Stewardship

Intro. Stewardship is an area that is not discussed much in the church today and often it is applied to only one area of our lives. Stewardship is a study that involves every area of our life, not just giving. But, what is a steward?

I. Definition of Steward.
   A. In English
      1. Webster defines it as, “An officer or employee in a large family, or on a large estate, to manage the domestic concerns, supervise servants, collect rents or income, keep accounts, etc., an administrator, or supervisor; a manager.”
      2. From others we learn that it is a person or official who controlled the domestic affairs of a household, supervising the service of the master’s table, directing the domestic, regulating household expenditures. A manager and administrator of a large estate and all the business associated with it.
   B. In Greek
      1. Notice three words.
         a. ἐπιτρόπος (epitropos)
            (1) Literally means “one to whose care something is committed.”
            (2) Has reference to a guardian, or a manager, or foreman.
         b. οίκονομος (oikonomos) and οίκονομιά (oikonomia)
            (1) While separate words they are closely related.
            (2) Comes from:
               (a) οίκος (oikos) meaning “house.”
               (b) νεμω (nemo) meaning “manage.”
               (c) It refers to the management of a house or household affairs.
            (3) It is translated stewardship, dispensation, governor, chamberlain.
      2. Notice two other words.
         a. Trustee
            (1) Has reference to one to whom something is entrusted in the confidence that it will be kept and protected.
            (2) It receives its significance from the word confidence.
         b. Partner
            (1) This has reference to the idea of fellowship or partaking together of something.
            (2) Having something in common with someone thus becoming a co-worker or fellow worker.
      3. Considering these three terms together.
         a. Trustee: in that we receive benefits and blessings from God to protect and hold intact.
         b. Steward: in that we must administer these benefits with the proper responsibility.
         c. Partner: in that we become more than a slave in that we become a partaker of God’s divine nature, and fellow worker with God.
II. GOD OWNS ALL THINGS.

A. The starting point of stewardship is the recognition that God is Creator.
   1. Gen. 1:1 "1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."
   2. Psa. 19:1 "1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."
   3. John 1:1 "1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
   4. Col. 1:16 "16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:"

B. Thus, God owns everything.
   1. By right of creation.
      2. Psa. 24:1-2 "1 The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. 
         2 For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods."
   3. Psa. 50:10-12 "10 For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. 11 I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. 12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof."
   4. Even our souls; Eze. 18:4 "4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

C. God gives us what we possess.
   1. Jam. 1:17 "17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."
   2. 1 Chr. 29:14 "14 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."

III. A GOOD STEWARD MUST BE FAITHFUL.

A. Recognizing that God entrust us with what we possess, we must administer this trust responsibly.
   1. Notice God’s claims upon us; Isa. 43:1 "1 But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."
      a. Creation
      b. Redemption
      c. Providence (called you)
   2. We belong to God.
      a. 1 Cor. 6:19-20 "19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s."
      b. We thus must be faithful stewards.

B. Faithful stewards.
   1. 1 Cor. 4:1-2 "1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."
   2. 1 Pet. 4:10-11 "10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
C. In our stewardship we recognize that we become partners with Christ.
1. John 15:15 “15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”
2. 1 Cor. 3:9 “9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.”
3. 2 Cor. 6:1 “1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”

IV. We must give account of our stewardship
A. Luke 16:2 “2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.”
B. Luke 12:42-48 “42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. 45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; 46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. 47 And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself; neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall he be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”

C. Mat. 25:14-30 “14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. 16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. 17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. 18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 20 And so he that had received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. 21 His lord answered and said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. 23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not straewed: 27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. 28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. 30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Conclusion: God has blessed us by entrusting to us a great amount. He expects us to be faithful stewards of that which He has given us. One day we will stand before Him in judgment and will be judged on how faithful we have been. Let us be prepared by being faithful stewards of that which God owns.