

Stewardship Again

by Bob Young
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The contemporary church struggles with the concept of “stewardship.” One problem is that we are using an older, unfamiliar word. Stewardship is not a daily life word. It has become church jargon. Where else in our lives do we use the word? The word steward has gone by the wayside. On the airplane, stewardesses are no longer; nor are stewards. Now they are flight attendants.

Is there a better, more modern word? I looked up the word stewardship in the thesaurus. My abridged thesaurus goes from stew to stick. Nor does stewardship show up in my *Webster’s New World Dictionary* as a separate entry—only as a derived form of steward. Fortunately, my dictionary provides separate listings for suffixes that form derived nouns. “-ship” signifies “the quality, condition, or state of being”. The noun stewardship may be compared to friendship.

Now we must research the word “steward”. A steward is “someone in charge of the affairs or another; a manager, supervisor, or administrator of the finances and property of another.” Another definition suggests a person “morally responsible for the careful use of money, time, talents or other resources.” Stewardship simply suggests we are stewards.

Simply by exploring definitions we have touched challenging concepts. As a Christian, I am a manager of God’s “stuff”. I have a supervisory or administrative role concerning God’s interest in this world. As a steward of God, when God desires to give something to another, I am responsible for making sure the transfer occurs. I am a trustee, overseeing God’s wealth until it can be properly distributed and proportioned among his heirs. Stewardship just became bigger than my weekly contribution in the church plate. Stewardship is what I do with the gifts God wishes to share with the world. Stewardship is how I share the gospel. Stewardship is how I use my life from God.

Consider the following thoughts.

- I am part of God’s creation. I am his.
- God does not love me more based on my actions.
- Nothing I do makes God love me more or less.
- God wants me to prepare myself for eternal life with him as I live here on earth.
- God wants me to live a life that imitates and reflects him.
- As stewards of God, both gifts and trusts have been entrusted to us.
- Some gifts are personal gifts. These are gifts for our own use and benefit.
- Some gifts are too big for us to keep for ourselves. These are to be shared.
- Trusts are for the good of the beneficiary of the trust.
- We are stewards of God’s gifts. He has entrusted certain things to us to share with others.

Consider some of the gifts God has given. This set relates to our creation and being.

- We are unique individuals.
- We have abilities.

- We can earn a living.
- God made us emotional beings: we can experience love and hate and other emotions.
- God gave us intellectual ability. God made us thinking beings: we have access to knowledge and discernment. We have free will.
- God made us with the ability to communicate, to experience fellowship.
- God made us reactive individuals. We can know and experience life with enthusiasm.

What follows is the beginning of a list of God's gifts. It is purposefully incomplete so you can add to it.

God gives us (in alphabetical order)....

Family

Fellowship

Friends

Health

Holy Spirit

Home

Hope

Jesus

Opportunities

Prayer

Rain

Salvation

What would you add to the list?