

Stewardship – Part One

"You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men."
I Corinthians 7:23

We learn at least two important truths from this verse: 1) - **We do not belong to ourselves**; we are not autonomous; we belong to the One who purchased us at the price of His life. 2) - **We should never be the slaves of men**, irrespective of who we are.

This is foundational for a proper understanding of stewardship. The dictionary defines stewardship: "A person who manages for another his property or financial affairs; one who administers anything as the agent of another." **This means that you, and everything you have, belong to Christ. He purchased you.** Your responsibility, therefore, is to steward that which belongs to him. You own nothing. Every decision you make – how you spend your life and the assets God gives you, how you handle all relationships in life – must be made based on the question, **"What does my Master want done with what belongs to Him?"**

In the final analysis, this is an issue of what you believe. Do you think, when Christ died for you, that He set you free to live for yourself? The Bible says, "And He died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised."¹

The Psalmist said, "For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue forever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish."²

This is your choice: you can deceive yourself into believing that all you are and have belongs to you, in which case you will end "like the beasts that perish." Or, you can acknowledge that you belong to your Savior and that as His slave He is preparing you for an eternity with Him.

¹ I Corinthians 5:15 ² Psalm 49:10-12

Stewardship – Part Two

"So let no one boast of men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's."
I Corinthians 3:21-23

These words reflect the attitude of those who think biblically. **The ethos of the whole of Scripture teaches that God created you for Himself – for His own good pleasure.** When you invest that which is entrusted to you, or when you seek to use that which is entrusted to others, this is your mindset. No one can tell another what this looks like. Each believer must look to God in making a determination.

Solomon, King of Israel, looked at life and concluded that it is vacuous. "Here is a grave evil I have observed under the sun: riches hoarded by their owner to his misfortune, in that those riches are lost in some unlucky venture; and if he begets a son, he has nothing in hand. Another grave evil is this: He must depart just as he came. As he came out of his mother's womb, so must he depart at last, naked as he came. He can take nothing of his wealth to carry with him. So what is the good of his toiling for the wind? Besides, all his days he eats in darkness, with much vexation and grief and anger... There is an evil I have observed under the sun, and a grave one it is for man: that God sometimes grants a man riches, property, and wealth, so that he does not want for anything his appetite may crave, but God does not permit him to enjoy it; instead, a stranger will enjoy it. That is futility and a grievous ill."¹

In essence, the Bible teaches that everyone wants to control and use you. No one else purchased you by going to hell on your behalf; only Jesus did this. As you live out your life, ultimately, even you do not control yourself and your possessions. As the world sees it, and as Solomon articulates it, the "fickle finger of fate" determines everything. **In light of this, you can either try your "luck" with the "fickle finger of fate," or you can place yourself under the authority of the One who loved you more than He loved His own life.**

You know you have done this when you see the whole of your life as stewarding "that which belongs to Another."

¹ Ecclesiastes 5:13-6:2