

Stewardship

Inspiring a deeper understanding of true giving

June 2022

Benjamin Franklin has been called “The Father of All Yankees.” His practical wisdom, found in his essays, letters, and the annual *Poor Richard’s Almanac*, have had great influence on Americans of succeeding generations. Many Americans remember such gems of advice as, “Time is money.” There were many who treasured his advice on how to make money and how to use money.

For example, he advised, “The way to wealth is as plain as the way to the market. It depends chiefly on two words, industry and frugality.” And he also said, “Remember, money can beget money.”

If the Bible had nothing to say about how to make money and how to use money, it would be negligent. Making and using money is an important part of human life ... it always has been and it always will be. If the Scriptures were silent about these activities, we could only conclude that the Bible is out of touch with the human condition.

The prophet Amos has a relatively simple formula for God’s people about how to make money: make it honestly. In some of the strongest language we find in the Bible, we find Amos quoting Yahweh, usually so forgiving and understanding, as saying to those who become rich by oppressing the poor: “Never will I forget a single thing you have done.”

In the last several years many colleges have introduced ethics courses in their programs. These schools are not all religious colleges either. Many people have felt the need for courses in

ethics because professional, educated people of all kinds have come to regard making money as an end in itself. Rising to the top of the economic ladder has become so important that many are forgetful of whom they step on as they



climb. White collar crime has made educators aware that it is not only important to teach others how to make money, but how to make it honestly.

A christian steward does not dedicate time, talent, or treasure that they may become God’s, but because they are God’s.



(Continued on page 4)

God's Talent Search

Every year, show business presents its super stars to the world. These are the entertainers who have survived all the preliminary rounds in the search for talent. They have been chosen because they are tops in ability and charisma.

God conducts a continuous talent search also, but the process is different. In this talent search all are participants; no one is merely a spectator.

All performers are under scrutiny, not to see whether some are better than others, but to examine the manner in which they are using their talents. The main questions are:

- *To what purpose are they devoting their talents?*
- *Do they thank God for giving them all their abilities?*
- *Do they envy the talents of others or do they thank God for these gifts also?*
- *Are they putting their talents to use?*

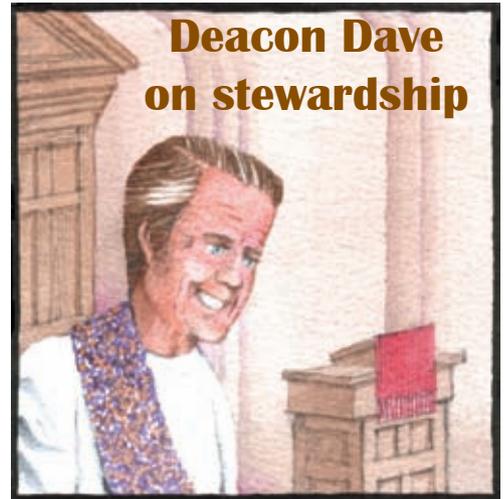
Christ redeemed the human race so that every God-given talent might be rescued from the service of money and self-gratification and delivered to the sacred service of the Lord.

Show business emphasizes talents as a foundation of a private career. The Lord regards them as a means of service to others. In Christ, he has given the perfect pattern for using talents correctly. Talents fulfill their finest purpose when they are used to lead people to faith in God's love. Talents have lasting value only when they are employed in God's service.

There's a place for you and your talents on God's team: your congregation!



Deacon Dave on stewardship



It seems as if nobody can get enough these days. Everywhere I go I overhear people saying: "If only I could get a \$100 raise." "If only I could have just one more dress." How many times have you heard someone make such a statement? How many times have you said it yourself? If only ... if just ... one more ... just one more.

Doesn't it seem as if people never get enough? Sure there's inflation and prices keep going up, but that's not the whole story. There's something about people. They always want more. It makes you wonder. When is enough ever going to be enough? Where does the desire for more end?

I was musing in this vein when I was suddenly struck by a thought: There is something that people seem to be able to get enough of!

Ask them how much they should pledge to their church. They'll come up with an idea of what is enough in a flash. Often it is token giving.

Ask them how much of their time, talents and energy they should give to their church. For most people an occasional hour seems enough.

Strange isn't it, how most of us can figure out very quickly, how much is enough for God.

If we are to be Christian stewards we

(Continued on page 4)

"If you want to live longer, give the other driver the right of way."

"There will always be roses, but someone has to take care of them."

"People who spend their time finding fault usually have little else to do."

Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor:

I offer this letter as an opportunity to voice my opinion on the subject of giving. I think that tithing is the only form of church support for me because it has a spiritual motivation rather than a material one. Too long, people have given to God because their church needs it, rather than because God needs it. People should tithe even in parishes that are affluent because God's work goes far beyond parish boundaries.

At one time I felt that after I had given money, I had completed my stewardship responsibilities. I noticed that quite a few of the articles in your publication, *Stewardship*, dealt with time and talent and this got me thinking. As time has passed I have come to recognize that I should, in addition to giving money, dedicate a portion of my time to God's service, since my time really belongs to God ... and God has placed it in my charge. The same goes for my talents. I own no talents. Talents belong to God. Those I have were not given to me. They were entrusted to my care and I am to use them as God wishes.

Now I try to give more than a weekly offering to my church. My aim is to also offer my talents and time in the service of God, on Sunday, and on every day and in every hour. I hope this letter will help others to see stewardship as I now do.

P. Gibbons
Emporia, Kansas

The Good Steward

A bride of a few months listened to two members of her husband's family deciding who were the happiest couple they knew. The decision for first place went to a cousin and his wife. A little surprised at first, she studied the situation.

She found that the "happiest couple in the world" had the lowest income of any of the brothers and sisters in the family. She found that they lived in the smallest house; they knew the fewest big-name people; their professional work drew the least national recognition. But she also discov-

... this couple was happy not because of the money they did not have, and not because of the money they did have ...

ered that they had jobs that were their choice of any in the world; they liked their community; they lived in the part of the United States they loved most; their home was the center of informal friendly groups; they had more interests on the string than a dozen people could conquer in a lifetime; and, they instigated many community and church activities.

The young bride came to the decision that this couple was happy not because of the money they did not have, and not because of the money they did have, but because the interests around which their lives centered were interests that money had no power to make or break.

Their greatest happiness was found outside the realm of things. 



God has given us many gifts and calls us to use those gifts to build up his kingdom. Our faith identifies us as stewards and gives us a relationship with God. Many of these gifts are given for our needs; others are given for the needs of others. Stewardship is a ministry by which we nurture and share our gifts.



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Continued from page 1...

Benjamin Franklin...

After telling us how to make money, the readings tell us how to use it. St. Luke is brief: “Use it wisely.” For Christians, St. Luke explains, the wise use of money means an unselfish use. Christians use wealth not simply to increase their own comfort, provide more luxuries for themselves, acquire more conveniences, or promote their own prestige. No, Christians keep in mind the needs of others and how they can with their wealth assist those less fortunate. Christians see wealth not as an end in itself, but as a way of promoting God’s kingdom on earth. Acquiring wealth, according to St. Luke, is a rather small achievement. The real test of a person’s worth is whether he or she can put that wealth to work ... can it be used to serve God’s plans and thus achieve eternal merit? 

Continued from page 2...

Deacon Dave...

must learn to think differently. We must first consider how much God has given to us. Has God ever stopped giving because God felt he had given enough? If God did stop giving, where would we be? A steward knows that all that they have is a gift from God. So the steward is always asking if they can do more for God. The steward donates freely of their time and talent, assisting wherever and whenever they can. The steward cultivates an attitude of generous giving, because they know the importance of their gift to God’s work.

Instead of wanting to have more, the steward wants to do more. Because they know that they can never do enough for God! 

