

Practical Christian Living

Advance in Faith Unit 104

Week 1: The Stewardship Paradigm



Introduction

The purpose of this session is:

- *To enable believers to differentiate between the concepts of stewardship and ownership;*
- *To encourage believers to accept the call to stewardship responsibility;*
- *To help believers recognise the value of natural things in the life of the believer;*
- *To clarify the roles, responsibilities and attitudes of a steward;*
- *To assist believers in identifying areas requiring stewardship attention in their own lives and take appropriate action;*

1. Stewardship vs. Ownership:

To embrace the Stewardship Paradigm, we need to understand these two concepts:

1. God has ***ownership*** of everything, including all we possess.
(**Ex. 9:29; 19:5**) (**Job 41:11**) (**Psalm 50:10-12**) (**1 Chronicles 29:11**).
2. We have ***stewardship*** of everything God entrusts to us.
(**Genesis 2:15**) (**1 Corinthians 4:1**) (**Luke 12:42**)

In the secular world, ownership is based largely on legitimate possession. If someone legally and legitimately acquires an item(s) ownership is then conferred upon him/her as possessor. However, in Scripture God is seen to be owner of everything, regardless of who possesses it (**Acts 4:32**). Therefore, anything we possess as believers has been entrusted to us by God, with reason, and we are required to be stewards of those things on His behalf.

An Owner has _____

A Steward has _____

The basis or grounds for God's ownership is:

1. God created us **(Psalm 24:1-2) (Psalm 100:3)**
2. God redeemed us **(1 Cor. 6:19)**
3. God sanctified us **(1 Cor. 6:11) (Heb. 10:10) (1 Peter 2:9)**
4. God sustains us **(Hebrews 1:3)**

2. What is Stewardship?

A steward (*oikonomos*: *oikos* – house; *nemos* – arrange) in Bible times was the manager of a household or an estate. The role of the steward was to plan, organise, co-ordinate and maintain the affairs of the house. The Bible refers to Christian believers as being stewards of the gifts of God (**1 Peter 4:10**) and the revelations of God given by His Spirit (**1 Corinthians 4:1**).

As stewards of God we are to be faithful (**1 Corinthians 4:2**), fruitful (productive) (**Luke 19:11-27**) and wise (**Titus 1:7**) with the gifts and revelations God has given to us. However, it is essential to also recognise that the demand for faithfulness in spiritual things is preceded by a demand for faithfulness in natural things (**1 Timothy 3:5; Luke 16:10-12**). In other words, ‘natural’ things are as important to God as ‘spiritual’ things.

3. Life Areas Requiring Stewardship:

There are seven basic life areas that constitute the whole person. All seven of these are mutually interdependent and therefore impact significantly on one another. Neglect in one area can easily lead to a lack of productivity in another. For this reason, it is important to pay attention to all seven areas and not over-emphasise one at the expense of another. The seven areas are:

1. Spiritual / Ethical:

- Relationship with God, values, prayer, ministry...

2. Emotional / Volitional:

- Emotional intelligence, emotional balance, emotional health, decisions, choices, obedience...

3. Physical / Kinesthetic:

- Exercise, diet, eating habits, rest and relaxation...

4. Vocational / Professional:

- Career, Calling, Skill Development...

5. Financial / Material:

- Giving to God and His work, planning, budgeting, investing...

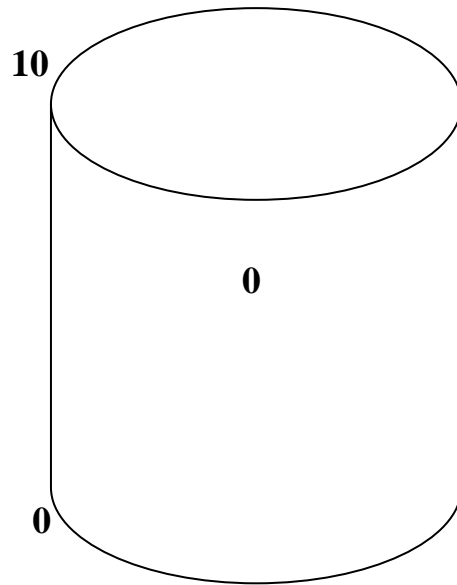
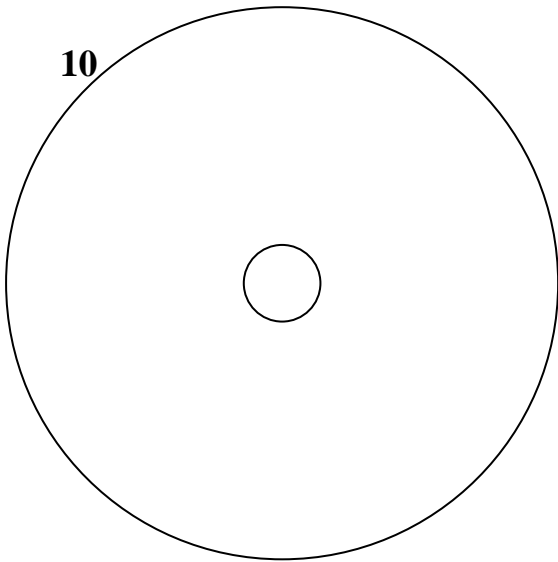
6. Relational / Social:

- Marriage, family, singleness, friendships, work relationships...

7. Intellectual / Educational:

- Intellectual capacity enhancement, study, knowledge...

3. The Wheel and Barrel:



Discussion Questions

1. List the top 3 areas that you feel are receiving adequate attention at the moment. Share them with the group.

2. List the bottom 3 areas that you feel need more attention in your own life. Share them with the group.

3. What practical steps can you take to embrace your responsibility for the areas needing attention?

Memory Verse

1 Peter 4:10

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