

STEWARDSHIP

SECONDARY SCHOOLS BIBLE STUDY GUIDE



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JUNE 2010

Preface

One thing which has been difficult from time immemorial for us as human beings has been to understand ourselves who we are, we are doing what on earth and never mind understanding how to use the resources we have accumulated, whether by chance, inheritance or our so called hard work etc. One thing which we must know is that right from the word go our parents Adam and Eve were given the responsibility to take care of every thing had already created them The psalmist states that the world and every thing in it plus its entire people belong to God (Psalm 24: 1-2). Apostle Paul in the letter to Ephesians made it plain that “we are God’s masterpiece created. Furthermore he has created us new in Christ Jesus (Christians) so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. This for me answers so many of question about ourselves, where we come from and why we are here. In short we are here as a stewards or managers (not bosses but people managing someone’s property).

Paul is encouraging us about how we ought to handle this short time we have on earth -RICK Warren calls this time ‘short assignment’ - Or is the maximum of 120 years on earth a reason good enough to spend at the expense of eternity? I don’t think so –after all some parts of the world life expectancy has dropped to 35. Or perhaps we find it hard to believe that life after this one is realistic? Paul identifies faithfulness as the characteristic of good stewardship {1Corinthians 4:1-2}. What should we be faithful in and why? That is million a dollar question we need deliberately to explore if we are to understand our entire role as human beings.

The first time I heard about stewardship it just had to do with hard cash. As you may be aware stewardship of money is given special class than other characteristics of discipleship. Why this is so- your guess is as good as mine ‘this money is meant for men of God who need their wages and some building projects. You don’t hear much about other needy people; By the way, how is the money that is given to God through our institutions supposed to be spent? We will certainly have no enough room and space to talk about all these issues. But at least we can talk a little about the danger of this very narrow understanding about the whole big picture. Perhaps the problem has been that there hasn’t been much teaching to the extent that the whole thing has been left in the hands of uninformed individuals. Or perhaps the negligence is on purpose so that the money realized in the church institutions just does a one sided job. It is important to know that every thing that we have is for God; time is for God, money is for GOD, beauty is for GOD, intelligence is for God, all good things we have are a gift from God – this is just to mention a few.

Stewards are therefore those people who have been given trust. The message of the gospel according to Paul is trust committed us. The question then becomes how careful are we to look after them as God desires? Paul also kept

emphasizing about giving generously to poverty stricken churches (2Corinthians 9: 6: 11) as another most important angle of responding to a call to stewardship. The resources GOD has given to us are meant to be enjoyed by every one not privileged few. Poverty, there fore, is in our midst as a litmus test for us to prove our love for God through a neighbor. We need to understand that not everything that surrounds us or within our vicinity is meant to be for me and me only. Someone said if resources were distributed evenly they were going to be enough for each one of us. Jesus talked about this when he said he who has two should share with one who has none. Isn’t this sensible? Jesus also told the rich young ruler about the possibilities of such evenhandedness i.e. ‘sell what you have and share the money amongst the poor.’ If that can be practiced where can it leave others and yourself? Such sayings are never meant to make us feel guilty but rather feel responsible. We are just a channel to pass on those blessings to others. So talents, professions etc. are meant not just for our family but all those that need them not only if they bribe us but because we know there is nothing that we have which we did not receive. We need to constantly ask ourselves why God blessed us with diversity and a privilege of having more than that poor neighbor. Some things are meant for neighbors, poor widows, orphans etc. Simply put, God has allowed us to keep them and our task is to notice areas of need; how much of that do we do?

Beside our stewardship of earthly possessions of course, it is also important not to lose sight about what the New Testament emphasizes – the stewardship of our Spiritual responsibilities. For Paul preaching the Gospel is an act of stewardship (Colossians 1:25). Peter also highlighted about stewardship of God’s gifts 1Peter4: 10-11. He was and is trying to let us understand that gifts God has given us are not just for our benefit, they are meant to serve the community and God’s church. This is a clear indication that no one is too under-privileged to give.

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STEWARDSHIP

Introduction

A Steward is someone who manages another's property. This could be finances or affairs. He is not the owner. He does not possess what is entrusted to him to manage. The owner gives the steward the responsibility to manage his possession wisely. God consider Christians as stewards. He has blessed us with a lot of things including our own lives; we therefore need to take care of all the resources which God entrusted us with. To the church in Corinth, Paul posed a question saying 'For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it why do you boast as if you had not received it.'(1 Corinthians 4:7). In this regard, it can be confirmed that God through Jesus Christ, owns everything that exist, seen and unseen including human beings.

1. **Read** Psalms (144:4; Luke 19:12-26; 1 Cor. 12:12:4-7 and 2 Cor. 9:8-11). Having read these verses, mention three major areas of our stewardship?
2. How can we take care of each one of those three things mentioned above? Discuss
3. Review this past week. As a steward, how did you manage your time, talents/gifts and treasure? Can you share that to your friends?
4. Why do we need to be wise steward? (1Cor 3:10-14)

Memory verse:

1 Corinthians 4:7- And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it why do you boast as if you had not received it.'

Response:

Pray that God should help you to recognize that God owns everything you have. He is God of your time, talents and treasure. Therefore He should help you to delight in him and acknowledge him above everything even as you use them to serve God's people.

HUMANKIND ASSIGNMENT

Introduction

In Genesis 1:26-31 it is clear that God had assigned a two-fold mission to the human race. In these verses both men and women are charged with a mission and that is to increase in number and fill the earth and also to rule over or have dominion over creation and to subdue it. The word dominion found in this perspective means to have control over it. This command is not just for prestige but it is an indication that all human beings male and female can glorify and serve God by caring for His creation. When God was delegating his authority to the human race, he expected people to take responsibility for environment and creatures that share our planet earth. It can therefore be stated that we are the managers of the creation that God has entrusted us and that is exactly what we want to find out in bible study.

Reflection

When was the last time you heard people seriously talking about taking care of the environment? How seriously did you or others pay attention to such forewarnings?

Please read Genesis 1: 26-31

1. In verses 28-30 mention two groups of things that God created which were entrusted to man?
Can you define the phrase 'rule over' creatures that share our planet earth?
2. As students, scientifically what do you think are the dangers of failing to control over what God has entrusted to us?
3. How should we as Christians look after the environment that surrounds us?
4. Though our citizenship as Christians is in heaven, but as of now we are still on earth; what stand should we take as stewards of the land, animals, water, vegetation, etc that God has given us?
5. When was the last time you participated in tree planting, litter picking and things of that nature in the surroundings you often live?

God was very careful on how he made this earth, therefore take some

time to thank Him for His creation and pray that God should help you not to be careless and wasteful as you fulfill the responsibility he has given you.

Memory verse:

Genesis 1:26 -Then God said let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth and over all creatures that move along the ground.

STUDY THREE

TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS A DISTURBANCE TO FAITH

Trials that come from within are called temptations. Due to a thin line between the two one can best describe them as **trials and temptations**. We sometimes feel like God should have done away with them on our behalf. Biblical account suggests they are unavoidable. Temptations are meant to be resisted and are not sin by themselves but Satan uses them to cause us to sin. Whenever we yield to them we endanger our stand in the Lord and hence fail to safeguard our faith as stewards. They say, “you can’t stop birds from flying over you head but you can stop them from making nest in your hair”. In this study, we want to seize the opportunity to explore this state and its significance (if at all there are some).

Reflection:

Do you think there are roles that temptations play in our Christian walk?

Please read James 1:1-15

1. Find out repeated words in this text? Why do you think are these words said repeatedly?
2. What should be our response or reaction every time we come face to face with trials and temptations? Why? (V1-4)
3. In verse 5 there has been a mention of wisdom. Suggest the reason

why James thinks wisdom is the key issue during this walk.

4. Educationally why is it significant for students or learners to have exams or tests at the end of the term or year? How does that compare with the tests or trials and temptations in our faith in verses 4 & 12?
5. Read 1 Peter 1:7 and James 1:13 discuss the role trials play according to Peter
6. Discuss how trials and temptations find way into our lives [v14].
7. Share with your group some trying and tempting moments you may have come across and how you responded.
8. When are temptations disadvantageous?
9. What does our Master Jesus Christ tell us about trials and sorrows in John 16: 33?
10. Put in plain words what Paul means in Romans 5:3.

Memory verse

James 1: 12- Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him

STUDY FOUR

STEWARDSHIP OF OUR FAITH—CASE OF JOB

Introduction

Much has been said about the ‘ups’ and ‘downs’ we go through as Christians. We have sometimes complained about them as if we can change anything about them. Every time we have encountered them the quick reaction has been asking a question like ‘why me Lord. Other schools of thoughts of course have believed suffering is not for us as Christians. We as a result find it hard to pronounce an ‘amen’ for them. as a matter of fact trials are here to stay. The only reaction needed is to find a way how to endure as they are meant to be endured; they are not caused by our sinfulness rather they are caused by our righteous standing in this corrupt world. They are an issue because they distract

us from our focus of being trustworthy managers of God's property.

Reflection

What do you make of school or learning without examinations or tests?

Please read *Job, chapters 1 and 42*

1. Would it be wrong to suggest that Christians or God's people have always been a target of Persecution? Why has this been the case?
2. Explain in your own words how you understand the passages as the writer may have intended?
3. Identify what exactly Job's fault was for going through what he had gone through v1-8.
4. Some people have suggested that bad luck, calamity, trouble, etc means punishment from God and wealth, so called success, health, etc means favor with God. Discuss to what extent this may be true; Compare such suggestions with Job 5: 11-17; 8: 3-4
5. Discuss the times past of temptations according 1 Corinthians 10:13 and Luke 4:13. Where do you fit in this history?
6. Describe Job's reaction in Chapter 42: 1-6.
7. What do you learn from the experience in Job 42: 7-16?
8. If what Job went through was an exam how much score would you give him?
9. What aspect did JOB Safeguard? Do you think he acted as a good steward of the faith?
10. If we have chosen Christ we have enrolled ourselves with a course group that makes such things an unavoidable and it just a matter of when. What do you intend to do with this plain truth that suggests that trials and temptations are to be expected?

“The lessons we learn in our suffering are not only profitable to us personally but they fit us to help others... But much sensitivity may itself be learnt through much pain, for it is true that some of the **great sympathizers** have been –and perhaps still are- **great sufferers**”

Herbert M Carson

Memory verse

Job 1: 22- In all of this, Job did not sin by blaming God.

STUDY FIVE

CUSTODIANS OF FAITH/CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY

—CASE OF JOSEPH

Please read *Genesis 39: 1-23*

Introduction

When the bible says things that happen to us have happen before it just means that; that is why for some one in high school every thing at primary level becomes easy as he had already passed through that stage. We at this point in time want to study what Joseph went through. It is sometimes not enough just trying to avoid temptation but turning and running is an important tactic that we need to learn from Joseph's story. Joseph realized how important he was before God and resisted the temptation by saying it would be 'sin against God.'

1. Explain how Joseph earned trust from his slave masters v2-6& 19 - 23.
2. [a]What were the things that God entrusted in Joseph's hands v6-7? [b]Why did Joseph not give in to the demands of Potiphar's wife despite all the obvious excuses?
3. Mention some few things that you think are delegated to you by God and that they need your proper care?
4. Can you share any situation you have come across in life that is similar with that of Brother Joseph?
5. Is it possible to escape temptations? - Mathew 5: 29 & 2Timothy 2: 22.
6. Like Adam did, there is a tendency to always find excuses when ever we give way to temptations. Can you remember some of

such excuses we make when we yield to temptations?

7. In Joseph's time in Egypt there were no human right activists that would fight for his rights let alone rights to speedy trial. Trials depended on what a ruler decided. In other words Joseph was at the ruler's mercy. I am convinced this was a hopeless situation. But how did Joseph survive and what was the secret of his success which is worthy imitating v21-23?
8. In this crooked world such tricky situations are to be expected. Like Joseph have you already calculated how you are going to face such things when they happen to you?

Memory Verse

Genesis 39: 21- But the Lord was with Joseph in the prison and showed him his faithful love

Prayer point

Pray that God will give you eyes to see opportunities in the things that are seemingly torturing and tempting.

STUDY SIX

SOME THINGS ARE NEVER MEANT

TO BE FOR SALE—FAITH

Introduction

Here is another chance of exploring a story that we sometimes find hard to believe. We would rather believe it was a fiction. Let me use this chance to say this story was real, in those days it was fashionable in Persia to keep beasts like lions in parks. Some kings normally hunted them for sport. The lions were used to execute people. It is not strange therefore to learn that Daniel went through such an experience. The main thing in this story is that Daniel came out of this difficulty without even a scratch. How did that happen? Prayerfully in this study let's explore the possibility of such things bearing in mind that like Daniel, we

are stewards of this faith.

Please read Daniel 6: 1-26

Reflection

Say at least some thing you know about Daniel.

1. What was the environment that Daniel worked in?
2. Describe the king that reigned during Daniels time.
3. It seems Daniel had so much attracted the attention of this pagan king at this particular time. Are you able to notice the reasons for that [v 1-3?] How well do you represent God to you masters (teacher's, parents, guardians etc?)
4. Are you able to remember some people who can be a match of Daniel in you society today?
5. What's the difference with how people in your society command respect today with the way Daniel did?
6. Besides earning a place of respect Daniel made enemies as well. Describe how 3&4.
 - a. Did the enemies find legitimate reason for accusing Daniel? Why?
 - b. How did he survive?
 - c. Is it possible to go through such experiences today? Share with you friends
 - d. Threat could not interrupt Daniel's prayer. What things interrupt your prayer life?
7. What do you learnt from Daniel's steadiness, politeness and administration as you compare with your approach to life?
8. What was the motivation for Daniel's determination in this situation?
9. What was the result of Daniel's steadiness V25-27?
10. Evil deeds often backfire on those who plan cruelty-v24. What other text talks about that and what can you learn form this?

Prayer point

Pray that you will be a good heavenly ambassador.

Memory Verse

Daniel 6:19 Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?

STUDY SEVEN

DISTURBANCE OF STEWARDSHIP

Please read *Mathew 28:1-15*

Have you heard about the word bribe? If you have I am sure you are aware of its meaning and its implications to the society. If you hear it for the first time this study will intend to ignite some curiosity about it. Some people have said countries like Singapore and Japan have prospered much regardless of the fact that they don't have many natural resources, because of their strict standpoint and punishment to culprits of this evil practice. This can tell how harmful this thing can be to a society. In the text we are about to study there is an element of such an activity. Let's find out about it.

Reflection: How possible is it to trust a doctor, a driver, a pilot, a teacher or a lawyer etc. who bribed a university professor to get her/his qualification? When would be the best time to give good reason for bribes?

1. How do you understand this story?
2. Who do you was Joseph of Aramathea?
3. What do you think forced Joseph of Aramathea to do what he did?
4. And why did some folks decide to seal the tomb? Who were these people?
5. Did they achieve what they were intending to do? What was the result?
6. Why were the soldiers and the women terrified? And what was the difference between their fear v 8?

7. Jesus rose but it did go down well with other groups. What did they do as a result? In plain language what do you call what did?
8. Why did they have to go that far?
9. Why is resurrection important to us? By accepting the bribe what was at stake in as far as our faith is concerned 15?
10. Do you ever see or hear such things like bribes taking place in our society today? If yes or no what do you think are the reasons they take place or don't take place?
11. From this what do think is the problem with corruption and bribes? What steps are you going take having explored some of the evils of bribes?

Prayer point

Pray that God will help to be a caretaker of what is true no matter what the situation.

Memory Verse

Mathew 28:6 - He isn't here! He is risen from the dead just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying.

STUDY EIGHT

STEWARDSHIP EXPLORED

Introduction

It has always been an amazing thing how much effort we have always applied -both believers and non believers- in trying to invest in order to have a secure future. Each time I have asked students as to why they work very hard in class their best answer has been 'We want to have bright future'. The fascinating thing about this is that we don't have that long future as compared to eternity. (At present in some parts of the world life expectancy has dropped to 35). Psalm 119: 19 has the whole truth about it. In this study we want to see what the parable has to say about the concern for the future as we study shrewdness of the unjust steward in this parable.

Please read Luke 16: 1-13

1. To whom was the parable being spoken?
2. Do you think the rich man in the parable or Our Lord who said the parable commends dishonesty or crookedness? V8
3. If not, what then is the point of the parable? See verse 3 and 8
4. What does the statement 'for the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of light'? Compare this with Pr.6:6 NIV
5. What does this teach about stewardship? v9. Does it necessarily mean that we can buy eternity with God using our possessions?
6. Why is it important to be trustworthy in worldly wealth? Vv10-12
7. It seems this steward was very much concerned about the future when he was going to be very old. What type of future are you very much worried with?
8. How do you understand v12-13? Money can easily take God's place and enslave people at times- how can you tell if you are one those slaves or not?
9. How do you intend to secure friends with your possessions money?

'A steward either loves God or loves money. If he loves money he hates God'

WILLIAM MACDONALD- True discipleship

STUDY NINE

HANDLING WHAT WE ARE ENTRUSTED WITH

Introduction

Please read Mathew: 25: 14-30

God is all knowing he knows the extent of our abilities. He doesn't really

want us to do more than we are able handle. He doesn't want us to say we have been overwhelmed by responsibilities. Failure therefore would only indicate laziness or hatred towards the master. GOD gives us time, gifts and resources according to our capability. Some people think they have an excuse for not giving as it would do with tax because they very poor. They question is- poor in what? You mean you don't even have enough energy to help an ailing neighbor? The problem is our way of thinking tells us you can only give money and things you can calculate. It is not question of how much but how well we use what we have.

1. Do you know what you are good at? Do you think someone can benefit from that? Some people say Pastors are doing much service in the eyes of God than Doctors or Teachers and jobs of that nature. How far is that true?
2. What was the problem of the last man in this chapter vv24-30?
3. What are the two important things we learn from (Matt 25:20-23) concerning a wise steward?
4. Most of the times as student we have excuses that we can't give because we don't have enough. Discuss what you learn from servants' attitude in verses 20 and 22 and 26
5. Discuss two attitudes and its consequences of Christ's coming this parable is suggesting vv29-30.
6. How many people have benefited from the talents you have?

Prayer Point

Pray that GOD will show you your abilities and how you can use them.

Memory Verse

Mathew 25:23- Well done my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount. Now I will give you man more responsibilities.

STUDY TEN

HANDLING WHAT WE BEEN ENTRUSTED WITH

Introduction

I am very sure by now we are aware how much we have kept or used that we needed to give out. I am also sure we are aware that poverty is no excuse for not giving. Here is an example a group of people who gave not out of abundance but out love for God and fellow human beings. Remember it is hypocrisy to say that you love God if you don't love your neighbor. Let us learn few more tips how this was possible as we study **2 Corinthians 8: 1-15**

1. Describe the motivation you see in the Macedonian Church v2.
2. What do you think impressed Paul about their attitude of giving?
3. Discuss the connection between giving and spreading the word of God?
4. Paul is also impressed that Jesus gave up his rights as God and became human. How does that encourage you about giving? Vv8-9- compare with Philippians 2: 5-7
5. What lessons about principles of giving and how you decide how much to give do you draw from this passage? Vv2-5 and 10-15
6. Discuss the possibility of this statement in our society today, "*Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over, and those who gathered a little had enough*".

Prayer point

Pray that God will give you the wisdom and willingness to learn how to decide what to give, how much to give, why to give and when to give regardless of your poverty or riches.

Memory verse

2 Corinthians 8: 12-Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over, and those who gathered a little had enough.