

English Transcript

Biblical Principles for Giving

Lesson 2: We are Managers NOT Owners!

Welcome back to Biblical Principles of Giving as we continue with Lesson 2. Turn to page 8 in your handout.

As we begin this lesson take a minute to write down all that you own. This list will represent your most important possessions. I have provided some ideas on page to get you started. You may add other things to this list. Pause the recording now to complete your list and then restart the audio when you are ready to continue.

Welcome back!

I suspect that your list included many of the items on page 8. As you consider your list of possessions, ask yourself if you are truly the owner. From a worldly and legal perspective, we could say yes. Our name is on the mortgage or lease to our house or car. We have the receipts to show we purchased any of these items.

The title of this lesson is “We Are Managers NOT Owners!” We often think we are the owners, but really, we are just managers or stewards of what God has given and entrusted to us.

Let us begin by reading the prayer of King David from 1 Chronicles 29:10-20

*¹⁰ Therefore David blessed the Lord in the presence of all the assembly. And David said: “Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. ¹¹ **Yours, O Lord**, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for **all** that is in the heavens and in the earth is **yours**. **Yours** is the kingdom, O Lord, and **you** are **exalted** as **head** above **all**. ¹² Both riches and honor come from **you**, and **you** rule over **all**. In **your** hand are power and might, and in **your** hand it is to make great and to give strength to **all**. ¹³ And now we thank **you**, our God, and praise **your** glorious name.*

*¹⁴ “But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? **For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.** ¹⁵ For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding. ¹⁶ O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name **comes from your hand and is all your own.** ¹⁷ I know, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. In the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen your people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to you. ¹⁸ O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts toward you. ¹⁹ Grant to Solomon my son a whole heart that he may keep your commandments, your testimonies, and your statutes, performing all, and that he may build the palace for which I have made provision.” ²⁰ Then David said to all the assembly, “Bless the Lord your God.” And all the*

assembly blessed the Lord, the God of their fathers, and bowed their heads and paid homage to the Lord and to the king.

If we focus just on verses 11-13, we see that David's vision is on the Lord. Six times David uses the word "Yours" showing his reference and attention on the God. Four times he uses the word "all" to demonstrate the scope of the power, glory and ownership that belongs to God. Four times he used the word "you" to maintain the focus once again on the Lord. And three times the Lord's position as "exalted," "head," and "ruler" is affirmed.

Then in verse 14 David states that all things have been given to him and others by God.

The life principle from this prayer and for this lesson is that God owns it all! He owns creation. He owns our bodies. He owns our life and times. He owns our wealth and possessions. He owns it all. Look at each of these verses to support these statements.

God owns Creation: *The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein. (Psalm 24:1)*

God own You and Your body: *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)*

God owns Your life and times: *My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. (Psalm 139:15-16)*

God owns Your wealth and possessions:

The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts. (Haggai 2:8)
You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth ... (Deuteronomy 8:18a)

Your body is not your own.

Your time is not your own.

Your wealth and possessions are not your own.

We are managers/stewards, not owners!

All that we are and all that we have belongs to God. He has temporarily entrusted it to us to manage according to His wishes.

The key to understanding God's will with our wealth and possessions is to have a proper understanding of stewardship. By Webster's definition, a steward is "one who manages

another's property." We are stewards of God's property while we are on earth. He can choose to entrust us with as much or as little as He desires, but at no time will we ever take ownership.

If we can accept this role as stewards and manage God's resources according to what He tells us in His Word, God will continue to entrust us with even more responsibility. But why would He entrust more responsibility to the one who acts like he/she is the true owner of what they possess?

Let us read another parable of Jesus from Matthew 25:14-30. In chapters 24 and 25, Jesus is teaching about his return after the crucifixion and ascension to set up His kingdom. He is teaching about the importance of being ready for His return. He teaches about the budding fig tree (24:32-35), the faithful servant (24:45-51), the ten virgins (25:1-13), the parable of the talents (25:14-30), and the sheep and goats (25:31-46). The overall message is that even though we do not know when Jesus will return, we are to prepare ourselves by faithfully living in his will. The first step in being ready is to trust Him for salvation. As a result of having true saving faith, his disciples will follow him in obedience and lay up treasures for the future kingdom.

Follow along as I read Matthew 25:14-30.

¹⁴ "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵ To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶ He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷ So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸ But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹ Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' ²¹ His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' ²² And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' ²³ His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' ²⁴ He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' ²⁶ But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Let us first make some observations from this passage.

In this parable, explain how Jesus is like “the man going on a journey” and how we are like the “servants”?

After Jesus’ resurrection and ascension there will be an extended gap of time before his certain return. He will come back as the conquering king to set up his kingdom. As his disciples, we are left as ambassadors and witnesses to make disciples and build his kingdom.

Why do you think each servant was given different amounts of money?

God determines the gifts and abilities given to each of us. We see this in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 with the distribution of spiritual gifts. We each have different abilities and various levels of faith. What we receive is less important compared with how we use what we have been given.

Did the owner ask them to all earn the same amount?

The owner made no statement about what was expected. The only unstated expectation was that each servant should be faithful if they are truly his servants.

How were the faithful servants rewarded?

Both the one who earned five talents and the one who earned two received the same blessing. The owner said, “Well done good and faithful servant. You have been faithful; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.”

What happened to the unfaithful servant?

The servant who received one talent and buried it received no reward. In the context of the return of Jesus, the servant represents the person who may profess faith in Christ but has never been converted. When Jesus returns, he will say to them, away from me, I never knew you. If this servant believed that the master was returning, he should have at least put the money in the bank so it could have earned interest. If he had done this, the servant would have to say that the money belonged to the master, and there would be a record that it was on deposit in the bank earning interest for the master. By burying it, no one would have known about the talent and when the master did not return, the money would be his. The penalty for this servant reveals that this parable is not just about serving God faithfully, but it also speaks to those who have true saving faith. This servant was cast into the darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is always the description of hell.

In addition to having true faith in Jesus, this parable teaches us to use whatever gifts and abilities God has given us to conduct His work in this world preparing for the return of Jesus Christ. We can summarize at least these principles from this lesson:

- God owns it all: God holds all the rights, and we are given responsibilities.
- God can use money and possessions to help us grow.
 - It can be a tool to teach us more about living for Him (Philippians 4:11-12),
 - it can be a test (Luke 16:11-12),
 - and it can be a source of testimony (Matthew 5:13-16).
- The amount is not important; attitude is everything. God does not condemn wealth nor glorify poverty. He owns it all, therefore hold everything with an open hand.
- Faith requires action on our part.

We can think of Biblical stewardship in this way:

The use of God-given gifts and resources (time, talents, treasure, truth, relationships) for the accomplishment of God-given goals and objectives. We are stewards of all these gifts as well ...

- **Time**: *So, teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. (Psalm 90:12)*
- **Spouses**: *House and wealth are inherited from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD. (Proverbs 19:14)*
- **Children**: *Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. (Psalm 127:3)*
- **Money**: *If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? (Luke 16:11-12)*
- **Spiritual Gifts**: *As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace ... (1 Peter 4:10)*
- **The Gospel/God's Word**: *This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. (1 Corinthians 4:1-2)*
- **People**: *Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. (Acts 20:28)*

How would your view of wealth and possessions change if every day you asked, "How does God want me to spend His money?"

What can you do to remind yourself that you are a manager/steward of God's resources?

When we think about our giving, instead of asking how much of my money will I give back to God, but rather, how much of God's money will I keep for myself?

As we think about our wealth and possessions, may these ideas guide our decisions:

1. God owns it all.
2. When we give to God, we are giving back a portion of what he already owns.
3. Giving to God should be the first line item in our budget.
4. Commit to live a simple life within our means.
5. As our income increases, our standard of living does not need to increase at the same rate.
6. Hold our possessions with an open hand.
7. We should look to continually increase our giving toward kingdom purposes from year to year as God provides.
8. Work hard to eliminate debt so we have more to invest in the kingdom.
9. Save to prepare for the future.
10. Live in such a way as to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

This concludes Lesson 2. In this lesson we emphasized the principle that God owns it all. We are managers and not owners.

In Lesson 1 we taught that we must have an eternal perspective and use our possessions to build up the kingdom as we lay up treasures in heaven.

In Lesson 3 we will discuss the Old Testament tithe and see what it can teach us as we desire to excel in the grace of giving under the New Covenant.