

## IS IT REALLY YOURS?

### Psalm 8:5-6; Genesis 1:26

**Introduction:** "This is mine and you can't have it!..." Everyone of us has the idea that what we "have" is ours and we earned it by the sweat of our brow and therefore nobody has any right to what is ours. In the New Testament, there are two words compounded into one word: "oikos" meaning house and "nomos" meaning divider. Together "oikonomos" they mean what we call a "steward."

A "steward" is one who serves as manager or trustee for something that is not his/her own but is given to him/her to administer for the benefit of others - to take care of to see to.

### I. MAN IS GOD'S STEWARD (*Psalm 8:5-6*)

1. To all living creatures God gave the gift of life itself.
  - All that we have and all that we are must be described as a free gift of God, not earned, but bestowed, given.
2. **Genesis 1:26** - Clearly implies that man is to manage this vast estate (earth) as creatively and inventively as possible.
  - Man is never to forget that he is only the manager and God is the owner and creator.
3. Since the fall of man, it has been true of man that he tends to forget that people are stewards and people begin to think that they (we) own God's earth and that we can do with it whatever we please.
4. When Jesus came into this world, He took on the form of a "servant" and declared that He came not to be ministered unto (although He was deserving), but to minister.
5. Jesus taught that man was a responsible trustee of all that God had given him and that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he accumulates.
6. Paul, in his letters, speaks of Christians as being servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God and that Christians are "fellow workers" for God.
7. Every Christian, soon finds that his/her conscience compels him/her to either perform true and full stewardship or he/she has an uneasy sense of unfulfillment.
8. The reason we do not live as good stewards of our time, talents and possessions is that although we are Church attenders, the pattern of beliefs which we base our lives on are based not as a real Christian, but more like a part time Christian.
9. We do not believe that our lives and our possessions belong to God and that His right of ownership must be respected in every moment.
10. We believe rather that our own lives and all that we own are ours to do with as we will.
11. We call Jesus "Lord" with our lips but we have no intention of letting Him be Lord over our time, our social relationships, our business life, or our family life.

### II. LOYALTY IS A BIG PROBLEM

1. When Jesus has been enthroned in our hearts, the problem of what is most important will be solved.
2. It is God's purpose to unite the broken human race, to reconcile them, the classes, the nations, to break down walls of hostility. This is God's plan and this is what the Christian is called to help do.
3. We give God a superficial recognition, "tip our hat," a "nod," a "wave of the hand." When it comes to the every day decisions about His matters, our genuine loyalties become all too apparent.

4. Life's demands are so numerous that they exert a terrible strain, even when we really want to do something helpful, we begin with a sense of uneasiness and end up usually in frustration.
5. The problem most of us face is "how do we be good stewards in such a world as ours, so full of challenge and inconsistency?"
  - The Christian idea of "stewardship" is based mostly on the belief in a sovereign God who created and directs the universe He made for His Own self-appointed reasons.
  - God created mankind, endowed him/her and made him/her a free agent in order that he/she might voluntarily work with God.
  - Stewardship becomes meaningful through the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Through Him we come to know the nature and purpose of God. Through Him we have access to and fellowship with God.
  - The Lordship of Jesus Christ is important for people (us) because it gives life its true meaning and defines this universe in its proper relationship to people and God. Thus Creator and Steward.
6. We can achieve our real, mature stature only as we become honest, responsible and faithful managers of God's things, for God's end, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

### III. LACKING A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY CONTRIBUTES TO OUR PROBLEM

1. Most Christians have not advanced beyond the pre-school child idea or maturity of self-centeredness.
  - A reason we are not good stewards is that everything is still Me, My, Mine and not Yours or even THINE.
2. The parable of the prodigal son is one which shows how a son learned that real security comes not from earthly wealth.
3. The rich young ruler had all the material things he could want, yet he found out he wasn't really satisfied. He refused to give up that which would bring to him the peace he was searching for.
4. Zacchaeus found salvation when he outgrew his possessiveness.
5. When we reach the point where we and all we possess are brought under the direction of God's will, then we will have reached the greatest point of personal dedication.
  - We need daily to bring our lives and motives under the searchlight of the will of God.

### CONCLUSION:

1. Christian, are you willing to push aside all your selfish considerations and step out into the supreme confidence that "*...he who loses his life shall find it...* "?
2. We must approach the world with respect because it belongs to God, it is not ours to exploit as we wish/will.
3. We have families, material things, obtained naturally, honestly and we feel we own them, but we must be careful and hopefully not hear that familiar voice saying "*...thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee. Then whose shall these things be that thou has provided...* "
4. Stewardship is not just a way to pay the church's bills or a tax deduction but stewardship means using everything we are, everything we do, every cent we spend, every moment we use, all the power and influence we have within the light and purpose of God.
5. Stewardship is not a thing, it is a way of living and it is the way of living that is fundamental to one's commitment to and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. God created all things with a purpose, therefore God has a purpose for your life and therefore you are

His. You must one day give an account of all you are and have.

- God gives you abilities in order that you might do His will.
- Each person can choose whether to use his/her God-given talents for God's purposes or for one's own selfish ends.
- God gives each of us 24 hours a day.
- God gives us the ability and the time for each responsibility He also gives.
- Each person will one day stand before the very God who gave him/her life and give an account of how he/she used his/her life in accordance with how God wanted him/her to use it.

7. Now Christian, that which you have been calling "YOURS" whose is it really?