

Stewardship

Stewardship is both an old and new concept. In the Old Testament, the concept of stewardship is based on man's willingness to recognize God as the provider of all essential elements of life. Then, as people received their harvest or an increase in their herd, they gave God the first fruits of that which they brought in from the fields or vineyards and the first fruits of the increase of the herds. By bringing these tithes and offerings to the storehouse, the religious system was supported. The Levitical group was able to lead in worship and administer the affairs of the law. This kept the nation on an even keel.

The New Testament concept is based upon the idea of grace and not law. The motivation for giving is the love that people have for their Lord and his Kingdom's work. People are to give from their heart because of the change that had occurred in their lives.

There is a great similarity between the old and new concepts of stewardship as they are presented in God's Word. Notice what the Bible says:

Who is to give? The Old Testament book of Malachi says "Ye." The New Testament proclaims "Everyone of you" (I Corinthians 16:2).

What is to be given? Malachi 3:8,10 states, "Tithes and offerings." Paul says in I Corinthians 16:2, "As God has prospered you."

When are we to give? "When the storehouse is open to receive the tithes and offerings," says the writer in Malachi 3:8-10. Paul makes it even more plain. He says, "Upon the first day of

the week..." (I Corinthians 16:2).


Where are we to give? The instruction of the Old Testament is "into the storehouse." I Corinthians 16:2 tells us, "In store."



Why are we to give? The Old Testament (Malachi 3:10) explains the reason as being to supply the needs; so that there would always be a sufficient amount in the storehouse. The New Testament (I Corinthians 16:2) states it plainly, "...that there be no gatherings when I come."

God's financial plan has been in force for more than 3,500 years. It has worked in every generation whenever and wherever people have practiced it. It has never been too demanding or restrictive. When practiced by God's people, it has provided for the work that needed to be done and God has blessed those who followed his plan.

Something Old ... Something New

God's plan is both. It has worked and continues to work today. 

This is a new year: 2021. When you resolve to make the changes in your life that have been nagging at you, don't forget our responsibilities as stewards of God's gifts. This is our chance to renew our efforts to share the grace bestowed upon us.



All is Given to Us!

God gives me shelter.

Not just any shelter, but a house with a sound roof and inside there is furniture and pictures on the walls. There is heat, air conditioning and a television.

God gives me food.

Not just food to sustain life, but a rich variety of delicious dishes, and marvelous tools with which to prepare them.

God gives me clothing.

Not just a covering for my body, but beautiful things with many different textures and bright colors.

God gives me friends.

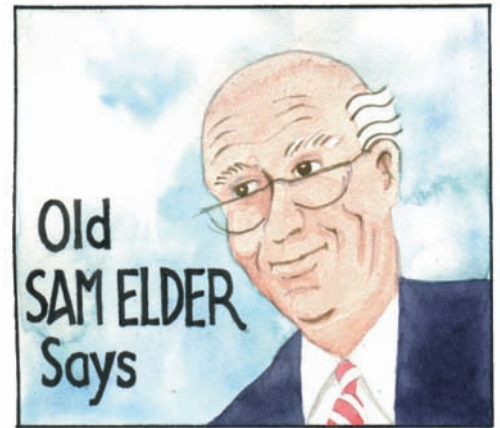
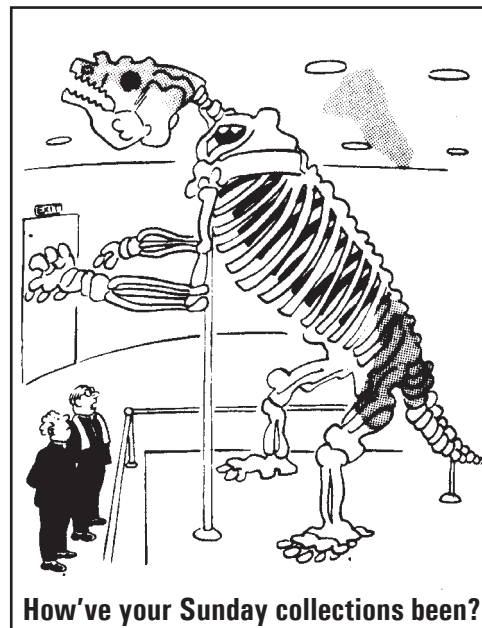
Not just acquaintances, but people who care about me.

God also gave his only son so that I might be eternally happy.

All that is asked in return is that you love God, have faith in God and that you share God's Word.



God has given you a gift, a charism. A charism isn't something you earn. It's a gift entrusted to you for the sake of the whole community, including your church. The only question is whether you will put it at the service of the community or not. Pray that you will grow in your understanding of stewardship of your talents and abilities.



Old Sam Elder remarked to Pastor Don Goodly, "I have concluded that the rich and poor have something in common. Take Bob Rich, he has repeatedly risked his inheritance on questionable investments, hoping to make a killing. Conventional investments are too mundane! With his expensive lifestyle, he wants to make a quick fortune so he can retire handsomely. Bob is always thinking of money and looking for that fabulous deal. Bob also loses a lot of sleep."

"On the other hand, Paul Poor is fighting the battle of minimums. In our community, you can't find a rent for less than the minimum. Food tends to cost a certain minimum per week. Old shabby clothing and shoes eventually wear out. Paul lives in "genteel poverty" without enough income to live adequately; yet, too well off to receive assistance. A health crisis or an accident could mean bankruptcy or going on welfare. Paul dreams of how just a few extra dollars would ensure his paying his way.

Pastor Goodly asked, "What can they have in common? They are as far apart as the poles!"

"Yes, pastor," began old Sam, "but both are thinking about money or the lack of it or the related problems of taxes, inflation or insurance, to the point that they rarely think about God; rarely think about spreading the Good News

Agent of Change

Change is occurring around us all the time, but being sensitive to it is necessary to be able to respond to it. To be an agent of change, we must realize that there is an ongoing need to wake up before it's too late.

If you put a frog in a pot of cold water and then gradually turn up the heat, the frog won't jump out and will ultimately be boiled to death. It is capable of jumping out, yet the urgency or change in the situation fails to stir the frog into action.

If we could change the world, how would we want to go? For God or against God? If we have faith in God and realize the power of God's grace within us, we accept God's will and use the gifts bestowed upon us to further God's kingdom.

I can't change the world, but I can do my own small share. Many calls come to us, for our time, talent and treasure to change it one step at a time. Do we respond to these calls on the personal level, family level, church level, community level? Do we act as an agent of change to make the world a better place even if it is only one step at a time?



“God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well” (Romans 12:6). “Be sure to use the abilities God has given to you ... Put these abilities to work; throw yourself into your tasks... “ (1 Timothy 4:14-15). Finally, we should remember Colossians 3:23-25, which tells us to work cheerfully in all we do, just as though we were working for Jesus.


Steward of the Month

Our Man!

Submitted by: lora, Lake Placid, NY

I have recently been introduced to Nip Rogers, a local artist in our small community. Since meeting Mr. Rogers, I have learned of the many different avenues he chooses to serve the Lord.


It is better to give than receive and Nip is a prime example of this stewardship to God. As a starving artist, he never speaks of his own woes. Instead he helps unload the truck at the local food pantry or helps the homeless find places to live. He donates his art to a show to support a school in Africa, helps his parents through the aging process, and he visits locals who are sick or in need of a smiling face. He is also a hospice volunteer, an active church member, a good friend to all and always greets folks with a positive attitude and a smile. He is a shining example of being a light for God and his people.

He is a father to four and has made memories for his children to last them a lifetime through his Christianity to others. You just gotta meet this man. 



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Old Sam Elder...

or never think about the needs of their fellow man. For both men, preoccupation with their treasure, or the lack of it, has shut God out of their lives. 



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