


and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand" (Gen. 39:4). Notice the responsibilities and rewards entrusted to Joseph because his master recognized his servant spirit. God is waiting to do the same for us when He sees that our motivation is not self centered but others centered. Are you being faithful in that which is another man's (Luke 16:12)?

At the age of twenty-four, Abraham Lincoln served as the postmaster of New Salem, Illinois, for which he was paid an annual salary of \$55.70. Even then, twenty-four years before he entered the White House, the rail splitter was showing the character that earned him the title of "Honest Abe." The New Salem post office was closed in 1836, but it was several years before an agent arrived from Washington to settle accounts with ex-postmaster Lincoln, who was a struggling lawyer not doing very well. The agent informed him that \$17 was due the government. Lincoln crossed the room, opened an old trunk and took out a yellow cotton rag, bound with a string. Untying it, he spread out the cloth and there was the \$17. He had been holding it untouched for all these years. "I never use any man's money but my own," he said.

#4) A final principle is given in verse thirteen. No man can serve two masters. As a faithful steward we can't do both what we want with assets entrusted to us and what He wants. We must choose between the two. If we hang on to our life, being our own boss, making our own decisions with what God has entrusted to us we will lose it (Matt. 10:39; 16:25). A double minded man is unstable in all his ways (James 1:8). Responsibility has been defined as knowing and doing what both God and others is expecting of me. God has given us a tremendous opportunity of stewardship. If we allow Him to be the Lord of our lives we will enter into the abundant life of which Jesus spoke: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). If we stubbornly ignore the owner and instead we choose as a steward to go our own independent way we will experience the reproofs of life: "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (Prov. 6:23). Prov. 15:31 The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise" (Prov. 15:31). These reproofs are allowed by our Father in heaven who lovingly disciplines us that we might have his greatest blessing (Heb. 12:11). Remember, whatever we own, soon owns us. Worry is a byproduct of ownership. Acknowledge God as the owner of everything in your life. "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it" (1 Cor. 4:7). "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" (James 1:17). When we acknowledge Him as the owner, we free ourselves from worries and cares and can be about the business of diligently managing His assets and experience the freedom and joy of His presence in our life.

*A simple definition of faithfulness is "fulfilling in my life what has been expected of me". Success in God's eyes is not determined by what I have done compared to what others have done. Success in life is determined by what I have done compared to what I could have done. In other words God doesn't measure me by others and their accomplishments, God measures me by what He has entrusted to me and how faithful I have been with it.*

# THE STEWARDSHIP OF LIFE



*Well done  
thou good and  
faithful servant*

Matt. 25:21



**Greenwich Baptist Church**

P.O. Box 52  
Greenwich, New Jersey 08323

The proper relationship of a Christian to money and material things is understood as we consider the concept of stewardship. Many understand that as Christians we should tithe and then above the tithe, give freewill offerings. Having done this, we have given God His part. But the proper Biblical concept is to understand that everything we have belongs to God: "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1). We should not think in terms of my car, my house, my land, my computer, my children, my bank account etc. but rather in terms of God's car, God's house, God's land, God's children etc. We are managers of His property. A steward doesn't decide what he will do with the master's property, he goes to the master and receives instructions concerning the master's will for his property and accordingly carries them out. God speaks of Christians as stewards in whom He looks for faithfulness: "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2).

The vital importance of properly understanding the management of the material things God has entrusted to us is given in the following passage: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. {11} If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? {12} And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? {13} No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:10-13).

Please note the following principles in these verses.

# 1) If I am not faithful in managing the little things of life, then I will also not be faithful in managing the greater things of life. Faithfulness in small things is a prerequisite if I hope for God to entrust me with greater responsibilities. Jesus spoke of this in the following verse: "His lord 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" (Matt. 25:21). God reveals that it is the little foxes that destroy the vines of our life (Song of Solomon 2:15). It has been observed of some of those who are materially wealthy that part of their success is linked with thinking in terms of percentages of savings rather than amount of savings. For instance, if a wise rich man went to the store and bought a can of beans that was ten cent lower than its' competitor's counterpart, his thinking would not be I saved ten cent, but rather I saved 10%. With his wealth he could have easily paid the extra ten cents, but there are important principles at stake that affect other major decisions in his life. Ten cents may not sound like much out of one dollar, but when the same wise rich man is making decisions concerning a \$10,000 purchase the fruitfulness of his thinking reveals itself. Ten percent savings on \$10,000 dollars would be \$1000. God encourages us not to despise the day of small things in our life (Zech. 4:10). Many wonder why God doesn't bless them with greater responsibilities in serving Him. The answer is because of our present unfaithfulness in little or lesser things.

A little girl who loved the Lord longed to share the message of salvation with those who had never heard it. So she contributed a penny to a missionary to help with the work of evangelizing the people of Burma. That small coin was all she had, but it was given from her heart. The worker on the foreign field was deeply touched by the child's earnestness and decided he would do the most he could with the money. After careful thought he purchased a Gospel tract and personally gave it to a young chieftain. Appar-

ently the Christian did not know that the tribal leader was not educated well enough to read it. God instilled within the ruler a burning desire to know the meaning of the leaflet, however, and he traveled 250 miles to find someone who could translate it for him. After he heard the Gospel message, it wasn't long until the young chief was gloriously converted. Returning to his people, he told them what the Lord had done for his soul. Later he invited missionaries to come and preach to his entire village, and many tribesmen who heard the good news accepted the Savior. All this and probably much more resulted from one dedicated penny given in Christ's name by a little girl who wanted the lost to hear about Jesus! Don't wait until you can do "great things" to start working for the Master. God can do wonders with dedicated little things.

# 2) An even greater principle is revealed in verse eleven. The greatest treasures of life are not material temporal things. Money cannot keep a marriage together. Money can't provide a person victory over habits. Money can't keep children from rebelling. Money can't guarantee a person a good night's sleep and peace in their soul. Money can't give security. Security is a byproduct of structuring my life around what is eternal and cannot be taken away from me. We are told in Proverbs 4:7 "Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and in all thy getting get understanding". Wisdom given to us from God is the key to a successful marriage, victory over habits, proper discipline of children, peace in our soul etc. What in this verse does God require in order for us to receive His wisdom? God says He will not give us the true riches of life (wisdom) if we have not been faithful in the stewardship of material things (unrighteous mammon) He has entrusted to us. If we are reckless, wasteful and careless with material things God has already delegated to us, what do you think we would do with any riches of spiritual things God would delegate to us? You guessed it. We would be reckless, wasteful and careless with the spiritual treasures. Jesus revealed to us that it is not proper to cast pearls before swine (Matt. 7:6). Why? "...lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you". Do pigs value appreciate and properly take care of precious valuable pearls? Of course not! Neither is it proper for God to entrust the great pearls of His wisdom to us if He knows we will soon irresponsibly misuse it in our lives and in the lives of others.

# 3) A further important principle is given in verse twelve. Not only is it important for us to properly manage the assets God has entrusted to us, but this verse reveals it is also important for us to be faithful in managing the assets that others have entrusted to us: "...if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's who shall give you that which is your own?". This would especially be important for a man who is not self employed but who works for someone else. Many have the idea of going to work to put in their eight hours with the primary motivation of receiving the paycheck at the end of the week. God has a far greater concern. God doesn't want us working or serving to please ourselves or to make us successful, he wants us serving to make other's successful. He wants us to diligently labor on our jobs with the idea of making the company successful. He that will be greatest of all in life must learn to be servant of all: "And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all" (Mark 10:44). "And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all" (Mark 9:35). Having a servant spirit is a key to God entrusting us with personal assets to manage for Him. A servant spirit is one in which we get more excited about making others successful rather than ourselves. Joseph found grace in the sight of his master because of his servant spirit: "And Joseph found grace in his sight,