Stewarding God’s Resources

Why the Biblical Principles That Guide Giving Should Also Guide Investing

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When We *Give*, We Ask

- Does this honor God?
- Will it bless people?
- Will it meet a genuine need?
- Is the church or charitable organization trustworthy?
- Will it bear lasting fruit for the Gospel?

When We *Invest*, We Often Ask

- How much has it returned in profit?
- What is the outlook? Will it go up in value? down in value?
- What are the costs/expenses involved?
- How risky is it?
- How will is impact my overall diversification?
- Will it meet my goal?

CHALLENGING OUR THOUGHT PROCESSES

Why do we instinctively apply biblical discernment to our *giving*, yet often suspend that same discernment when deciding how to *invest*?

The Thesis:

Since stewardship concerns both what we *give* and what we *keep*, Christians should apply the same overarching biblical principles to *invested capital* that they already apply to *charitable giving*.

Same governing principles.
Different purposes, duties, and applications.

How We Will Reason

1

What Scripture explicitly teaches

2

What reasonably follows from Scripture

3

Prudent application

4

Conscience and Christian liberty

FOUNDATION

The Triune God Owns Everything

“The earth is Yahweh’s, as well as its fullness,
The world, and those who dwell in it.”

— Psalm 24:1 LSB

Ultimate ownership belongs to God.
Stewardship is entrusted to us.

FOUNDATION

The Source of Wealth

"Both riches and honor come from You,
and You rule over all."

— 1 Chronicles 29:12 LSB

"It is He who is giving you power to make wealth."

— Deuteronomy 8:18 LSB

NOT

What do *I* want to do with *my* money?

BUT

What does *God* want to accomplish with *His* resources?

REDEMPTION

Redeemed with Precious Blood

“And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your sojourn, knowing that you were not **redeemed** with corruptible things like silver or gold from your futile conduct inherited from your forefathers, but **with precious blood**, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, **the blood of Christ**.”

— 1 Peter 1:17-19 LSB

REDEMPTION

The Redeemed Steward Belongs to God

“Or do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For **you were bought with a price**: therefore glorify God in your body.”

— 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 LSB

The issue is not only *what* belongs to God.
The deeper issue is *who* belongs to God.

Stewardship Defined

"Let a man consider us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found faithful."

— 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 LSB

- Manages another's property
- Exercises delegated authority
- Serves the owner's purposes
- Gives an account
- Must be faithful

The Administration of Love

“The only right mode of administration is that which is regulated by love.”

John Calvin · Institutes III.7.5

God’s gifts are entrusted to us for the good of others driven by love, and we must account to Him for their use.

STEWARDSHIP

Wealth, Stewardship, and Allegiance

"He who is **faithful** in a very little thing is **faithful** also in much, and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. Therefore if you have not been **faithful** in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will **entrust** the true riches to you? And if you have not been **faithful** in the use of **that which is another's**, who will give you that which is your own? **No servant can serve two masters**; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and wealth.**"

— Luke 16:11-13 LSB

- Faithful in little and much
- Faithful with wealth
- Faithful with "that which is another's"
- Accountable to one Master

Giving Transfers Stewardship

Giver discerns → Gift is transferred → Recipient administers

"… taking precaution **lest anyone discredits us in our ministering of this generous gift**, for we respect what is good, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."

— 2 Corinthians 8:20-21 LSB

The *giver's* stewardship concerns the decision to give.
The *recipient's* stewardship concerns the ongoing use of the gift.

What Remains in Our Hands

Giving concerns resources we *transfer*.

Stewardship continues over resources we *retain*.

“responsible possession under God and subjection to the just claim of one’s neighbors”

C. F. H. Henry, “Christian Perspective on Private Property”

What we keep must be stewarded as faithfully as what we give.

STEWARDSHIP

The Steward's Five Uses of Money

1	2	3	4	5
Earn	Live	Give	Owe	Grow

TODAY: GIVE + GROW

Giving Defined

The voluntary transfer of resources without an expected financial return

Worship • Gospel ministry • Church support • Mercy • Genuine need

The Character of New Testament Giving

"Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

— 2 Corinthians 9:7 LSB

Purposeful • Voluntary • Cheerful • Generous • Sacrificial

Investing Defined Carefully

The commitment of capital with risk and an expected financial return

Equity

ownership

Debt

financing

Funds

mediated participation through a fund manager

Eventide, "Interest in Bonds for the Faith-Based Investor"

"Invested in the Market"

"Market exposure"
"Buying the index"
"The market returned…"

Enterprises
Managers
Workers
Customers
Products
Practices

The abstraction that is inherent in fund ownership obscures the relationship; it does not eliminate it.

"Do you know what you own?"

Kuruvilla, "Do You Know What You Own?"

Primary and Secondary Markets

Primary market

New securities are issued.
Capital goes to the issuer.

Secondary market

Existing securities change owners.
Proceeds usually go to the seller.

Most public stock purchases do not directly send cash to the company.

SEC Investor.gov

SYNTHESIS

Different Purposes. Same Stewardship.

Giving

- Transfers resources
- No expected financial return
- Ministry, mercy, and direct need

Investing

- Commits capital
- Expected return with risk
- Provision and productive enterprise

Different mechanisms and purposes. Same owner. Same stewardship.

The Parallel Principles

- God’s glory
- Love of neighbor
- Wisdom and prudence
- Integrity and justice
- Fruitfulness
- Accountability

PARALLEL PRINCIPLE 1

Principle 1: God's Glory

"Whether, then, you eat or drink or **whatever you do**, do **all** to the glory of God."

— 1 Corinthians 10:31 LSB

Does this honor God?

PARALLEL PRINCIPLE 2

Principle 2: Love of Neighbor

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

— Matthew 22:39 LSB

***Giving* ordinarily serves the neighbor *directly*.**
Investing* can serve the neighbor *indirectly
through productive enterprise.

PARALLEL PRINCIPLE 3

Principle 3: Wisdom and Prudence

Giving asks

- Purpose
- Need
- Doctrine
- Governance
- Fruit

Investing asks

- Risk
- Return
- Cost
- Diversification
- Time horizon

Moral conviction does not replace wisdom.

PARALLEL PRINCIPLE 4

Principle 4: Integrity and Justice

Honest measures

Fair dealing

Truthful products

Just wages

Non-exploitation

How you *give* matters. How you *profit* matters.

PARALLEL PRINCIPLE 5

Principle 5: Fruitfulness

Giving asks

What spiritual and practical fruit may this gift produce?

Investing asks

What products, services, work, practices, and economic value does this enterprise produce?

What is produced? • Who is served? • How is the result achieved?

PARALLEL PRINCIPLE 6

Principle 6: Accountability

"So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God."

— Romans 14:12 LSB

God evaluates all stewardship—not merely the charitable portion.

CAPITAL STEWARDSHIP

God’s Resources as Capital

Capital is the portion of resources committed toward productive use, financing, or future economic value.

By what biblical principles should Christians deploy God’s capital?

Bahnsen, “Debt, AI, and What Actually Creates Value”

CAPITAL STEWARDSHIP

Productive Enterprise

Meaningful work	**Useful goods and services**	**Innovation**
Productivity	**Provision**	**Future generosity**

"Performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need."

— Ephesians 4:28 LSB

Kuruvilla, "The Purpose of Business"

Human Flourishing, Properly Ordered

1. God's glory
2. Faithful stewardship
3. Love of neighbor
4. Human flourishing

Human flourishing is a subordinate fruit of life and institutions functioning more consistently with God's created and moral order.

Kuyper, Lectures on Calvinism, Lecture III

CAPITAL STEWARDSHIP

Different Purposes. Complementary Service.

Giving may result in:

- Proclaim the gospel
- Strengthen the church
- Relieve suffering
- Meet immediate needs
- Serve the vulnerable

Investing may result in:

- Finance productive activity
- Sustain meaningful work
- Develop useful goods
- Build future provision
- Create future generosity

Different needs and goals. Complementary forms of service.

THE VITAL INVESTMENT QUESTION FOR THE STEWARD

The question is not simply, "What return will this investment produce?"

The deeper question is, "What kind of world does this capital help create?"

Robin John, "What Are We Rooting for in the World?"

THE HEART OF THE STEWARD

A Whole Stewardship Ethic

"But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evils, and some by aspiring to it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, O man of God, flee from these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, gentleness."

— 1 Timothy 6:6-11 LSB

A Whole Stewardship Ethic

"Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty or to set their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Command them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed."

— 1 Timothy 6:17-19 LSB

Contentment • Hope in God • Enjoyment
Good works • Generosity • Eternal perspective

The Same Heart Can Distort Both

HEART	GIVING DISTORTION	INVESTING DISTORTION
Pride	Giving for recognition	Wealth as self-made
Coveting	Withholding generosity	Chasing “more”
Anxiety	Hoarding	Portfolio as refuge
Indifference	Giving without love	Investing without concern

The Transformed Steward

GRATITUDE

CONTENTMENT

TRUST

LOVE

The same heart that must be sanctified in *giving* must also be sanctified in *investing*.

GUARDRAILS

What We Are Not Saying

- Investing replaces giving
- Scripture mandates one portfolio or manner of investing
- Shareholders control every corporate act
- Every trade directly funds a company
- Values alignment guarantees returns
- Perfect economic purity is possible

GUARDRAILS

Faithful Stewardship Requires Both

Biblical alignment
is not a substitute for
financial due diligence.

Financial performance
is not a substitute for
moral discernment.

GUARDRAILS

Responsibility and Fiduciary Context

Personal assets

Owner's duties, goals, prudence, and conscience

Client or plan assets

Beneficiary mandate, loyalty, care, and fiduciary duty

Church or nonprofit assets

Mission, restrictions, fund purpose, and prudence

Knowledge • Intention • Proximity • Authority • Available choices

U.S. SEC • California Probate Code / UPMIFA

GUARDRAILS

Do Not Bind Where Scripture Does Not Bind

Never bind the conscience where Scripture has not bound it.

- No mandated fund family
- No universal company list
- No perfect portfolio
- No single screening threshold

Biblical principles • Wisdom • Informed conscience • Christian liberty

APPLICATION

Ask the Parallel Questions

BEFORE GIVING	BEFORE INVESTING
Does this honor God?	Does this honor God’s created and moral order?
Will it bless people?	Does this enterprise genuinely serve people?
Is it wise?	Is it financially prudent?
Is it trustworthy?	Are its products, practices, managers, and fund manager trustworthy?
Will it bear lasting fruit?	Does it create genuine and lasting value?

As a steward of God’s resources, how will I answer these questions?

Every dollar God entrusts to us has a purpose.

Some dollars are given away.
Some are invested.

Whatever their use, every dollar should advance God's purposes according to God's principles.