

Biblical Stewardship: What Is a Steward and What Does Stewardship Mean?

Introduction

In the Bible, a steward is someone entrusted with the responsibility of managing what belongs to another. Stewardship, therefore, refers to the faithful and responsible use of all that God has entrusted to us—our time, talents, resources, relationships, and ministries. The concept spans both the Old and New Testaments and applies to every believer.

Old Testament Examples of Stewardship

Eliezer – Steward of Abraham

Eliezer, Abraham's servant, was given authority over all his master's possessions and was even trusted to find a wife for Isaac, Abraham's son. This reveals the depth of trust stewards could be given.

“And Abram said, ‘O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?’”
(Genesis 15:2, ESV)

“Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had...”
(Genesis 24:2, ESV)

Joseph – Steward in Potiphar's House

Joseph was appointed over all the household affairs of Potiphar. His faithfulness as a steward in a foreign land underlines the principle that stewardship is not based on status but on integrity and faith.

“He left all that he had in Joseph’s charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate.”
(Genesis 39:6, ESV)

New Testament Teachings on Stewardship

Jesus extensively taught about stewardship, especially in relation to the Kingdom of God. He used stewards in parables to illustrate faithfulness, accountability, and readiness for His return.

The Faithful and Wise Steward – Luke 12

Jesus emphasized the need for readiness and wise management. A faithful steward is one who lives in anticipation of the Master’s return, serving diligently.

“Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time?”

(Luke 12:42, ESV)

“Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required...”

(Luke 12:48, ESV)

Parable of the Talents – Matthew 25

This parable reinforces the idea that God expects a return on what He entrusts to His people. The servants who multiplied their talents were commended, while the one who did nothing faced judgment.

“For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”

(Matthew 25:29, ESV)

Theological Insight: Stewardship as Worship and Responsibility

1. Stewardship Reflects God's Ownership

Everything we have is from God and belongs to Him.

“The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.”

(Psalm 24:1, ESV)

2. Stewardship Requires Faithfulness

It is not the size of the gift but the faithfulness in using it that matters.

“Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.”

(1 Corinthians 4:2, ESV)

3. Stewardship Involves Accountability

God will hold each believer accountable for how they managed what He entrusted to them.

“So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.”
(Romans 14:12, ESV)

Every Believer Is a Steward

Stewardship is not just for pastors or church leaders. Every Christian is called to manage their gifts, time, and calling for God’s glory.

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”
(1 Peter 4:10, ESV)

Jesus’ instruction to Peter after the resurrection also confirms that love for Christ is shown through responsible care for others:

“He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’... Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’”

(John 21:17, ESV)

Conclusion: Live as a Faithful Steward

All believers are stewards of Christ. Whether in ministry, business, family, or personal life, God expects faithfulness. Stewardship is a sign of maturity and a pathway to greater Kingdom impact.

“This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

(1 Corinthians 4:1, ESV)

Other Key Verses on Stewardship (ESV):

- Luke 16:1-13 - Parable of the Dishonest Manager
- 1 Corinthians 9:17 - Paul's commission as a steward
- Ephesians 3:2 - Stewardship of God's grace
- Colossians 1:25 - Stewardship of the Word

May the Lord bless you as you serve Him faithfully.

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