

SESSION 5



OUR RESPONSE TO WORK

1. God Is the Owner

A. God is the creator and sustainer of all things. Because He created all things, He owns all things.

Psalm 24:1:

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein...”

Psalm 50:10:

“For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.”

Exodus 19:5:

“...for all the earth is mine...”

Deuteronomy 10:14:

“Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth and all that is in it.”

Job 41:11:

“...Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine.”

1 Corinthians 6:19:

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own...”

1 Corinthians 7:23:

“You were bought with a price...”

1 Timothy 6:7:

“for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.”

- Since God owns everything, you own **nothing**.
- All of us have heard something similar to this statement, “*What I have, I have worked for and earned! I did not get any gifts or handouts... all this was my work... my HARD work!*”
- We need to remember **Deuteronomy 8:17-18:**
“Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth...”
- You worked hard. You saved diligently. You put in some very long hours. Well done! But remember that God, your creator, gave you the ability, thinking, processing, talent, and strength to get you to where you are today, to make the money you have.

2. We Are Stewards

A. We are not called to be **owners**. We are called to be **stewards**.

“When the Possessor of heaven and earth brought you into being, and placed you in this world, he placed you here not as a proprietor, but a steward.” - John Wesley

- There are two types of stewards: good stewards and bad stewards.
 - Good stewardship is managing God's **treasures** in God's **way**, for God's purposes, and always for God's glory.
- B. We begin life with our hands wide open and nothing in them. As we mature, by the grace of God, He allows certain things to be placed into our possession.**
- A good steward lives with open hands. We dare not think of gripping the things God entrusts to us. We hold everything loosely.
"The one principle that surrounds everything else is that of stewardship; that we are the managers of everything that God has given us." - Larry Burkett
 - A good steward not only maintains what God entrusts to us, he also **invests** them wisely.
"Investing should be more like watching paint dry or watching grass grow. If you want excitement, take \$800 and go to Las Vegas." - Paul Samuelson
 - If God wants to remove His gifts from us, it is His sovereign right.
- C. So, a good steward can be summed up as:**
- One who recognizes that God owns everything.
 - One who **faithfully** manages resources according to biblical principles.
 - One who intentionally multiplies resources and uses them for God's glory.
 - One who gives cheerfully, saves consistently, invests wisely, and avoids debt.
 - One who works **diligently** as unto the Lord.

3. Increasing Responsibility

A. Hard work and diligence pay off.

- The greatest ability that you can have is **dependability**.
- When people can count on you to do what they need you to do or what you have promised to do, they will take interest in your services and abilities.
- Dependability, **discipline**, and diligence in doing a good job cannot go ignored for long. Often, these traits will lead to a promotion.
- Dependability, **discipline**, and diligence are traits important to employers, but they are also important to God. If you prove to be consistently dependable, disciplined, and diligent, don't be surprised when you are "promoted" by God.

B. Your faithfulness with what God has entrusted to you will determine the responsibilities He rewards you with, both in this life and the life to come.

"With great power comes great responsibility." - Spiderman

- Those who pursue God's work God's **way**, will eventually experience God's **success**.
- The world's success is always more money. Kingdom success is about becoming more like Jesus.

- Kingdom success could look like more financial rewards, but it could also look like:
 - Greater peace and contentment in life.
 - More opportunities to share our faith with others.
 - Greater influence.

1 Chronicles 4:10:

“Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, ‘Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from harm so that it might not bring me pain!’ And God granted what he asked.”

C. Remember, circumstances don’t determine faithfulness, character does.

Luke 16:10:

“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much”

- It is a man’s character that affects the way he handles responsibility.
- Men of strong character are **faithful** stewards, and their reward will be great.

Matthew 25:21:

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’”

4. Managing the Increase

A. Remember, God owns everything. You are His steward. J.C. Ryle puts it so comprehensively:

“Our gifts, our influence, our money, our knowledge, our health, our strength, our time, our senses, our reason, our intellect, our memory, our affections, our privileges as members of Christ’s Church, our advantages as possessors of the Bible, all of these are talents. All of these are endowments given to us by God. From whence came these things. There is only one answer to that question. All that we have is alone from God. We are God’s stewards.”

- If and when God blesses you for your hard work, it is not only for your benefit. God **blesses** you so that you can be a **blessing** to others.
“ The way to bless God is to bless someone He loves. Bless someone in need.”
 - James Robinson

“ When God blesses you financially, don’t raise your standard of living. Raise your standard of giving.” - Mark Batterson

Hebrews 13:16:

“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

B. The end goal in life is not a successful career that leads to a relaxing retirement. The end goal is to glorify God by loving Him and serving others.

Luke 12:16-21:

“And he told them a parable, saying, ‘The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, “What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my

crops?” And he said, “I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’” But God said to him, “Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?” So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

Proverbs 11:24-26:

“One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched; and one who waters will himself be watered. The people curse him who holds back grain, but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it.”

- A good steward shares his faith, his life, and his gifts with others.
- Success has never been an issue of how much; it has always been a matter of faithfulness.

C. Stewardship is a cycle of receiving and giving, resting and working, praying and doing.

- Perhaps the question isn't, “*How much should I give?*” Perhaps the question is, “*How much should I keep?*”.
- How will you respond to your financial increase?

Your Table Discussion Questions

1. Ownership and stewardship are mindsets. How does owning something differ from being a steward over something? Explain.
2. In what ways has God prospered you in your career/at work? What was your response? Explain.
3. It was said, “*Stewardship is a cycle of receiving and giving, resting and working, praying and doing.*” What does this cycle look like in your life? How should it look?

Your “BetterMan” Reflection:

Before our next session, take a moment this week to reflect on your notes, and then answer the following question: The Lord has blessed you, far more than you need or deserve. What is one step you can take toward greater generosity in your life. Write your answer in the space below and then do it!