

6 Principles of Stewardship in the Bible

Jesus spent much of his ministry teaching about how we ought to live. If we take time to study and understand his teachings on stewardship in the Bible, it will change how we manage our time, money, possessions, and relationships. Many Christians today associate stewardship with tithing or making donations, but biblical stewardship goes much deeper than that.

Let's take a look at some scriptures on stewardship and uncover principles that can impact how we live our lives.

What is stewardship in the Bible?

Stewardship is defined as “The careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.” In other words, stewardship is managing and caring for things that belong to someone else. The person tasked with this management responsibility is called a “steward,” but they can also be referred to as a manager, agent, or overseer.

Biblical stewardship, also known as “Christian stewardship,” is the practice of selflessly managing everything we have—our talents, time, money, relationships, health, etc.—for God's glory. It's been practiced for thousands of years, and its origins are captured in the many Bible verses about stewardship of money, time, and possessions.

Check out these passages and the practical lessons they can teach us today.

Principles from Stewardship Bible verses

1. God created everything

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

Before the creation, there was nothing. Then God created everything. So all that we see, touch, and feel—as well as things beyond our natural senses—are his.

For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Colossians 1:16-17

Understanding that God created our world is foundational to understanding biblical stewardship because it provides meaning behind everything around us. Because all of creation belongs to the Creator, only God decides who will oversee what he has made. There was a purpose behind God's creation of the world, and part of his plan involves us being faithful to manage what we have been given.

2. Everything belongs to the Lord

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it—the world, and all who live in it. Psalm 24:1

The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it. Psalm 89:11

These are foundational verses about stewardship. According to King David, everything belongs to the Lord. This is also backed up by God's statement in Job 41:11b, *"Everything under heaven belongs to me."*

Job 41:11

“Everything under heaven belongs to me.”

When we understand that our lives belong to God and that we are simply managers working on his behalf, we can begin to understand that there is a greater meaning to living than just living for our own gratification.

3. God has called everyone to be good stewards

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. Genesis 2:15

God has entrusted us to oversee and manage his creation. Taking care of our planet, the environment, and the animals were the first task God used to teach responsible stewardship.

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10

This scripture on stewardship is much more personal. How we manage our talents and spiritual gifts reflects our values. We can use them for selfish purposes or to help our neighbors.

For example, if you have a talent for finances, you could help others learn how to be good stewards of money. Consider holding financial classes at your church to help people learn to manage debt or plan their retirement. These practical steps will allow you to serve and help improve the lives of others.

4. Christian stewardship can result in growth

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it." Genesis 1:28a

That which is healthy normally grows and reproduces. Part of Christian stewardship is our directive to gratefully use the gifts the Lord has given us to increase and multiply those gifts for God's glory.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 2 Corinthians 9:6

“How much growth we see is often based on how much we are willing to give of our time, spiritual gifts, and other resources.”

How much growth we see is often based on how much we are willing to give of our time, spiritual gifts, and other resources. For example, if a Christian stops investing in their church community, they will often begin to feel disengaged and withdrawn. Or contrarily, if a couple decides to intentionally put time and effort into their marriage, their relationship will have a much better chance of growing.

5. We will be held accountable for our stewardship

"For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them." Matthew 25:29

In Matthew 25, Jesus tells the parable of the bags of gold. A wealthy man entrusted gold to his servants when he left home to travel. Upon his return, the master calls his servants to give an account of what they did with his gold.

Two of the servants doubled the gold they had received by making wise investments. The master commended them:

"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" Matthew 25:23

One of the servants, however, was afraid of losing what he had been given, so he hid his gold instead of investing it. His master condemned him for not being a good steward:

"Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 25:27-30

Each servant was held accountable for how well they used what they had been given. Jesus told a similar parable in Luke 19:11-27, which shares the same message—we will be called to account for how we used the gifts God has given us.

6. Good stewardship will be rewarded

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Colossians 3:23-24

Once we study stewardship in the Bible and learn to use what we have for God's glory, God promises us an inheritance as a reward.

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Matthew 6:33

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

Selfishness leads to emptiness and more greed, but when we live a selfless life in service to God and others, God promises to meet all of our needs. In John 10:10, Jesus also promises to give us a life of abundance.

Study Questions:

What is ownership?

What does “Lord” mean?

What is the hardest area in which to allow God complete control?