

Stewardship

Inspiring a deeper understanding of true giving

June 2021

Left a preacher's widow, with five children to feed, clothe, and educate, Aunt Nan settled on a farm in Ohio, and ran it herself with the aid of her boys as they grew up. In the pantry of her farm house was an old coffee grinder she used as a "storehouse" for her offering to God. Out of every dollar she received for things sold off her farm, she immediately put into that coffee grinder the Lord's portion.

Those who knew her well were witness to the fact that she gave of her gross, not merely her net income. If anyone ever had a right to renege on proportionate giving to God, Aunt Nan had; a run-down farm to manage and five children to raise. But she did not.

But she proved her love by her life and by her deeds. She often sang:

*"Take my life and let it be consecrated,
Lord, to thee. Take my silver and my
gold, Not a mite would I withhold."*

In years of financial stress and strain, Aunt Nan proved the place God held in her life; not by gathering her children around her in her farmhouse and talking to them in mere words about how she loved the Lord; she proved by the way she handled money that Jesus Christ had the supreme place in her heart and house.

The money in Aunt Nan's coffee grinder wasn't only mother's gift ... it was the family gift. The children helped on the farm and had a personal investment in the contents of that coffee grinder. Every Sunday, each one of them, from mother down to baby, had an offering for their Lord. Aunt Nan knew that children

"learn to do by doing," and she acted upon this principle. She taught her children to give by giving. She did not have her children sit beside her in church and watch the collection plate go by without putting anything in it.

Aunt Nan knew the message of the Bible: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not



depart from it" ... was true. "Aunt Nan's coffee grinder plan" has worked better in supporting the local church, in helping missionary work at home and abroad, and in influencing young people to give of their time and talent to God, than many

Genesis tells us that God placed the first human being in the garden to practice stewardship there; "to work in and take care of it." Genesis 2:15



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We can take the step of faith as we renew or consider additional areas of commitment of our time, talents or treasures.

Jesus' death on the cross was the ultimate in love for us ... what we do with it is our response.

*Are you an active member...
The kind that would be missed,
Or are you just content
That your name is on the list?*

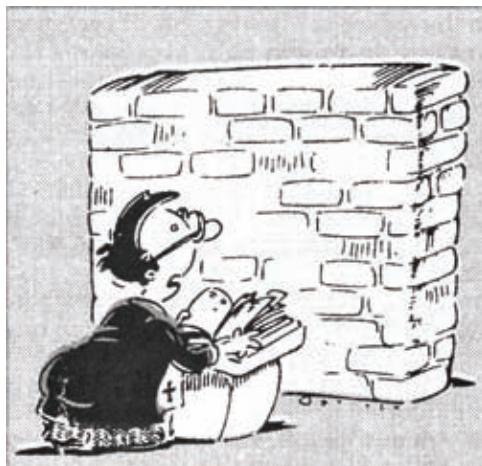
*Do you attend the meetings
And mingle with the flock,
Or do you stay at home
And criticize and knock?*

*Do you take an active part
To help the work along,
Or are you satisfied to be
The kind that just belongs?*

*Do you ever voluntarily
Help at the guiding stick,
Or leave the work to just a few
And talk about the clique?*

*Come out to meetings often
And help with hand and heart.
Don't be just a member
But take an active part.*

*Think this over member ...
You know right from wrong,
Are you an active member
Or do you just belong?*



*"Today's message is titled:
'It is More Blessed to Give'
and is taken from Paul's letter to ..."*

Deacon Dave on stewardship



Very often the lines between what we consider "sacred" and what is "worldly" are blurred. The situation in the Gospel of Matthew 22:15-21 is a case in point.

Is it just for a faithful Israelite to pay the Roman tax? A yes and Jesus is convicted of subjecting God's kingdom to the pagans. A no and he is a traitor to the state. The answer is a classic. Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.

Although the question was posed two thousand years ago, the answer has to be worked out in each age. That fine line between what belongs to God and what to Caesar is a constant puzzle. It mixes in with issues of state funding of abortion, praying in public school, the relationship of one state to another in the Middle East.

***Give to Caesar the things that
belong to Caesar and to God
the things that are God's.***

Jesus does not get caught in the verbal trap. His answer is not a definitive statement; but a statement of attitude. In this world we really don't own things as much as we are stewards who administer. To be sure, we have monthly

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God's Gift of Time

The dictionary defines time as a period during which something exists or can be accomplished. We live in twenty-four hour increments. We can only live one day at a time, one hour at a time.


We make time for work, recreation and rest. If you are like me, all of your time is accounted for. Most of us run through our days like that character in Alice in Wonderland, crying "I'm late,



I'm late."

I challenge you to get still for a moment. Take a good long look at your typical day and honestly see how much time you allot to the giver of life!

Now that I've gotten your attention ... if you're really serious about this challenge, we agree that time is a gift given freely from our Creator; it is life itself. Yet, sadly we misuse this gift. Typically, we have the attitude of self-service, rather than other-service, including service to our church.


If we are honest, we can see areas in which we can improve our response to God, for the astonishing gift of time. You might ask, I do give? I invite you to take a closer look at your giving habits. When you give, in what spirit do you give? It is to give loudly, so all those within range know of your gift. When you show some kindness or use your talent, are you pompous and pumped up? Then the reward is superficial. The gift is given in the spirit of self-service. As the words of Scripture remind us to be "doers of the Word, not hearers only." 

The Good Steward

It had been many years since I taught a Sunday School class. But I knew the morning I arrived at church and saw the small gathering of little girls on the front steps, I was about to be called to serve God ... if only temporarily.

"We don't have a teacher," a little girl named Sara said, looking up at me with wide blue eyes. I stared at the four little faces before me and nodded my acceptance to help out. There were instant smiles all around. And as I trailed the girls down the hallway to their classroom, I was overwhelmed with the feeling of gratefulness.

She listened with her heart and served.

Only God knew I was capable of teaching a Sunday School class. The children were only eight and nine years old. Too young by far to have known my own daughter when she went to the church. God was calling me into stewardship ... a teaching stewardship, briefly, but confidently, nonetheless. I listen to God with my heart. And when God calls, I gladly serve. I'm menial, and God knows my limits. God never summons me into a servitude I am incapable of performing. God makes me smile ... and bow my head to him. God is a lamp unto my feet. Therefore my servitude is joyful! 



The work of the church can never be complete without your help as a member of the stewardship team. Everyone must work together to form a beautiful picture of what God can do through the ministry of your church. Each steward can find and fill his or her place.




God was calling me into stewardship ... a teaching stewardship.

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Aunt Nan...

other plans, drives, movements, suppers, and sales have.

Because she was a real steward and proved her love for God by her deeds, Aunt Nan influenced her whole family to serve Christ and his church. All are active in the church today. Her oldest son is an able bishop with world influence. Another son is a professor at a great theological seminary, and still another son is doing missionary work.

Let us learn from the fine example of Aunt Nan! Set aside a coffee grinder or something in the house to serve as a storehouse for your family's offering to God. Like Aunt Nan, we will see the positive effect this will have on our young people as they learn the principles of stewardship by active participation. As a result we will have a more Christ-like America and a more Christ-like world. 

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Deacon Dave...

bills and mortgage payments to prove that things belong to us; but the belonging is for only a short time. We really only manage these things and then pass them on to another. In the Gospel, Jesus sees Caesar as but another of the stewards of the world. Ultimately the stewardship must be settled before the "owner." 