

Your Church Name Here

# *Stewardship*

## **Defining Stewardship**

### Lesson 1

**TEXT:** Luke 12:42-46 – *And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.*

**INTRODUCTION:** Today, we are beginning a series that will last most of the year. It is on the topic of stewardship. Unfortunately, many people misunderstand the entire concept of stewardship. When mentioning the word *stewardship*, most people immediately think of finances. Throughout the Bible, stewardship is mentioned or implied. Our goal in these lessons is to define stewardship and to apply it to various areas where it pertains. In today's introductory lesson, we will define stewardship. Once we have a clear understanding of its definition, we will apply it more appropriately to various areas of our lives.

- I. **STEWARDSHIP BEGINS WITH UNDERSTANDING WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A STEWARD.** In Bible days, a steward was employed by powerful or wealthy families to manage their domestic concerns, oversee their other servants, collect rent or income, and keep the accounts for the family. As we will see in future lessons, the job of being a steward often would fall to the eldest son in the family or be divided among all of the sons. In Genesis 15:1-2, Abraham went to the Lord to ask for guidance. He had no son, so his steward was a man named Eliezer of Damascus. He asked God for a child who could become the steward of his household.
  
- II. **STEWARDS WERE THOSE WHO COULD BE GREATLY TRUSTED.** This was not a position given lightly. It was a position given to someone who could be trusted. A steward was required to possess many different qualities. He was required to be loyal to his master. He was required to be discreet. He was required to be honest and trustworthy. He was required to be available at any time. He was required to have some leadership skills because his position was one of some authority. No doubt, Joseph was a steward when he was placed in charge of all of the land possessions in Egypt. Joseph had gained that position because he could be trusted and because he had all of the necessary qualities to be a steward.

- III. STEWARDSHIP WAS ALWAYS A SUBSERVIENT POSITION.** A steward was not the master of the household but was under his master's authority. His power and authority came from his master, so he exerted great power and authority. He did not act on his own behalf; he acted on behalf of his master. Though his duty did not require him to be popular among the other servants, he had to be diplomatic enough to represent his master properly to the other servants in the household. He was not a ruthless tyrant but rather a diplomatic representative of the master.
- IV. STEWARDSHIP WAS THE ACT OF BEING THE STEWARD.** A person first had to possess the qualities of a steward before he could be trusted with stewardship responsibilities. Many people want authority but are unwilling to become the people they should be to earn that right. Stewardship was not something to which one was entitled. It was a position earned by one's character and hard work. Many people want more responsibility without first obtaining the proper character. If a person cannot be trusted, his talents and abilities are not valuable to a master. Many gifted people have lost their rights to be a steward because of a lack of character.
- V. STEWARDSHIP EXTENDS TO ALMOST ALL AREAS OF LIFE.** Someone in a leadership position in the government should see himself as a steward, not as a ruler. In Bible days, every ship appointed an officer to distribute provisions to the other officers and to the crew. That person was the steward. Today, it is much the same in every organization. Some people are placed in trusted positions and become the liaisons between those in authority and those who work for them. The steward manages the business on behalf of the one who owns the business. Pastors of churches would be considered stewards as well.

**CONCLUSION:** Throughout these lessons, we are going to see the importance of being a steward. Most of us in our lifetimes will be placed in positions in which we should exercise stewardship. To do so properly, we must understand what it means to be a steward and develop the character necessary to fulfill our tasks. It is not just about money. It is regarding anything that has been entrusted to us. When we are entrusted with something, we must become good stewards of that entity.

**MEMORY VERSES:** Luke 12:42-43 – *And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*