, "Utilizing God-given abilities to manage God-given resources to accomplish God-ordained results".

Let's look at Luke 10:30-35 where Jesus replied to a lawyer who sought to justify his attitude by asking "And who is my neighbor?" This will set the stage for discussing these three attitudes.

**Luke 10:30-35** *And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, <sup>34</sup> And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.*

## What is yours is mine and I'm going to take it.

In the parable, the thieves saw what the traveler had, beat him and took it.

This is an attitude of greed. One so bad we couldn't even think of having it as Christians. However the subtlety of this attitude doesn't lie in violently taking away the possessions of another, but from a point of view that says "Look what I have. I worked hard to get all this. It's mine" This attitude is a denial that God made us able to earn a living, or produce something of value and that He is the source of those things.

You may have heard the phrase "If God isn't Lord of all, he isn't Lord at all". This directly addresses our view of all we possess, including money, goods, or even time.

**1John 2:15-16** *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

This is no different than seeing what the world has to offer, and being obsessed with that next "latest and greatest" thing we wish to obtain, be it money, position or possessions. But don't misunderstand this, God does want us to have good things, much like he blessed Israel with riches when they fled Egypt, but God had a plan for what they had gotten. The key to successful stewardship is in seeking the kingdom of God first (Matt. 6:33). Are the things we desire meant to serve us, or God's kingdom?

## The ABC's of Stewardship

Attitude: The response of a successful steward

God is the provider of our \_\_\_\_\_, and has chosen us to \_\_\_\_\_ them properly.

Now, we may have never entertained the thought of stealing from someone, but when we seek only to gain and possess, we are essentially telling God "You can't provide for me, so I'm going to take what I can get."

A more well-known example of this attitude is when King David took Bath-sheba, the wife of Uriah (II Sam 11:1-27). David allowed his desire for Bath-sheba to cause him to make decisions that would rob Uriah of his wife and ultimately his life. This attitude grieves God, but his desire is to lead us to the belief and understanding that he is the provider of all we need.

**Malachi 3:9-10** *Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. <sup>10</sup> Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

Here we can see that God desires our trust in believing He is our provider, and His abundance is limitless.

Greedy "Christians" are miserable people. God resists their pride of ownership, and even what they have is never enough.

We know this lesson from the book of Haggai.

**Haggai 1:5-10** *Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. <sup>6</sup> Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. <sup>7</sup> Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. <sup>8</sup> Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. <sup>9</sup> Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. <sup>10</sup> Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.*

## The ABC's of Stewardship

Attitude: The response of a successful steward

**Discussion: Have you ever been robbed or had something taken from you? How did that make you feel? What did you think of the person who took from you?**

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### **What's mine is mine and I'm going to keep it.**

The second attitude we see in the parable is that of the priest and Levite, who both saw the same man, yet passed him by without helping. They were going about their "business", probably on their way to the temple. This situation was very untimely, and by the look of it, the man was probably dead anyway, and no priest or Levite should touch the dead, so they kept walking.

Now in their minds they were perfectly justified, and really, who knew if that man was even Jewish? They had strict rules governing just what they could, or couldn't do.

This attitude easily accepts the idea of tithing. God here's your 10% and the rest is mine. That's the rule, right? What I have left I own, and it's mine to do with as I please.

God intends his blessings to be like a river that flows through his kingdom. But this attitude is like a dam, and those who have it behave like God's blessings are just for them and the flow stops there, ( except for that 10% of course ).

It's very easy to be legalistic about what we have been given. We can acknowledge God as our source of blessings, yet fail to consider how we might be a blessing to others. It may even be a matter of how convenient it is to give. Whatever it may be, money, volunteer time or a ride to the doctor for a brother or sister, whose schedule comes first, ours, or God's? For the good Samaritan, the timing was probably no better than it was for the priest and Levite.

We \_\_\_\_\_ God's work through us when we think of ourselves as the \_\_\_\_\_ of all we possess.

## The ABC's of Stewardship

Attitude: The response of a successful steward

In the book of Matthew 25:14-30 Jesus tells the parable of the talents. It's about a man who entrusted his "Goods" to his three servants. In verse 15 the man distributed his money to them according to their "several abilities". Note, they didn't all get the same amount, and in this instance it doesn't mention him giving them any instruction about what to do with the money, or, "talents" (which in that time would value around \$5,200). But we can see that two servants traded or otherwise invested their master's money for his gain, while the one remaining servant just held on to it.

We can see two key points here.

1. Regardless of ability, each servant was entrusted something of value.
2. The attitude of each was displayed in what they did with the money entrusted to them.

In each case the servants did what they thought best, but in vs. 26-30 the last one should have known he was expected to use what he was given. Instead, he treated it like he owned it.

**Discussion: Can you think of a time you saw a need, and due to a recent blessing, you were able to meet it? Or did you withhold what you had because you "needed it"?**

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**Discussion: Describe an instance in which you gave something grudgingly. How did that feel compared to a time you offered something cheerfully?**

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The servant who withheld his master's money may have feared losing it. But the scriptures say he knew his master, and what was expected of him. Likewise we must pray and study to know our Heavenly Father's wishes. We can't out-give God in any capacity.

**Luke 6:38** *Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*



## The ABC's of Stewardship

Attitude: The response of a successful steward

### **What's mine is yours, and I'm going to give it.**

This is an attitude of abundance. Not necessarily of wealth, but an understanding that all blessings flow from God. No matter how much we can give, the flow will continue as long as we are the channel for His abundance.

We don't know the religious standing of the Samaritan who helped the wounded man. He may have just been a wealthy businessman who understood money as a tool, and that it would be no problem recovering the cost of his detour. Or, he may have felt moved by God to help. The scriptures don't rule out either possibility. What we do know, is the attitude he displayed went beyond just a feeling of obligation. He could have just left the man at the inn, and like the priest or Levite, felt justified. However Jesus said he took care of the man for the rest of the day, and on departing the following morning, promised to repay the innkeeper for any additional expense.

Here is an attitude of commitment of resources. We don't know how long it took the wounded man to heal or how long he remained lodged at the inn. But we do know the Samaritan man wasn't concerned with who the man was, only with doing what it took to see him restored to health.

At one point in Jesus' ministry he was questioned by a young man on exactly the same point as the lawyer in this parable. In Mark 10:17-22, the young man also asked *"What must I do to inherit eternal life?"* *"Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."* The young man went away sad, and stopped following Jesus because he had "great possessions."

I'm sure Jesus knew the young man's standing. No doubt he hoped the answer he gave would open the young man's eyes to the value of heavenly treasure above worldly possessions much the same as the Holy Spirit deals with us today. The transformation of our point of view, that we are not the owners, but we are stewards of all God has given us. And that the kingdom of God is far more valuable than what we can possess in this life.

God's blessings are meant to flow \_\_\_\_\_ us. We aren't the owners of them, but are faithful \_\_\_\_\_ with a God ordained purpose.

## The ABC's of Stewardship

Attitude: The response of a successful steward

You may be thinking, "I don't have a lot to give, even if all I have is from God"

If we only look at ourselves without considering God's power to bless what we do give, that would be true for the majority of us. But consider God's ability to bless with little.

In John 6: 1-13, Jesus fed a multitude of people from a small offering of fish and bread. Even his disciples were dismayed at the gift from a small boy saying in v.9: "*There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?*"

Of course reading on we see Jesus blessed that little bit to the feed everyone. Even the leftovers were far more than what was originally given.

Now, not much was said about the boy, but his attitude was one of giving. I'm sure he didn't think his lunch could feed over 5,000 people, but he was willing to give what he had.

Here's how Jesus looked at it:

**Mark 12:41-44** *And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. <sup>42</sup> And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. <sup>43</sup> And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: <sup>44</sup> For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.*

It would seem evident that the poor widow knew God could meet her needs much better than the farthing she put in the offering box.

God wants our faith to extend to all aspects of our lives, and stewardship is of primary importance, because it is the physical support of our ministry.

**James 2:15-16** *If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup> And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?*

As individuals, we may not be able to meet all needs, but if we are all faithful to give as God has blessed us, no need will go unmet.

To close, I'll leave you with the words of the apostle Paul, who wrote concerning the taking up of an offering.

**2 Corinthians 8:11-12** *Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. <sup>12</sup> For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

## **The ABC's of Stewardship**

Attitude: The response of a successful steward

**Discussion: Can you think of another example in the Bible where God blessed someone who only had a little to give?**

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**Discussion: What was the outcome of their choice to give?**

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## **The ABC's of Stewardship**

Attitude: The response of a successful steward

# **Do**

Read 2 Corinthians chapter 9:

Seek God prayerfully about your personal giving; whether it is money, time or talent.

Consider the gifts and talents God has placed in you. Let God speak to you about where you can begin to give or increase what you give. Remember, it is not about abundance, its about attitude.

Note: Every time you give something this week, stop and pray for God to bless your attitude as you give.

**The ABC's of Stewardship**

Blessings: The Resources of a successful Steward

# Engage

Have you ever given a gift to someone and then resented what they did with what you gave them. If you feel comfortable, share with the group that experience.

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Have you ever gone above and beyond the normal effort to give a special gift to someone? Maybe you spent time making it yourself or saving to buy it or took time to plan something you knew they would enjoy. Talk about that experience with the group. What did you get out of it, what was the persons reaction, etc.

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## The ABC's of Stewardship

Blessings: The Resources of a successful Steward

# Develop

### Outline

1. God is the source of our blessings.
2. God has the power and will to give us what we need.
3. Our perspective is important.

## God is the source of our blessings

We belong to a God who is always giving. The most famous verse of the Bible is John 3:16, God so loved the world that he **gave** his only begotten son. Throughout scripture you find God giving over and over again. Everything that we have that is good in our life has come from God and He has unlimited resources to provide all that we could need. This idea is essential to stewardship. If we believe that everything is Gods and everything we have is provided by God, it will greatly affect how our attitude in giving.

**1 Chronicles 29:10-17** *Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed [be] thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. <sup>11</sup> Thine, O LORD, [is] the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all [that is] in the heaven and in the earth [is thine]; thine [is] the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. <sup>12</sup> Both riches and honour [come] of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand [is] power and might; and in thine hand [it is] to make great, and to give strength unto all. <sup>13</sup> Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. <sup>14</sup> But who [am] I, and what [is] my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things [come] of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. <sup>15</sup> For we [are] strangers before thee, and sojourners, as [were] all our fathers: our days on the earth [are] as a shadow, and [there is] none abiding. <sup>16</sup> O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name [cometh] of thine hand, and [is] all thine own. <sup>17</sup> I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.*

Verse 11 says all that is in heaven and earth is thine, verse 14 says all things come of thee and again in verse 16 we see that all this store comes from thine hand and is all thine own. God is the source of all that the people had given. David declares this over and over again as he praises God for what God has given so that His people could give it back. David understood the concept that everything we have to give already belongs to God, we are simply stewards of all that is His.

## The ABC's of Stewardship

### Blessings: The Resources of a successful Steward

A father took his son to McDonald's and near the end of the meal the father reached over to take a couple of fries from his son and the son pulls them away and says "no, these are mine". The dad was shocked. He had paid for those fries just a few minutes earlier. He was the source of the fries that his son was refusing to share with him. As the boy's father, he could have easily have taken the fries from him if he wanted to. He didn't need the fries, he could have gone to the counter and bought his own fries. He could have gone to the counter and bought so many fries that he could bury his son in them.

God wants us to share our blessings not because he is \_\_\_\_\_, but because He is \_\_\_\_\_ and has made us in his image.

So often we treat God like the boy treated his father at McDonald's. He reaches in to take a couple blessings and we pull back and tell God that they are ours. God provided the blessings and we should be willing to give them back to him. He gave us our abilities our energy and our health to obtain all that we have.

**Discussion:** Have you ever given something to someone and then had them turn around and refuse to share with you? How did that make you feel and how did you react?

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### God has the power to give us what we need

**Jeremiah 10:12** *He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.*

God spoke the world into existence. His power is infinite. There is nothing that God cannot supply because he is the author of all that is. His riches are beyond measure and He is able to take care of all our needs. When Paul was writing to the church in Philippi, he was thanking them for the gifts they sent him and tells them that God will supply their needs.

**Philippians 4:19** *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

God doesn't expect us to \_\_\_\_\_ anything he hasn't already \_\_\_\_\_ to us.

## The ABC's of Stewardship

### Blessings: The Resources of a successful Steward

When we have faith in God that he can supply anything we need, it frees us to give liberally to God all that he asks. We don't have to worry about where we will get what we need or how it will come because we have a God who supplies our needs.

**Discussion:** Think about 1 Chronicles 29:11 in the passage we opened the study with. What stands out about that verse, and what does it mean to you? How does it relate to stewardship?

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The church in Philippi were not wealthy benefactors who gave to Paul out of abundance. In 2 Corinthians chapter 8 Paul describes their giving as sacrificial. The promise that God would supply their needs was important to them. It meant something. It can mean something to us as well. There is no lack of riches in God's glory and we should anticipate that there will be no lack in God's supply. We have access to more than we could ever know what do with.

## Our perspective is important

When the children of Israel were in the wilderness and they had no supply of food, God sent manna. The thing about the manna is it would only last one day, if you tried to take up two days' worth on any other day than the Sabbath, it would spoil. If we don't have the right perspective, we can think that a day's supply is not sufficient. It takes faith to trust that God will supply day by day. Jesus illustrates this concept for us really well.

**Matthew 6:25-31** *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? <sup>26</sup> Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? <sup>27</sup> Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? <sup>28</sup> And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: <sup>29</sup> And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, [shall he] not much more [clothe] you, O ye of little faith? <sup>31</sup> Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? <sup>32</sup> (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. <sup>33</sup> But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*



## The ABC's of Stewardship

### Blessings: The Resources of a successful Steward

**Discussion:** What would seeking first the kingdom of God look like to you? Think about the context of Jesus's words. Do you think our perspective on physical things is tied to seeking God the way He wants us to?

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Jesus calls us to give up our focus on material things and focus on Him. That is an abstract idea to most of us. How can we practically live in this world and not worry about the things we need? We have to eat. If we have a family, we need to provide for them to eat. We need a place to live. We have bills to pay. The cares of this life can overwhelm our senses and get our priorities out of whack. I would suggest that it isn't that we ignore the things that are necessary, but rather we keep all things in proper order. We should seek God *first* and ask for his wisdom and guidance on the proper balance.

Jesus said that God has always known our needs, and because he lived as man, understands our needs. Our perspective should be one that knows God will take care of his children. We can take solace in the words "and all these things shall be added unto you".

**Discussion:** Do giving to the needs of others and seeking God's kingdom relate? Why or why not?

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We are accountable for the blessings that God gives us. God gives things to you that He does not give to me and He gives things to me that he does not give to you. In that way we are able to meet each other's needs, and are made complete by the working of God's grace through us. Jesus draws a partnership picture in Matthew 25.

He says that he was hungry and people fed him, he says that he was sick and in prison and people visited him. Those who he says this to ask, when? Jesus responds this way:

**Matthew 25:40** *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done [it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [it] unto me*

## The ABC's of Stewardship

### Blessings: The Resources of a successful Steward

Giving to \_\_\_\_\_ is giving to \_\_\_\_\_.

If we have the perspective that when we give to others we are giving to God, it should change us. If you couple this concept with the idea that God will supply our needs, we start to understand that God desires a partnership with us. He desires to use us to supply the needs others. We get the privilege of being the conduit that God pours out his riches to others, we have to work on making this the way we view the blessings God gives. If we do, we will see God pour out his blessings on us.

**Luke 6:38** *Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*

This is a powerful promise that is contingent upon how we give. If we give out of a willing heart, He will give to us through others. Notice the end of the verse; The measure we mete will be measured to us again. We have control over how much God blesses us. Being stingy not only keeps others from being blessed, it limits the blessings of God in our own life. Our life should be a river of His blessings, not a reservoir. Forget about whether or not someone deserves your help or if the money will be properly used by the person. You aren't giving to them, you are giving to God. Be prayerful and be obedient to the unction of the leading of the Holy Ghost. He wants you to be a blessing to your church family and the community around you. He wants to use us to shine his light to all we meet.

**Discussion:** Do you recall a time when you were challenged by the Holy Spirit to make an offering even though you knew it would be a financial strain? What did you do? And what did God do in return?

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## The ABC's of Stewardship

Blessings: The Resources of a successful Steward

# Do

This week take out schedule some time to pray and thank God in advance for financial, time and talent blessings that He will pour out on you so you can return them to Him.

1 Chronicles 4:10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep [me] from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.

## The ABC's of Stewardship

Consecration: The Requirement of a successful Steward

# Engage

What is your most precious or sentimentally significant possession?

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What are the thoughts and feelings you have when you are unable to meet the need or desire of someone you care for?

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## The ABC's of Stewardship

Consecration: The Requirement of a successful Steward

# Develop

Outline:

1. Consecration in Scripture
2. The Rich Young Ruler

### 1. Consecration in Scripture

**<sup>1</sup>con•se•crate** \ˈkän(t)-sə-,krāt\ *adjective*

14th century : dedicated to a sacred purpose<sup>1</sup>

**CONSECRATION** Persons or things being separated to or belonging to God. They are holy or sacred. They are set apart for the service of God. The Hebrew *qadesh* and Greek *hagiazō* are translated by several different English words: holy, consecrate, hallow, sanctify, dedicate.

**Old Testament** God is said to be *qadesh* or “holy.” When persons or things were “consecrated,” they were separated to or belonged to God. “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy” (Lev. 19:2). “Ye shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation” (Exod. 19:6). When persons were “consecrated,” they were set apart to live according to God’s demands and in His service.

In the OT the ordination of persons to the service of God is indicated by the phrase “to fill the hand.” This phrase is usually translated “consecrate” or “ordain.”<sup>2</sup>

When we talk about consecration and stewardship, we are talking about setting something apart for God. In both the Old and New Testament we see the giving of money, time, property, skills, talents and other things to God. There is no set amount of “things” we have that God requires we consecrate to him. If there were, the Bible would be very specific about it. The reason there is no set amount is because God wants our *very lives* to be consecrated unto him. God desires to make us Holy.

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<sup>1</sup> Merriam–Webster, I. (2003). Merriam–Webster’s collegiate dictionary. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam–Webster, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> Lee, H. P. (2003). Consecration. In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen & T. C. Butler, Ed.) (334). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

## The ABC's of Stewardship

### Consecration: The Requirement of a successful Steward

God is Holy. The holier we are, the closer we can be to God. And who makes us Holy? God does. Whether following the law in the Old Testament, or demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit in the New Testament, what we give is just an effect or byproduct of a life consecrated to God.

## 2. The Rich Young Ruler:

The story of the rich young ruler is recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Each adds a few details. We will read Mark's version:

**Mark 10:17-22** *And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?<sup>18</sup> And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? [there is] none good but one, [that is], God.<sup>19</sup> Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.<sup>20</sup> And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.<sup>21</sup> Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.<sup>22</sup> And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.*

Three things the other accounts add that are not in Mark is:

- One of the commandments that Jesus listed was to love your neighbor as yourself. The young ruler confirmed that he had also kept this commandment from his youth.
- Matthew makes it a point to describe the ruler as young.
- In Matthew, Jesus begins his answer with, "if thou wilt be perfect (complete)..."

**Discussion:** Examine verse 17. What do you think the rich young ruler's attitude was as he approached Jesus?

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## The ABC's of Stewardship

### Consecration: The Requirement of a successful Steward

**Discussion:** Examine verse 18. Jesus does not shy away from being called master, teacher, Lord, the Son of God or the Christ in other places in the New Testament. Why do you think he says what He does in this instance?

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There is no exact right/wrong textbook answer for the questions above. This is the way God has presented His word to us. Here is an explanation that would fit with other examples in scripture:

Jesus was our perfect example. Jesus sought to glorify the Father in everything He did. Did Jesus deserve praise as Lord? Of course, but while He was a man on earth He pointed people to the Father whenever possible. In fact, we read that it was the Father who told Jesus what to say and directed his works (John 14:10). In the case of the rich young ruler, Jesus sees his excitement and dedication, and directs it to the correct place. Jesus is training the young ruler that even "masters" are servants to God. And no man (flesh) will ever be "good" outside of the Father making them good.

Next Jesus reminds the young ruler of the commandments every Jew should know, including loving others as themselves. The young ruler is confident enough to respond that he has kept these from his youth up.

**Discussion:** Did you have any rules or commandments that you grew up with from youth to adulthood? What were they? What was your attitude towards these rules? Did your attitude change over time?

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Keeping the law of God is good. God loves obedience. The rich young ruler did nothing wrong by keeping the law from his youth up. The danger arises (in the rich young ruler's life and in all of ours) when doing the work of God becomes so much of a routine that we lose the sacrificial and purposeful nature of what it means to serve and love God. Have you ever heard the phrase "familiarity breeds contempt"? When we grow up around something or constantly live close to it we tend to take it for granted or forget the cost of that thing.

# The ABC's of Stewardship

## Consecration: The Requirement of a successful Steward

Serving God should be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, not just \_\_\_\_\_.

Is there anything wrong with having Godly habits? By no means. Daniel had a great habit of praying at regular intervals. Jesus had a habit of giving thanks at meals. Godly habits are a great thing. As with any relationship however, God desires an authentic and purposeful love relationship with those he has chosen.

**Discussion:** For those who are dating, engaged or married, or desire to be, describe an authentic, loving relationship between a man and wife. What does that look like?

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**Part 2:** Now imagine a relationship where the husband and wife (or boyfriend and girlfriend) only communicated through habitual laws. What might that look like?

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Now we come to Jesus' solution for the young man. It's vitally important to this whole study that we note this single word in verse 21. That word is "loved". Jesus looked at this man and loved him. His answer, while seeming harsh, was done out of love.

Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_ on us and \_\_\_\_\_ us when He asks us to do something.

Jesus tells the young ruler to sell all that he has, distribute it to the poor, pick up his cross and follow Him. This response is unique to this man. There are plenty of other instances in scripture – both before, during and after Jesus walked the earth – where those who decided to follow Jesus and receive eternal life did not have to sell everything they had. Jesus told the man to sell all he had because that is exactly what *that man* needed. God had found the hidden area of his heart that was not yet consecrated to God.

God isn't as interested in us consecrating our \_\_\_\_\_ as he is in us consecrating our mind, \_\_\_\_\_ and strength.



## The ABC's of Stewardship

### Consecration: The Requirement of a successful Steward

God didn't *need* the rich man's wealth and he doesn't need ours. God delights when we love him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. If money and possessions are holding any part of us back from a complete relationship with God, giving it up now is a small price to pay for what we will gain.

There are two important types of giving. There is the giving up of the old man in order for God to make a new one. And there are the love offerings of a spiritually re-born man unto God. The rich young ruler was going through the first type.

When we consecrate our lives to God He will help determine what we need to give up. The Holy Spirit purifies our lives and reveals anything that is unrighteous. These are the things we lay at the feet of Jesus and His blood cleanses us from unrighteousness. Once we are new creatures, we have the opportunity to give love offerings to God. We have the opportunity to give sacrificially to God not because it's required or because our possessions are holding us back. We have the opportunity to give to God simply to say that we love Him.

Jesus wasn't asking the rich ruler to consecrate his \_\_\_\_\_; He was asking him to consecrate his \_\_\_\_\_.

When we consecrate our lives, our possessions are just the fruit (or effect) of a consecrated life.

There is nothing wrong with owning \_\_\_\_\_, but the possessions should not own \_\_\_\_\_.

John Maxwell tells the story of a fly on the flypaper. The fly is stuck to the flypaper. He may tell himself "Hey, it's nice here. I think I'll stay." But it is just an illusion; the fly is actually trapped. The rich man was trapped by his possessions and it took a perspective change from Jesus to make him realize it.

It's important we don't dismiss the story of the rich man because we feel we don't relate. The rich man looked great from the outside. He was

- young
- influential
- obedient to the law
- he loved God and loved others
- excited (he ran to Jesus)
- humble and open (he bows and asks Jesus for guidance in broad daylight in front of others)

But the young ruler had a part of his life he had not consecrated to God and it was destroying him.

## The ABC's of Stewardship

### Consecration: The Requirement of a successful Steward

**Discussion:** Has there ever been a time in your life when you thought you had everything together but God revealed a portion of your life that was not consecrated to Him? Please share.

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**Discussion:** Do you think the rich man really obeyed *all* of the 10 commandments? Why or why not?

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We don't know all the details of the rich man's walk with God. But we do know that when a choice was given to either follow Jesus or follow his money, he chose the money. This does not sound like someone who was fully committed to the first commandment, "You shall have not other gods before me."

**Romans 12:2** *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

When God asks something of us our response should not be, "What do I have to give?", but "What do I get to become? How is God transforming me into his image? Thank you God for consecrating me to your will!"

We **consecrate** our money and possessions to God so he can continue the process of consecrating **us**.

One of the basic rules of investing is that the more money you invest, the more you stand to make. In the same manner, the more of our lives we yield to God, the greater he can make us. The difference between God and an investment firm is that God's investments always yield positive gain.

## The ABC's of Stewardship

### Consecration: The Requirement of a successful Steward

Let's finish the story. The rich young ruler goes away sad. Jesus goes on to say the following:

**Mark 10:23-27** *And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! <sup>24</sup>And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup>It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. <sup>26</sup>And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? <sup>27</sup>And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men [it is] impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.*

Is it possible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle? No. Nor is it possible for salvation apart from God. With men it is impossible for salvation, but when we give our all to God and allow him to consecrate our lives, we will have eternal life in abundance. God wants us to come to him being poor in spirit. God looks at us with love and desires to have every part of us.

Verse 24 mentions *trusting* in riches. When we trust in something more than God, the thing we trust in becomes our god.

Take some quiet time in your groups and re-read the story of the rich young ruler silently to yourself. Honestly evaluate how you feel when you read the story. Do you feel sorry for the ruler because he has to give up so many things? Or do you feel sorry for him because he missed an opportunity to give all that he had to God and receive the blessings of following Jesus? Carefully evaluate your initial reaction when Jesus asked the man to sell all his possessions. How we react to this story may help all of us evaluate if any of our possessions have not yet been consecrated to God.

## **The ABC's of Stewardship**

Consecration: The Requirement of a successful Steward

# **Do**

This week keep an empty jar in a place that you will see it frequently. Everyday pray to be shown something specific about your money, time, property, skills or talents that he wants you to consecrate to Him. Write it on a slip of paper and put it in the jar. Use this as your daily reminder of what God is asking you to do.

## The ABC's of Stewardship

Donation: The Reward of a successful Steward

# Engage

If you could give one item to everyone in the world (the same item to each), what would it be and why?

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When you were the most financially poor you have ever been, what was your most embarrassing/least appealing possession? Maybe it was an article of clothing, a piece of furniture, your car, etc.

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Followup: What would you consider the nicest possession you have ever owned?

## The ABC's of Stewardship

Donation: The Reward of a successful Steward

# Develop

### Outline

1. Are we a consumer or contributor?
2. Truths about givers
3. Types of givers

### Are we consumers or contributors?

In Luke chapter 6, Jesus gave a tremendous teaching on giving. In one thought he summed up how God rewards those who will give generously. He describes a person who contributes to the lives of those around them. We have a choice if we are going to take, consume and use up the resources around us, or if we are going to contribute, give and provide resources to make the world around us and the people around us better.

**Luke 6:38** *Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*

We talked about this verse a little earlier in this study on stewardship, but it is worth looking at again. Our giving has very little to do with our assets, it has everything to do with attitude. Do we live like we are owed something, or that we owe others something? We have received freely, we should give freely.

We are \_\_\_\_\_ by God to be a \_\_\_\_\_ to others.

When you look earlier in this same chapter you see Jesus talking about those who are blessed or happy.

**Luke 6:20-25** *And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed [be ye] poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. <sup>21</sup> Blessed [are ye] that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed [are ye] that weep now: for ye shall laugh. <sup>22</sup> Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you [from their company], and shall reproach [you], and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. <sup>23</sup> Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward [is] great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. <sup>24</sup> But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. <sup>25</sup> Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.*

## The ABC's of Stewardship

### Donation: The Reward of a successful Steward

In this passage those who had the fewest assets were called blessed, those who had much were given a warning of woe. Jesus isn't anti-rich and pro poor, but he is challenging the popular thinking of the day. The thought was, if you are rich that meant you were blessed by God and if you are poor it meant that God was punishing you.

Those that are "poor" in this passage don't have much material wealth or many assets, but if they were blessed, it means they weren't hoarding what they did have. They were storing up treasure in heaven. Those who were rich in this passage, were consumers. They hoarded treasure for themselves. Jesus says they received their consolation. He means that they should try to enjoy every moment they have now because that is their comfort, it is all the comfort they will ever be able to receive. We have a choice to make in this life. Will we be consumers or will we be contributors and it has nothing to do with our assets. If we are stingy with the little we have, we have still received our reward in this life.

We have \_\_\_\_\_ to give, the question is \_\_\_\_\_ we give them.

**Discussion:** Have you ever given when you weren't sure you really had it to give? What did you feel in the moment and after? What was the result of your action?

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Years ago there was an earthquake in Alaska that caused millions in damage to the state. The governor was sitting in his office thinking about how they were going to recover from the devastation when he opened a letter. It was from a little boy who sent the governor a card with 2 nickels taped to it and told him it was for the recovery effort and if he needed more, to let him know. The boy was not deterred by the size of the problem or the fact that ten cents wasn't even close to being enough to complete the job. He was contributing what he could. The size of our contribution isn't the thing, it is our willingness to contribute what we have.

## Truths about givers

**2 Corinthians 9:6-7** *But this [I say], He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. <sup>7</sup> Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, [so let him give]; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.*

## The ABC's of Stewardship

### Donation: The Reward of a successful Steward

How we give is just as important as the fact that we give. Paul writing to the church in Corinth tells them that God loves a cheerful giver. We shouldn't give out of obligation or because we want something in return, but because we love God. Our motivation matters in our giving. If we give to get, we won't get. We have to give what God laid on our heart. If we continue reading in Luke chapter six, Jesus will talk a little bit about this concept.

**Luke 6:27-35** *But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, <sup>28</sup> Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. <sup>29</sup> And unto him that smiteth thee on the [one] cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not [to take thy] coat also. <sup>30</sup> Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask [them] not again. <sup>31</sup> And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. <sup>32</sup> For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. <sup>33</sup> And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. <sup>34</sup> And if ye lend [to them] of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. <sup>35</sup> But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and [to] the evil.*

Notice that Jesus says in verse 35 to do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great. It seems like a paradox, but its based on our heart. If we look to bless others, God will bless us. We have to be genuine in our love and care for others. If we love with an agenda, then it really isn't love.

**Discussion:** Looking at this teaching from Jesus, how important do you think the motivation behind our giving is to Jesus?

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Givers give without expecting something in return. If we give expecting something back, we aren't giving. We are trading. We shouldn't be keeping score; you did something for me now I need to do something for you in return. Neither should you give to someone expecting them to repay the favor at some point in the future.

When we operate in the grace of God we are just a channel of resources. We ask God what do you want to do through me. This is the grace level of giving. Its knowing God has so much more to give than we can ever spend. We become a conduit of the riches of God to flow through us like a river.



## The ABC's of Stewardship

### Donation: The Reward of a successful Steward

**Discussion:** Have you ever given expecting in return? Compare that with a time that you gave with out expecting anything.

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## Types of givers

John D Rockefeller was a millionaire by the time he was 23 and by the time he reached 50 he became a billionaire and was the richest man alive. He was a hoarder of his riches. He didn't give out of his abundance and was stingy with his money. He became so sick that all he could eat was milk and crackers by the time he was 53 and was given a year to live by doctors. He had become so obsessed with keeping his money that it riddled him with ulcers and he became sick literally unto death. It was at the lowest point that he decided to turn his life around. He started giving to church and he gave lots of money to medical research. The moment he started giving, he started getting better and he lived until he was 90 years old.

He started his life as one type of giver. The lookout for number one, I will not give anything person. They are lonely people. They are scared of losing what they have, whether little or much.

There is also the type of giver who gives expecting in return. The problem is, that you won't always get something back and when that happens this type of giver feels cheated. It would make anyone miserable.

True givers though, understand the principle of sowing and reaping. It's not doing something now so I can receive later. Like we said earlier, that is just trading. You will be rewarded, but the reward comes from God out of our obedience, not out of our own labor. God is the source of our resources or blessings, not our efforts. We do good, we give without seeing or seeking a reward.

When Winston Churchill was a boy he and a friend were swimming when Churchill got into trouble and started drowning. His childhood friend saved his life. This young man had ambitions of becoming a doctor someday, but his father said it couldn't happen because of their station in life. They simply didn't have the money or ability to send him to medical school. After Churchill's father learned of what happened he offered to pay for the boy to go to school. That little boys name was Alexander Fleming and he would grow up to become a doctor and discover penicillin. Later in life Churchill was in Egypt and became deathly ill and when Alexander Fleming heard, he flew to Egypt and used his knowledge of medicine to save Churchill's life again. The generosity of a father would bless his son many years after the act of kindness. This is the selfless giver.

When giving is your \_\_\_\_\_ it will \_\_\_\_\_ your life.

## The ABC's of Stewardship

### Donation: The Reward of a successful Steward

**Malachi 3:7-10** *Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept [them]. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? <sup>8</sup> Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup> Ye [are] cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, [even] this whole nation. <sup>10</sup> Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that [there shall] not [be room] enough [to receive it].*

This is the only thing God ever said for us to test him on, our giving. He promises that if we are selfless in our giving that he will open up the windows of Heaven for us. We will be so blessed that there will not be room enough to receive it.

Think about the boy who gave two little fish and five loaves of bread. What could so little do for so many? But he gave willingly and God multiplied and blessed and more food was picked up that what was originally given. This is God's economy. This is what can happen when we give to God cheerfully with expecting something in return. We can be a selfless giver. We can give, even if we feel it is too small to give. It's not. Give as God has purposed in your heart and you will be blessed. He tells us to prove him. God can do a lot with the amount you give and can attend to your needs. Place your trust in him not material things. Trust that he has thoughts of good for you. Material things are fleeting.

I remember hearing a story about a man who told his wife on his death bed that he wanted to be buried with his money. His wife dutifully agreed. At the funeral, standing at the casket the woman wrote a rather sizable check and dropped it in the casket. A friend asked why she had done such a thing and she replied "he said he wanted to be buried with his money, if he can cash it where he is going then he can have it".

You see, one day we are going to die. 10 out of 10 people will die; it's just the way it works. The only question is what you will have when you die. Treasure here on earth or treasure in heaven? The choice is ours. We make it every day in the decisions of how giving we are to those around us. I pray this study on Stewardship has opened your heart and mind to the prompting of the Holy Spirit to give as he would have you give. May you pour out the blessing your receive and never run out.

**Discussion:** How do you think we can give without expecting in return and yet have God tell us to test him in our giving?

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## **The ABC's of Stewardship**

Donation: The Reward of a successful Steward

# **Do**

Give generously. Pray for wisdom on how to be wise stewards with your resources this week/month. In the areas where you were able to find extra money by cutting back on a cup of coffee a week, or making lunch instead of buying, give that generously in faith and believe God will bless you. Do this in the areas of time, skill and talents as well.

