

**BIBLE "STEWARDSHIP"**

As one studies God's holy Bible, there comes an increasing conviction that the converted Christian has an inescapable responsibility to do, and not to do, certain things in relation to what God has revealed. In saying this, we must always remember that we do, or obey, or refrain from that which is wrong, not to secure God's acceptance and favor, but as a natural result of a faith and love relationship with Christ, as a result of our being new "creatures" (2 Corinthians 5:17), in whom Christ lives (Galatians 2:20). This new-found responsibility is understood only by the converted man or woman.

In the Bible this responsibility is often referred to as "stewardship." The word "steward" conveys the idea that God has entrusted something to us, and we are responsible to Him for the way we use it. In our studies on the Sabbath, we have already sensed our responsibility or stewardship to God in relation to our time. We are responsible for how we use the seventh day, and also for our use of time every day of the week. In this lesson we will focus on another aspect of stewardship--our means.

1. First, what gives God such authority over His creatures? What answer could we give after reading Genesis 1:1, Psalms 24:1,2, Psalms 50:10-12, and Haggai 2:8?  

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2. What further reason does God have on our lives, as made clear in 1 Timothy 2:5,6, and 1 Corinthians 6:20?  

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3. In spite of all that God has done for us, what right can we all still exercise, according to Matthew 19:16-22?  

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4. What is the basic problem when a person refuses God's rightful claims to expect of him faithful stewardship? Tie these two texts together.
  - (a) Read the parable in Matthew 25:14-30. Compare how many words it took the faithful servants to report in verses 20,22, with how many words there were in the excuse of the unfaithful servant in verses 24,25. What did the third servant accuse God of in verse 24?  

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  - (b) How is the problem of this unfaithful servant made clear in the contrasting counsel of Jesus that very same morning to the lawyer in Matthew 22:37?  

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5. God claims our faithfulness in relation to our time. The God of life gives us our time to live. He sustains us every day, whether we recognize it or not. Read Deuteronomy 8:17,18. In light of this truth, He invites us to become faithful stewards with our money as well as our time. What was God's special request to Israel called in Leviticus 27:30,32, and how much was it to be?  

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6. What is the first record of tithing in the Bible? Summarize Genesis 14:18-20.  
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7. When God spoke to Israel about tithing in Malachi's day (about 425 BC), in Malachi 3,  
(a) What was His warning in verses 8,9? \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) What was His promised blessing in verse 10? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What was the tithe used for in the Old Testament period? How does Numbers 18:20-24 clarify this? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Does tithing have a part in the beliefs and development of the New Testament Christian church? Is the tithing principle still needed? How does (b) below help us to see its right usage?  
(a) Matthew 23:23 \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) 1 Corinthians 9:13,14 \_\_\_\_\_
10. As with all of our time, so God requires careful usage by His stewards of all of our means – including additional offerings for the needs of the church, for those in need, and in our daily personal living. A careful reading of Proverbs 19:17, Matthew 19:21, 1 Corinthians 16:1,2, and 2 Corinthians 9:7 will help us to understand these things.
11. The key to faithfulness in all stewardship--of time, money, treatment of our body health--is found in question 4(b), in being so close to Jesus every day that we are motivated by His indwelling love to do His will in all things. When we respond to this love, God is being placed above self, which is "key" to our final and full restoration to the image of God. What is the admonition of 1 Corinthians 4:1,2?  
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