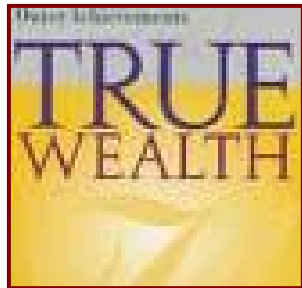


Melva's Corner



Living to Give! (Financial Freedom) Part I

September 17, 2007

Central Truth: We are here to glorify God through the wise investment of our time, our talents and our treasure.

Giving by faith is meant by God to be an exciting privilege. When you honor and praise God through your commitment and obedience to stewardship, He showers you with joy. He turns your giving into a thrilling adventure in Christian living.

Would you like to enjoy such an experience?

Understand Stewardship

To start on your journey to financial freedom, you first must understand the meaning and importance of stewardship.

In the New Testament, two different words describe a steward. One emphasizes guardianship over children and the administration of a master's household. The other stresses the role of a manager over property. In either case, a steward oversees the affairs and property of another person.

One cannot overemphasize the importance of stewardship. Stewardship over all that God entrusts to us in life is foundational to giving. All that we have, we enjoy because of God's grace and goodness. He has put into our hands the administration of all that He owns. As your preeminent master, He holds you accountable for how well you manage what He has entrusted to your care.

This divine perspective helps us understand much of our purpose for living as Christians. We are here to glorify God

through the wise investment of our time, our talents and our treasure. Our Lord came to seek and to save the lost. He has commanded us to continue His mission by helping to fulfill the Great Commission in our generation.

My goal is to help you fulfill God's purpose of your life by showing you the biblical way to invest wisely in God's kingdom and thereby increase your fruitfulness for Christ.

Be Faithful

Faithfulness is another quality that will equip you to enjoy giving. The apostle Paul says, "It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." Faithfulness is dependability - a steady, day-by-day obedience to God in what He has given you to do.

A trustworthy steward will evaluate his opportunities and invest what God has given him in such a way that it will produce the best possible results.

Adopt a Godly Attitude

The attitude of a steward is vital. Paul admonishes, "Let everyone give as his heart tells him, neither grudgingly nor under compulsion, for God loves the man whose heart is in his gift." Or as the Living Bible renders it, "Cheerful givers are the ones God prizes."

The Greek word translated "cheerful" is *hilaros*, from which we get the word "Hilarious." Supernatural, Holy Spirit-directed stewardship is giving with expectation, excitement, joy, praise - even laughter. Indeed, God prizes "hilarious givers" because they are the ones who have discovered the exciting enjoyment of giving.

Recognize and Fulfill Your Stewardship Responsibilities

One of the major responsibilities - and privileges - of a fruitful steward is to share the life-changing message of God's love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Our Lord has given to every Christian the command to "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere" and to "make disciples in all the nations." This command, which the church has historically called the Great Commission, is the privilege and

duty of every man and woman in every generation who confesses Christ as Savior and Lord.

If you and I and Christians everywhere will simply obey our Lord's call to the stewardship of our time, talents and treasure, we will release not only vast sums of money to advance His kingdom, but all other resources needed to reach billions of people for Christ and thus help fulfill the Great Commission in this generation.

Matthew 6:21 records perhaps the simplest truth about your commitment:

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

One can determine much about a Christian's spiritual life and how faithfully he fulfills his stewardship responsibilities by what he treasures. Your use of time, talent and money clearly shows your spiritual commitment because you invest in what your heart values most.

Scriptural References:

***“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
(Matthew 6:21)***