

Stewardship - Part 5

by David Adams

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faithfulness and love in ecclesiastical stewardship and personal stewardship, highlighting examples from the Bible and warning against spiritual blindness and poverty.

Duration: 50:58

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 13:1, 1 Corinthians 4:2, 1 Peter 2:16, 1 Peter 4:10, Revelation 2:1-7

Topics: "Faithful Stewardship", "Serving Others"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker acknowledges the abundance of material to cover and the need to condense it. They emphasize the importance of being faithful stewards of the ministries God has given us. The speaker references 1 Corinthians 4 and 1 Peter 4, highlighting the need to use our gifts to serve one another and to speak the word of God. The ultimate goal is to bring glory to God through Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Well, it's only fair game, I guess, when the speaker makes a comment from the platform that somebody's going to question it or challenge it. But let me make a suggestion or two to you regarding my statement about the weather in Psalm 118. Who do you think was the author of the wind that blew out of the wilderness and blew Job's house down with all his ten children in it? Who do you think was the author of the storm on Galilee when our Lord was sleeping in the boat and the ever obedient son stood up in the boat and rebuked the wind and the waves? Did he ever rebuke anything that the Father had sent to him at any time? Who do you think was the author of the Heraclodon that came down upon the ship in which Paul was traveling, heading for Rome? To frustrate the purpose of the Lord already stated to Paul, as thou hast borne witness of me at Jerusalem, so shalt thou also bear witness of me at Rome.

Who was trying to see that he never got to Rome? Now, perhaps you would be kind enough to consider at least those three examples to support the suggestion that I made to you that all the weather is not divinely sent. But we had one this morning, didn't we? A spell or so. And as I looked around, I didn't know how many to expect this morning, and I thought, well, no.

We're not all cut from the same piece of cloth with the same scissors, are we? And neither are the birds. You remember the stormy petrel that just enjoys flying into a storm? I suppose it would be a rainstorm, wouldn't it? However, I was rather shocked because last evening I was informed that the storms here in this area of Florida always go around Park of the Palms. They don't seem to center on this area at all.

So, I was looking very confidently last night at the black glowering, lowering sky and said, well, we're not going to get any because someone who knows, lives here all the time, has informed me that we never get any storms at Park of the Palms. Well, there you go. Nobody's infallible.

Not even talking about the weather, right? Well, thank you for coming, you stormy petrels. And let's turn this morning to 1 Corinthians 4. Now, I am conscious of the fact that what we have left for this morning in the study of stewardship is what we should have left for a whole week. So, we certainly can't handle it all.

We have much too much material. In fact, I told my better three quarters on the phone yesterday, and she asked me how it was going. And I said, well, I think folks are getting tired, and maybe I am a little myself.

So, there's a lot of material ahead of us. She said, well, just give them the best you can. Now, you can't get to heaven that way, but you can finish up a week of studies perhaps that way anyway.

So, I am here to comply with orders from headquarters. And so, on that account, I probably am going to have to condense considerably this morning, or do some rapid talking, which I am not supposed to do. I'm counseled against it.

Remember, I told you, I'm not to talk too fast, and I'm not to drop my voice at the end of a sentence, and I'm not to mutter. So, I probably will violate all these three prohibitions as I'm going this morning. Just don't remind me of it after the meeting, will you? I wanted to move into two areas of stewardship which we have not touched in any kind of detail up till now.

The one is ecclesiastical, and the other is personal. Now, the ecclesiastical area of stewardship, of course, refers particularly to the church, or to the churches. To the church at large, as the body of Christ, and to the churches individually, as we have them with the epistles written to the churches, and also those last seven major messages that our Lord gave to the churches.

The voice of the Spirit was to be heard. Interesting, by the way, isn't it, that the book of the Revelations starts off with God giving to our Lord Jesus Christ an unfolding, an unveiling, an apocalypse, a revealing, and that he gives it to an angel who, in turn, hands it down to John, who, in turn, writes the messages to the churches. He gives it in one book, and then when you get to read the messages, you discover, he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.

I'm sure that's worthy of some consideration, even if we don't have time to do it this morning. So, when you come to the close of the book, the last of the canon of Holy Scripture, we discover that it opens in chapters 2 and 3, at any rate, with a stewardship which is implied of necessity, and which is required of these churches of Asia Minor. And if you run through them in memory quickly, you'll remember that they were very diversified, these stewardships, and the qualities that were required to be fulfilled by each of the seven churches of Asia were distinct one from the other, and the Lord calls them to account.

It is stated here in 1 Corinthians chapter 4, in verse 2, it is required of or in stewards that a man be found faithful, or that one be found faithful, man or woman, of course. And some of you will remember the statement made in Titus chapter 1, where it says there, Paul writing to Titus says, an overseer or a bishop must be faithful as the steward of God. That's one of the titles in connection with stewardship that we have applied to an individual.

So, faithfulness is required, the outstanding necessity or requisite of a steward or stewards, whether they be individual or whether they be collective, whether they are apostles or whether they are churches. So,

there is such a thing as an ecclesiastical stewardship, and this involves a tremendous amount of consideration and detail. If we were to run just briefly through the messages to the seven churches of Asia, to look at the aspects of ecclesiastical stewardship, it would surprise us likely just how much there is involved.

Starting off with the church at Ephesus, you recall, that had left that which was supreme. It was superlative. It was the greatest to them at one time, and that was their love for their Lord.

And it is a striking coincidence, or perhaps not a coincidence, but fact that it is the message to the church at Ephesus under Paul that we discover that the love was the outstanding characteristic to be revealed in that which represented the bride. I remember, where was I? Somewhere. I think it was, you know, I was in a Spanish-speaking assembly one time, and when I got up to speak, I said, no, we're turning to the Second Epistles of the Ephesians.

And so, the leaves all started fluttering, you know, and back and forth, and then I heard the pages going, and some of my audience on that occasion were not very conversant with the order of Scripture. So, in all the generosity of my heart, I let them search for a while, you know, and I couldn't find the Second Epistles of the Ephesians, so I suggested we go over to Revelation chapter 2. And it is really so, because that which in essence was given to us in Paul's writing to the Ephesians is solidified in the Lord's message to the church at Ephesus. And his major complaint, as you will understand, you remember that he admires, or rather he approves, of their doctrinal position.

He approves of their moral condition, but then he finds fault with their spiritual or emotional condition. And so, he charges them that in their stewardship they had left that which was supreme in the beginning to them, that which was their first, not chronologically first, but their chiefest love. I know most of us look back to the days when we were first saved, and our affection, our dedication to our Lord, our love for Him was what we now call, at this late date, our first love.

But I think that the idea in the Lord's message to Ephesus was not their first love when they first got to know the Master, but that which was their prime or chief or the ultimate of their love. And that was their love towards Him. Thou hast left, he said, thy first or best or chief love.

And having done that, of course, the rest was more or less put into the shade. Because, you see, if you have a doctrinally correct church, and if you have a morally correct church, and yet if that assembly is lacking in that which is prime, that which is chief, that is the most important, what do you have? You have a clear head, and a sound body, and no life. So you've only got a corpse, right? And while they were even doctrinally correct, the more correct the thing can be without life, the more stupid it becomes, right? And that's what they called them in the funeral parlors, I know.

Well, that was the situation, that was the position as far as the church at Ephesus was concerned. And the Lord calls them to the fact that their stewardship of love had been forsaken. Therefore, He speaks of the necessity to repent, and to return to that which was to them in the beginning of the greatest importance, and that which meant so much to Him even at that later date.

And then you move on, you go to Smyrna, you remember, and the stewardship of Smyrna was faithfulness unto death. And it certainly seems evident in the message to the church at Smyrna that death was not distant, that death was very imminent, and Satan was going to cast some of them into prison, and that they were called upon to be faithful unto death. So faithfulness now is the second feature of the

ecclesiastical stewardship.

The church is called upon to be faithful, and that woven in with the matter of love, you see very clearly that these two emerge also in a practical sense in our lives individually. But there they were brought together in the ecclesiastical state, in the life of the assembly, in the life of the church. And then you go on to Pergamos, and the chief thing that was wrong with Pergamos was its doctrine, and the thing which the Lord hated, the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

You remember I suggested to you on a formal occasion this week that the term Nicodemus means, it's a double composite word, and it means one who was to rule over, to guide, to direct the populace. Nicodemus. When you come to the book of the Revelation, you have the Nicolaitans, and you have these who were in the position to use the laity as subject to their official position of order.

So, the Nicolaitans followed the Nicodemus, and the Lord finds considerable fault with this matter that there were some who were to lord it over, or to control, really to conquer I think the word Nico is, but at any rate it means to control. And this time they're controlling the lower strata, or level, of the members of the church, which the Lord hates both their deeds and their doctrine. And then when you move on to Thyatira, you recall that Thyatira's great failure in their stewardship was who, why, and where, and how was dictating the plan of the church.

There was a total reversal of order, so that Jezebel, symbolically of course, was there teaching in the church, and had introduced the double form of contamination. To eat things sacrificed to idols, that's spiritual defilement, and also to commit fornication, and that was physical defilement. And these two areas have afflicted the church ever since.

The church and the churches, the individual churches, and in the days in which you and I are living, we find this is becoming increasingly evident. And those who are responsible for the order of the assembly, for the conduct of the assembly, for the morality of the assembly, and for the moral tone of the assembly, are having to combat conditions which, 40, 50 years ago, we never even dreamed of. I recall when I first went preaching publicly to an extent, that we never mentioned the word divorce off the public platform.

We never mentioned the word adultery off the public platform. These things, if they were lurking away in the back of possibility, were never brought out to light, and never stated publicly. In fact, I suggested to you the other day that there were certain passages of scripture in my younger days, I recall, and not so young, some of them, I suppose, when certain chapters were forbidden by the elders of the assembly where I grew up to be even read in public, which I consider now is a travesty of the revelation of truth, because we have never been instructed anywhere, as far as I know, in the scriptures that we should hide, cover up, avoid, pass by, or jump over certain passages of scripture because they're not really fitting to be read in public.

There's an absolute denial of such a practice as that which we have in the Old Testament days. So, we have got to combat these things now. And in two of the churches of Asia, you have the same thing brought out, that double defilement, those two areas where the spirit and the body of the believers is brought into uncleanness.

And the Lord charges the church with that very thing, with failing to keep the moral and spiritual and intellectual purity of the assembly. Sometimes you get it on the one side, and sometimes you get it on the other side, and yet there are times when the one leads to the other, as many of you, I'm sure, must know

in your practical overseership of an assembly. And then you move on from there, from Thyatira to Sardis, and you discover that one of the things that's supposed to characterize the church is vitality.

And they had a name that they were living, but they were dead, says the Lord. And because of that, He was going to refuse them. He was going to publicly repudiate them.

It was that thing with which God charged Moses in another era, to have a name, to have an outward profession, but to lack the vitality, the spiritual vitality of the Lord who was in the midst of them. So, He charges Sardis with that very thing. Paul speaks of that, you remember, in some of his later epistles, about people who have a form of godliness, but deny the power of it.

And certainly, my brethren, an ecclesiastical profession is not to be static. It is not to be alike this thing. It is to be characterized by spiritual vitality.

That's what the Lord says about Sardis that was so, sadly, lacking. Then you move into a brighter sphere. You move into sort of the sunlit uplands of reality when you come through the church at Philadelphia.

And the Lord does not accuse them of anything condemnatory. To the contrary, He approves of their condition and their character. And finally, the church at Laodicea, which everybody knows, is deplorable.

So much so that He said He would nauseatingly refuse them and publicly denounce them, because they said their rich increase was good and knew not they were blind, miserable, and naked. So, the Lord calls the churches, and I'm doing this hurriedly because I want to get into some consideration of the personal stewardship that we have as well. But He calls the churches, and He even threatens the one, you remember, the very first one with removing the candlestick out of its place.

And then He closes with the last one with a public repudiation of that which was carrying His name, but was poor and blind and miserable. So, they had failed in that ecclesiastical stewardship. I want to read with you, having made that what my wife calls a far too lengthy introduction, so that we can get to the subject before us, read one or two passages with you here concerning personal stewardship.

First, in chapter 4, where you have already turned, I assume, that amends to account of us as of the ministers of Christ. Now, there are different words used as translated in our English Bibles for ministers. Sometimes it's deacons, and sometimes it's a public or official minister.

Sometimes it's a servant, and just a servant. When you get into the political area, I don't suppose you'll be able to get to that this morning, but you understand from Romans chapter 13 and 1 Peter chapter 2, that politicians are called God's servants, and the word is deacons. That's a very interesting word, by the way, and I commend to you a study of deacons and deaconry.

I remember receiving a letter from an assembly distant from our home, and the brethren had decided that they should have a board of deacons, and so they wrote to me and asked me what my opinion was of the matter, and that sent me doing a little scurrying and into a rather extensive study of the business of deacons and deaconry, and I decided, much to, well, I suppose it was a surprise to the brethren, although they felt happy to act upon it, and I'm sure it'll be a surprise to some of you, that I couldn't find a board of deacons in the New Testament church at all. In fact, I couldn't find, apart from that word in Philippians that people hang on to very closely, I couldn't find any isolation of any one service to which the scripture uses the word deaconry or deacons. We all go to Acts chapter 6, don't we, when we have the two kinds of ministry, and that is the apostles giving themselves to the study of the word or the ministry of prayer, and

then the seven brethren that were chosen to look after the daily administration, the administration of food for the seemingly neglected widows, the Hellenistic widows of the Greek believers who were there at Jerusalem in the area at the time, and these, we say, these were called to be deacons, but when you look into it a little more closely, you'll discover that when the apostle says, we will give ourselves to the ministry, the prayer and the ministry of the word, the word ministry is deaconry, and then when you trace that word deacon all through the New Testament scriptures, you're surprised to discover that a deacon, or the title, if you want to call it a title, is given to the Lord Jesus himself, and that Paul says that those who preach and teach the word are acting as deacons.

Sometimes when I'm speaking in certain places, and the brethren cut the hymns all short, you know, I start off by saying, now which would you rather have, priestly service or deaconry service? And of course the hosts say, well, of course we would rather have priestly service. I said, when you sing, you're acting as priests unto the Lord, and you are creating an offering which you offer to the Lord. When I get up here to address you, I'm acting as a deacon.

Now which would you rather have? Would you rather have priestly ministry or would you rather have deaconry ministry? And of course they say, well, you know, we'd rather have priestly ministry. Well, then you better sing a little more and cut the time of the deacon back, because that's exactly what it is. And when you search through this use of the word deacon, then you come to Romans chapter 13.

You discover that politicians are called the ministers of God, and the word is deacons. And not only so, but they, as any other deacon in any other position, have to give an account to God, because it is a stewardship. Deaconry is a stewardship, and there is a political stewardship of people who do not even understand that they have anything to do with God in their political office.

Politicians are God's ministers. The word is God's deacons, and it's required, it says here, of a deacon that a man be found faithful. And now we discover that they have to give an account to God, as do we all.

And that brings me back to a certain place where we start at the beginning of the week, and that is that the whole creation is responsible and accountable to God. Regardless of the position that we as human beings occupy, demons are accountable to God, and they must answer to Him for all that they have been engaged in in the period that He has allowed them to be active in this world of art. I never went very far with you, did I, in the matter of the adversary being the prince of this world, and we never get into his agents, and we never get into the ministry of his agents, but there isn't anything, as I said to you at the beginning of this week, there isn't anything or anyone that isn't responsible and must give an account to God.

Saved and unsaved, intelligent and ignorant, learned and unlearned, young or old, male or female, human or spirit being, there isn't anyone anywhere that is not accountable and responsible to God for a stewardship. And we did state, didn't we, or come to the conclusion that a steward is one who has been entrusted with the property of another, and because the property does belong to someone else other than the person who administrates it, then they are, he or she, are definitely responsible. So, whether it's a politician in the Congress or the Senate or whatever office they may occupy, or whether it is as we have in the Scriptures of truth, this word deacon applies to all alike, and preachers and gospel messengers and teachers of the word, as well as overseers and others, are all spoken of in the Scriptures, along with public ministers, along with politicians, they're all spoken as being deacons.

So, I suggest this is brethren who are inquiring that perhaps that might answer the question that they had written to me about, and they were willing to accept it, and to this day they didn't constitute the board at all. Unfortunately, we have made sort of hard and fast lines about some of these ministries which God has committed to us, and we have elevated some of them to a position that they do not have relatively with other ministries. Of course, it's required of a steward here as we're reading that he be found faithful.

Now, turn with me please to 1 Peter chapter 4. I don't know how far we're going to get into this this morning, but at least we'll try and get an A- for trying. 1 Peter chapter 4, I also have a word I'd like to read with you from chapter 7, but look at verse 10 of chapter 4. Before that, we have hospitality. We'll see the reason for that in a minute.

Verse 10 of 1 Peter chapter 4 says, As every one or every man as he has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Then he goes on to explain that by saying, If any man speak, let him speak of the oracles of God. If any man serve, minister in that deaconry, let him minister as of the ability which God gives.

And here's the purpose of it, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Now, if he is speaking, if he is serving, it is all with the one purpose that in everything, in all this kind of service, God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. But, he says in verse 10, we are to serve one another, to minister, to administrate the gifts, and the gifts are to be used one to the other.

Perhaps I could pause here a moment just to say to you, in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 through 14, you will discover that the gifts that are disposed by the Spirit of God according as he wills arbitrarily, if you please, according to his divine will, he distributes the gifts. And, if you read that carefully and look through the words as they are used, you will discover that no one receives a gift for personal profit. No one is expected to receive personal profit from the administration of a gift.

And, on that very point, many have gone astray, haven't they? Thinking, well, I have received this gift, and I have received that gift. No, I don't practice it in public, but I am edified myself by the exercise of that gift. You've heard that? That has no scriptural foundation.

We are not expected to be edified by a gift that the Spirit of God has granted to us. These gifts are not for individual benefit. They are for what Paul says mutual benefit.

They are for the benefit of others, and then he also states, as you remember in Ephesians chapter 4, that they are for the purpose of preparing others for their service. So, your gift, as you exercise it, is to help me to prepare me for my service, and my service is to help prepare you for your service. But, I never read that my service is expected to edify myself, because no gift is given for personal profit.

The gifts that have been given are given for the benefit of someone else. That is consistent, of course, with the stewardship of the Lord Jesus as well. Now, look what he says here.

He says, as every man has received the gift, as everyone has received the gift, so minister the same one to another between yourselves as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Now, this expression rather arrested my attention not too long ago. The manifold grace of God is a stewardship, and the fact that he said manifold means that it is multiple.

It is very extensive, and the gifts which the Spirit of God has been pleased to bestow upon the church, rather than that's not a good expression either. I sometimes take exception to that, along with the weather, you know, because we often heard it said, well, our Lord, when he went on high, he gave gifts to the church. Well, that's not what it says.

It doesn't say give gifts to the church. It says he gave gifts to men, to individuals. Gifts are not given collectively, although I may also make another suggestion to you, and that is, you recall that twice Paul says in the Corinthian epistle that we are to earnestly desire the better gifts.

A comparative word, I believe, not the best, but the better. Earnestly covet, he says, or desire the better gifts, and I said to myself, I don't understand this because if I understand correctly from 1 Corinthians 12, the gifts are in relation to the occupy in the body. If that is right, then the analogy is correct.

The hand can't say to the foot, we don't need you because you can't use tools, but then the eye can't say to the hand, I don't need you because you can't see, and the ear can't say, that reminds me of an illustration, an optician's illustration in the newspaper some years ago. It had a face and a head, you know, with a pair of glasses on it, and these things are talking each to the other, and the ears say, well, you know, the most important thing about us is everything hangs on us. That's right, and the nose says, you fellas have got it all wrong, don't you know, can't you see that everything rests on me? Yeah, and then the eyes spoke up, and they said, how crazy can you be? What are glasses for? They're so we can look through them.

So, the ears, and the nose, and the eyes had a contest between themselves as to which one was the more important because of the use that was made of all three of them by a pair of glasses. Well, Paul uses an analogy very similar to that, doesn't he, in 1st Corinthians chapter 12. He says, you can't say, you ears, that you don't need the nose, and the nose can't say that you don't need the ears because everything rests on the nose, unless you had a monocle, of course, you know, one of those long sticks, you know, with the one pirate's eye in the end of it, and you had a distance, so you look through it.

You use it as a telescope, too, if you wanted. Well, he says, no, the individual members of the body cannot separate or isolate themselves each from the other because it's a whole unit, and they are all required. But, as he says here, this is something of the manifold grace of God, and he makes us stewards.

That's what he says, that's what he said there, didn't he, 1 Peter 4 and 10? He makes us stewards of the multiplicity of the grace of God. We're stewards of his grace to begin with, but we're also stewards not only of his grace, but all the gifts that he has given to each of us for the benefit of the whole. So, notice what Peter says, and he agrees with Paul very clearly when he says it here in verse 10, minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Then he goes on to say, of course, do it. Do it with the ability that God has given you to do it, so that if you have, I shouldn't have said if, should I? No. Because you have received a gift, each and all of us.

Then we have also received, please notice, it took me a long time to learn this, we have also received the ability to use the gift. I was taught so strictly and emphatically when I was a younger Christian that you should never do anything in the flesh. You should never do anything by intruding into an office that you don't have.

You should never do anything unless, and this is the crux of the matter, you are led of the Spirit to do it. So, with the result that when a prayer meeting time came around, I never stood up to pray because I never felt led of the Spirit to pray. Because I was taught that whatever service you handled, you were taken sort of by the back of the neck, and the Spirit of God puts you on your feet, boom, there, now pray.

Or stand you in the street corner and say, there, stand there, now preach. I've had brethren do that to me, but I never felt the Spirit of God do that to me. I was very strictly taught this, whatever you do, Dave, don't step out of place.

Don't do anything unless you are led of the Spirit to do it. And I was used to the old open platform style of conferences, which meant, of course, that it depended on the new running shoes you had who got to the platform first. And I had seen this happen so many times.

So, I was at a conference one time, and there were about, oh, I don't know, 10, 12, 14 preachers there. And one of the men whom some of you know, you've already mentioned his name to me, with whom I was preaching for a little time when I first started, and he came up to me and he said, Dave, are you exercised about speaking this afternoon in the ministry meeting? And I said, well, you see, I'm not sure, because what's gone before this morning doesn't seem to fit in with what I would be saying this afternoon. Like I said to another preacher, and some of you may know him too, he came to me during a conference, he says, Dave, are you exercised about speaking this afternoon? And I said, I don't know if it'll fit in.

I really can't say. Well, if you do speak, what would you speak on? And I said, well, I think I would likely speak on the Melchizedek Priesthood of Christ, because I was interested in it, had it on my mind. Oh, he said, I recall a man at a conference recently spoke on that, and it felt as flat as a pancake.

So, I said, thanks a lot, you go ahead and take the part. I won't do it, and so I didn't. So, I was easily squashed that way, because I was instructed not to do anything unless I was led by the Spirit of God.

Well, at this particular conference, this brother came to me and said, Dave, are you going to speak this afternoon? I said, I don't know. I don't think what I had in my mind fits in with what we've heard this morning. So, what did the good brother do? He was one of the ones who instructed me, never speak out of turn, never speak unless you're led by the Spirit.

And if the Spirit of God has a theme for a conference, then you'll know whether you fit in or not. So, that's what I said. So, what did he do? After lunch was over, he got right onto the platform, and he said, I was talking with Brother Dave, and I asked him if he was exercised about preaching this afternoon, and he said he didn't know whether it would fit in or not with what we heard this morning.

Well, he said, God is the God of the variety, and I'm going to change the subject. I said, Demetrius, you guys can't lose. If it goes along with what we've just been hearing, then he's in the Spirit.

And if it doesn't go along with what we've just heard, then God's the God of variety. So, you can change the whole thing around if you like. So, you see how much of our human failure enters into these subjects sometimes.

But what I did discover was this. Just as we have been reading here, if God gives us a gift to exercise in service for himself, he not only gives the gift, he gives the ability to act in it. That is one of the ways, I tell younger folks at any rate, that you will know if you have a gift for a particular kind of service.

The Spirit of the Lord who indwells us and capacitates us for a specific field of service always supplies the ability to exercise it. So, don't wait until you feel yourself caught up by an angelic hand and carried over to visit Sister So-and-so because she really needs a visit. She's failing a lot these days.

No, this is in your heart to do it. Go and do it. And when you go and do it, you will discover that that is the work the Spirit of God wants you to do.

That's all. Just go and do it. Because he supplies, as we've been reading here, the ability to practice the gift which is a result of the grace, this manifold grace of God.

A lot of things you have to unlearn, don't you, that you learn in your younger days. That's the advantage of living a little longer. Now, let's look back to chapter 3. I'm not getting started yet, am I? But then what else is new? Chapter 3 of 1 Peter.

Now that we're in Peter, not necessarily that this falls into line chronologically with what we've been talking about, but he's speaking about wives, verse 1, and verse 7, husbands, and he says to them that they are to dwell with them, that is, with the wives, according to knowledge. Now, there's an interesting statement. Husbands dwell with them according to knowledge, awarding or giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel.

That same brother that instructed me in some of these things was in a Bible reading one time when I was there, and a question was asked. It's one of those conversational Bible readings when you could ask questions. The question was asked, what does it mean in 1 Peter chapter 3 about the wife being the weaker vessel? Now, does this mean physically? Well, this brother had a wife that was no weaker vessel, I assure you.

So he said, no, I don't think it would mean that. Well, now, would it mean then mentally? And he said, well, yes, I guess that could be so, intellectually. And his two daughters were sitting in the crowd, and afterwards they said, Dad, when we get home we're going to tell Mother what you said about her mentally, and you are in big trouble.

So then the question comes back at you, how is the wife known as the weaker vessel? Is it hereditary from Eve? But as I suggested to you yesterday and didn't develop that, Adam was responsible in his stewardship towards his wife for what happened there in the garden. Or is it something that she has inherited because Eve was deceived, and then she transgressed as 1 Timothy chapter 2 says. What is this weaker vessel? What's meant by the weaker vessel? Well, now, I'm not trying to be political, but I'll make a suggestion to you.

You husband, you want to throw this out, think about it first. Let me suggest to you that it's neither physically nor mentally, and not even spiritually. Well, let me give you another word, positionally.

That sound right? And I will take you right back to Genesis 3, won't it? So, the husband is to give honor, but that's really not what I want to say out of this verse, unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel. And then notice this, being heirs together of the grace of life. Now, how do you understand that statement? Heirs together of the grace of life.

What kind of life? Eternal life? No, not talking about eternal life. That's not the subject. The subject is husbands and wives.

Well, then you must be talking about married life. What do you think? Heirs together of the grace of life that your prayers be not hindered. The whole concept is the marriage relationship.

And the husband and wife are brought together, endowed by God as heirs together, together of the grace of life. Married life, not eternal life, and not natural life, because they're heirs together. They are in a union which has distinguished them from natural life.

It's not a question of eternal life, but that's totally out of the context. So, it can only be married life. So, how are we to understand the marriage relationship? Heirs together of the grace of living together.

That is one of the peculiar and particular blessings which the grace of God has given to us, and unfortunately, which we do not nearly appreciate as we should. Now, that can be developed as you will see. I have said to you also, six and a half minutes ago, that a steward is someone who is entrusted with the property of someone else, of another.

Immediately, that opens a big subject, because then you say to yourself, okay brother Dave, now what is the property that belongs to someone else that we are made heirs of? What is or what are the properties? Well, we've already looked from Romans Acts chapter 17 at the fact that God has given us to his life and breath and all things, that he's given to us mobility and being. We are in him we live and move and have our being, so we don't need to go into that again. We're also speaking in 1 Peter chapter 3 of this special favor that grace has bestowed upon us, and that is marriage.

That is so discredited, it is so discarded, it is so cast off like an unwanted irksome task or relationship they were called into. They've brought it down from its nobility, married life, and they have reduced it to a convenience, and relativism in our day has done that, because if anything is only of value because of the way it appeals to you, then it has lost its standard. It has lost its inherent value, and has become relative, or the product of relativism, because they say what is right for you is not right for me, and what is right for me is not right for you.

So a thing is only right or wrong relatively to the way we receive it or understand it, which of course means that they come out with the next statement and say there are no absolutes, which is absolutely ridiculous. You know why? Because you've just made an absolute statement. You say there are no absolutes, but you've just made an absolute statement that proves that your first one was ridiculous.

Absolutely, there are absolutes, and that's the problem. So, we've taken the absolute thing, and we've introduced relativism, and made everything in relation to ourselves. Therefore, there are no points of reference, there are no standards, and the world's out to sea.

That's why we have morality, that's why we have all the perversion and the promiscuity in the sexual realm, that's why we have all the libertinati in the mental and in the commercial world. The world has been set adrift on the sea of no absolutes, no standards, no point of reference. But this is not true, and this certainly is not scriptural.

There are very definitely absolutes, and God has given to us absolutes not only in the personal realm, but in the ecclesiastical realm as well. He has given to us, that Paul refers to in 1 Corinthians chapter 4, mysteries. Let a man so account of us as stewards of the mysteries of God.

Stewards of mysteries. We have stewards of grace in 1 Peter 4, we have stewards of marriage in 1 Peter 3, we have stewards of mysteries in 1 Corinthians chapter 4, and most of you here will know that there are

seven mysteries in the New Testament, and evidently these have all been entrusted to us. There's the mystery of His grace, there's the mystery of the gospel, there's the mystery of the church, there's the mystery of the resurrection.

Oh, would I show you a secret! There's the mystery of Christ, which is the last and final one, I judge. These things have been entrusted to us, and what have we done? We have thrown them away, we have loosely considered them as unimportant, but these are absolutes with God, and these are the things of which we one day, as well, must be accountable. For it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful, and we must, every one of us, give account of himself to God.

And that is only, my dear friends, my enduring audience, that is only an introduction to the subject of personal stewardship. But it is true, isn't it? We must all give account of ourselves to God, and we shall leave for another time, perhaps somewhere in the early years of the millennium, to continue the subject as the Lord wills. Shall we pray? Our Father, may it please thee, in thy gracious spirit, and the Lord of the church, he to whom we belong body, soul, and spirit, whose we are, whom we serve, whom we represent, and concerning whom we are to be the reflection of our glorious Lord himself.

May this be our happy loss. Open our hearts and minds, and instruct us, Lord, in the ways that truth, and help us to remember constantly that not only hast thou given us charge over that which is not ours, that which is distinctly thine own, but we are accountable for what we have and do with what thou hast given to us. Blessed then, morning as we separate, we pray in his name.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/7/SID7636.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-adams/stewardship-part-5/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net