

Stewardship

Inspiring a deeper understanding of true giving

October 2022

Christians have an attractive idea that God has number one claim on us ... on everything we own, on everything we are. But, honestly, do we believe it? There are fellows and girls that do live as if what they have, God gave them. But there seem to be just as many who live the opposite way, as if everything they are and own are the products of their own efforts.

“My talents and my work have gained for me this wealth, and I’m the only one who’s going to say what I do with it.” Now, who is right?

I asked Bob Barton, who works in the garage after school and on Saturdays to earn money for engineering school, which one was right and he said that, of course, “the self-made man” was. “I know how to handle tools,” he said, “and believe me I’m going to climb to the top as an engineer. What I want, I get. Nothing will stop your boy Bob.”

Then I asked Andy Newsome, who works with Bob and is one of his closest friends, and Andy replied, speaking very slowly and deliberately, “Well, the way I figure it, this is God’s world. God wants it to be a pretty good world and sent his son to show us how it could be like that. Some men did not like the picture Christ painted; it was too good for them; they couldn’t take it, so they crucified him. But, God loved us enough that he sent Christ back to us. It’s my idea that if God loved me so much, I owe him my life. Right now I’m trying to find out how God intends to use it.”

This answer caught Bob by surprise. He had never heard Andy speak in those

terms before. The idea of owing our lives to God because God gave his son for us was “all Greek” to him; and yet Andy was so sure of himself, so certain in his conviction that Bob had no answer.

Then I asked Andy, “Have you any leads yet on the way God wants you to use your life?”



“Nothing I can put my finger on and say “This is it!” was the reply. “But I like science pretty well, and it seems logical to me that God would use that interest in some way. I’ve thought of going into

(Continued on page 4)

If you have a warm handclasp, use it.

If you have a gift of speech, speak.

If you have energy, spend it for good.

If you have money, give it.

If you have time, share it.



Saturdays are Special

Did you know that Saturdays are special for Christians? With our Jewish friends, we are called to remember that Saturday is a day to rejoice in the beauty and glory of creation, which Genesis describes as taking place on the week's first six days, Sunday - Friday.

For Christians, a celebration of the goodness of creation and the infinite goodness of the Creator is a perfect preparation for the Celebration of the Resurrection; the restoration of the fullness of life and beauty to Jesus Christ and to the whole creation.

While we often think of the creation as being long ago, it has not ended but is continued among us and in us to the end of time. I have carried with me on a scrap of paper for many years the words from the next to last chapter of the Bible, "Behold I make all things new."

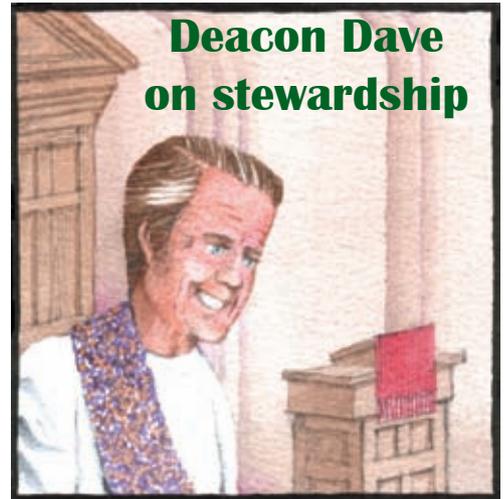
This is God's promise, this is God's way; always to be continuing his creating work, always to be about loving creating and re-creating of the world. Hymn 155 states the truth so beautifully, "New ev'ry morning is the love our wakening and uprising prove."

God, in loving power, is always offering us new time, new life, new strength. While the calendar may tell us the year begins January first and the church year begins on Advent Sunday, and our birthday may commence a new year in April, still for all school children and many adults September is a most real beginning.

The Lord God is graciously giving us a new day and season to seek and discover him in new and wonderful ways, and newly in tried and true ways.

(Continued on page 3)

Deacon Dave on stewardship



Christian commitment is the tie that binds us to the purpose and power of God. The Apostle Paul describes the commitment of Christ. He "humbled himself" ... "unto death, even death on a cross." Being God, he still did this because of his commitment to enter our world and reveal God's love and our need of God.

Now you and I are challenged to be of this same "mind" or commitment. Sometimes the tie that binds us to God's purpose is a sort of slip-knot arrangement, allowing slack for our own desires. Paul urges us to tie our commitment tightly and squarely as did Christ. Have we?

A real test of our commitment is stewardship. Paul says, "Let each of you look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." When we consider how Christ humbled himself, how the needs are just as desperate today, and how we are called to have the same mind, even a tithe seems small, doesn't it? The discipline of tithing is the square-knot by which God blesses the tie that binds us to him and to others. If, as a Christian, you haven't tried tithing, do it now and ask God to bless you! 

*We own nothing.
We are simply
stewards of our lives,
our goods, and our
relationships. A basic
understanding of
Christian stewardship
is that we are set in
this world as caretakers,
as stewards, not
as possessors. To be
wise, is, in one sense,
to be a good steward.*



Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

All my life (I'm eighteen) I have been what my friends call a sap when it comes to donations. They laugh because I can't pass a blind man, a cripple, a deaf person, or even just a commonplace beggar, on the street.

The other night we were standing on the corner waiting for a bus and a minister (I guess that's what he was) asked for a few pennies.

So I dug in my bag and gave him some change. Right away my friends tell me I have committed a sin.

Why have I sinned? Was I to play the doubting Thomas when the man said he needed money? Was I to ask for his diploma from the school of ministry before giving him some small change? Perhaps he was odd, but there had to be some need in him for the poor man to stand on street corners begging!

Cathy

Continued from page 2...

Saturdays are Special...

God would give us new life as we give ourselves this fall season newly, more deeply and fervently to serve him by helping our brothers and sisters. God would give us new strength for new and exciting commitments to, and adventures with him.

Thank you, loving Father, for creating us in your image and likeness, for daily renewing us in your Holy Spirit, and for giving us a new season to launch forth in your beautiful fresh new service. 

The Good Steward

The practice of tithing will increase the spirit of penance and the abnegation of the material. It will develop a host of Christian virtues and teach a right appreciation of material things. It also leads to a new insight into spiritual values.

I know (from years of listening) that a claim such as this will produce a resounding round of emphatic guffaws. Yet, I'll venture that the above statement will be disclaimed only by those who have never tithed or even attempted to tithe.

... Ask a tither ...

Those who frown on tithing, or sacrificial giving, or any other solidly and sacrificially based budget of 10 percent of one's income for God's work, dispute the "spiritual" values of these programs. They will tell us that "all you're looking for is money" (which is not true, since it is more accurate to say that what is sought is generosity).

Ask a tither. These are the people who speak of a heightened spirit of penance, and charity, and even humility and the benefits of developing a more sound appreciation of money, investments and the whole range of material things. These are the people who will tell you of the blessings that come with sharing their material blessings with God. 



In order for you to be what you should as a church member, you must first define and confirm your stewardship obligations and commitments between yourself and Christ who gave his all for you.

Stewardship of time, talent and possessions is the very heart of Christian discipleship and our way of expressing our love in response to God's amazing grace.

Continued from page 1...

Christians have an ...

research, where I could devote my talents to discovering something that would benefit people. Or of being a teacher, because a science teacher with a Christian faith ought to be able to do a lot of good. Or, I may be a doctor ... perhaps a missionary doctor. I don't know yet."

"But how will you know when the time comes?" asked Bob skeptically, getting into the conversation at last. "So far as I'm concerned, it's money that makes the world go around. So that's what I'm out to get, and I'll get all I can. I may never be a millionaire, but you won't see me starve. I know what I'm after. You don't. Which one of us is right?"

"I still think I am, Bob," was Andy's answer. "You seem to be more certain at the moment than I am. But I'm working on it. I've prayed about it. In young people's meeting, I've studied the needs of the world and tried to; seen how my abilities stack up against them. I've been reading what the Apostle Paul said in the letter to the Romans about the different gifts we all have. So I think that as long as I keep on doing those things ... praying, studying the needs of the world, trying to find God's guidance through the church and the Bible ... I'll be ready when God chooses to show me what I am to do."

"Maybe so, maybe so," said Bob. "But it isn't the way I work. Does God have anything to say to you about how to use your abilities now? So far as I'm concerned working in this garage was certainly my own idea. What about you? Do you think God helped you get the job here?" And he laughed as he thought of the burly, profane owner of the garage, believing such a queer thing if it were ever suggested to him.

Andy laughed too, knowing what was in Bob's mind. "You probably won't be-

lieve me, Bob, but I do think just that. I had a chance to work in the town library this year where I would make more money than Ed is giving us. But I prayed about it, and God led me to take this job. I'm sure of it because I have been able to help Ed's son with his chemistry and in that way I have gotten him interested in our church school class. If I'd been at the library, I would never have known this family.

"Well, I'll be doggoned," said Bob. "I didn't know you were here to do missionary work. I'll steer clear of you from now on." Andy laughed, though there was a serious ring to his voice. "Better watch out or I'll sneak up on you when you're not looking!"

There you have it. Two fellows I know, very close friends, yet each with quite a different idea about the way to use his abilities. One is in life to get everything he can for himself. The other intends to give all he can, regarding his fellows as colleagues in the task of making this a better world. What do you think? Who has the more Christian attitude? And how do their ideas stack up against the ones you have about the use you are making of your talents? 

