

advancing stewardship

estate planning and other news

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Connecting Stewardship to Life

Henry Eygenraam

Someone once said "What we love and how deeply we love it, effects the whole direction of our lives". When I read and re-read this statement and consider its implications for me as a person and a Christian it can conjure up a host of reflections. What does it mean when applied to our career, our family, our church, ministry, etc?

Through the presentation of the Growing in Giving conferences I had the pleasure to get to know Ted Boers, a displaced Canadian who has been successful in business south of the boarder. Ted has contributed significantly to the development of a functional understanding of what it means to be a "steward" of what God has entrusted to us in Time, Talents, and what we might call Treasures. He recently shared his **Stewards Creed** with us. In it he wrote what follows:

The Steward's Creed

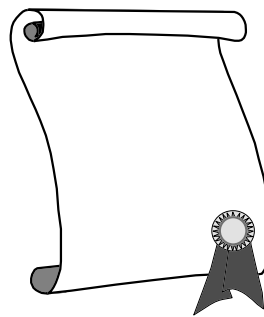
As a Christian I recognize that my relationship with God is that of a child to a parent, a disciple to a teacher and a steward to a master.

As a child I know that God loves me and has a special plan for my life.

As a disciple I recognize Jesus as my teacher and I sit at His feet to grow in my understanding of God and in my relationship with God.

As a steward I recognize God as my master and as the source of everything I have and I strive to gratefully use all the gifts He has given me to honor Him.

I honor God by loving Him with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my mind and by loving my neighbor as myself.



I demonstrate my love for my neighbor by giving generously of my resources to assure justice for the oppressed, mercy for the impoverished and access to the gospel for the lost.

I demonstrate my love for God by giving of myself as He Gave of Himself.

The opening sentence of this article alludes to is the same concept that Ted's creed statement deals with. A biblical passage that deals with the "wholeness" of our "steward status" is Matthew 6:33 where we read "Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be given to you as well." Ted translates this as "Put God's work first and do what he wants"

All of this speaks volumes. Not about giving a part of it back to God but recognizing that all of it is His. All is a trust placed with us to administer in His best interest. Our challenge then is to incorporate the practice of this concept into the decisions of our daily lives. Where will we employ or spend the time that we have available to us? Do we recognize that it is a limited resource and will it be used for the benefit of His kingdom wherever we find ourselves? All of us have talents that can be employed for good in a host of different ways; we can prayerfully consider where we may invest them.

In planning for how we use the physical resources of finances and material possessions we can also reflect on "what we love and how deeply we love it". There are real challenges to living out this ideal. There is also joy found by those who have worked at mastering the perspective that it contains. I see this on a regular basis when I have the opportunity to assist people in the plans that they construct for their support of ministry. Including it in their plans is a natural continuation of how they have come to live their lives. Like exercise we starts with small steps and build to bigger things. Try it! The Bible tells us we will like it!

Stewardship Motivations – 1

Ron Rupke

Hustle! Drive! Energy, focus and determination! These are words we all use to describe people who demand much of themselves, and seem to accomplish so much! Most of us can picture someone who might be described with these words, and usually we admire that person.

It's much easier to describe the vigour and zeal we see in such people than to explain how they came to be the way they are. How did they gain – and keep – such a high level of motivation?



Stewardship counsellors meet many of these vigorous productive people in the course of their daily work, as clients plan for the future use of the money and material assets entrusted to their care. A conversation about money and property easily leads to a discussion about the business that generated the wealth; from there, it's only a small step to the human motivation behind the business!

How marvellously mixed motivations can be, I learned as a retired builder told his story of starting his own business. After training as a 'rough' or framing carpenter, he took a job with a local contractor and was soon promoted to foreman. His employer had a rigid system of classifications, paying finishing carpenters about 30% more than rough carpenters because of their supposedly higher level of skill. How hard it was to be responsible for the whole job, patiently explaining to the men under his authority how and where to build, and then to bring home a much smaller paycheque than they were earning at the end of the week! Before long this foreman went to the company owner, to point out that if he was supposed to be in charge of the whole job, he should also be the highest paid employee on the project. The owner insisted on sticking with the classification pay rates, and by the end of that

discussion, the young foreman had decided to go into business for himself.

Looking back on that decision from his vantage point more than 40 years later, the storyteller could remember everything about his first solo project. In late fall, he contracted with a local developer to erect homes on two lots before April 15 the next year, in order to qualify for a winter works grant of \$500 per unit. His responsibility to provide for a wife and two young children without that steady paycheque at the end of the week motivated him to be at work before dawn each morning, to continue until sunset, and to put in plenty of Saturdays as well. When he couldn't find a mason to build basement block walls to meet his schedule, he tackled the project himself, and had the walls half built before the professional crew showed up!

It was a project built on adrenaline, and it worked.



Before the winter months came to an end, the April 15 deadline that had seemed so daunting when he started made an easy target. In fact, work on both homes was completed by March 15, and his

new career as a successful homebuilder was launched.

Count the motivations. There is the perceived injustice in his employer's classification system, the government-sponsored incentive in the winter works program, the will to provide for a young family, the need to prove to himself and others in the community that he really could manage his own business. Since the storyteller is a devout Christian, we can also hear what modern evangelicals refer to as the prayer of Jabez in the background. (See I Chronicles 4: 9 & 10.)

Business beginnings make good stories since they show so much of the business owner's character. As I thought about this client's story while driving home from my visit, I concluded that even a strong start does not guarantee success. Only a life-long walk with God comes with the promise of the best

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Stewardship Motivations, con't.....

possible finish to the ventures of one's life. This client's decision to carefully plan the future uses of the wealth God had entrusted him, including support for kingdom causes in those deliberations, gave good evidence of the character and the ongoing walk with the Lord suggested in his story. Continuing in that path will lead to the life-summary that the author of Chronicles provides for Jabez ... "And God granted his request." (I Chronicles 4: 10b)

I Want to Tithe...

Sometimes when we pray, as the Bible says, "We don't know what to pray for." That leads to some interesting dilemmas. That was the case for one pastor.

"I want to tithe," a man told his pastor, "I want to give 10 percent of my income to my church. When my income was \$50 a week, I gave \$5 to the

church every week.

When I was successful in business and my weekly income rose to \$500 a week, I gave \$50 to my church every week.

But now my income has gone to \$5,000 a week, and I just can't bring myself to give \$500 to the church every week."

The pastor said, "Why don't we pray over this?"

The pastor began to pray, "Dear God, please make this man's weekly income \$500 a week so that he can tithe again..."

- Rev. John L. Mand, "Holy Humour"

Are you Still Procrastinating?

John H. Rudy

(Moneywise Meditations – order yours today!)

I heard someone say he'd like to procrastinate, but he never seems to get around to it.

Procrastination, particularly when it comes to your Will, is too costly. You can't afford it. Loved ones may be neglected. Taxes may be higher. The church won't receive anything. Your Christian stewardship will be incomplete.

Actually, procrastination is reckless, because it means your possessions will be distributed according to the government's formula. And procrastination is dangerous, because sometime it is going to be too late to write a Will of your own.

Decide how you want your possessions distributed and how you want your loved cared for. Decide how much should go to the work of the Lord. Then reach for a phone and make an appointment with your lawyer (or CSS).

When is the best time to make a Will or to bring your present Will up-to-date? Right now!

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The 4 “Ds” of Change
Rick DeGraaf

Most people desire to serve God more faithfully in the area of stewardship. How can we make changes to improve this? I suggest for your help the 4 ‘D’s’ of change:

Desire: For a person to change there must be a desire to do so. They need to be convinced that the status quo is not good enough! Something better is needed – it can’t stay the way it is. Therefore, in developing a personal lifestyle of stewardship we need to recognize what needs to change. Some of the trends we see in society are: a reduction in resources (availability of people and money) for ministry; an increase in personal wealth accumulation; an increase in debt and misuse of credit; and a concern about the future.

Decide: Just being convinced about the need for a change and having a desire to do something about it is not enough. We need to decide and commit to action. For instance, if we are convinced that we should give proportionately (as

scripture teaches in both Old and New Testament) then we must do what it says to in 2Cor. 9:7: “Each person should give what they have decided in their heart to give...” (NIV). Making a decision to act is like setting a goal for yourself – a target that we desire to achieve!

Discipline: Simply making a decision has no permanency if it is only a one-time thing. We now need to develop the discipline of giving or we fall back into the old patterns. We need a plan so that we will achieve what we have decided to do. Careful, consistent discipline produces good habits and routines. These remind us to act faithfully and generously. This will lead to the next ‘D’:

Delight: God’s desire for us is that giving would become a delight. As we look back it’s not hard to see the changes in our lives and reflect on God’s hand in allowing us to achieve them. What we *desired, decided* and *disciplined* ourselves to do has produced *delight*. This delight is a result in seeing God’s hand in how he has blessed us through the process. The desire has been transformed into delight!!



Request for Information

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Request for Information

- More information on the work of CSS
- Information on making a Will
- Call me to arrange a visit / presentation
- Information on Charitable Gift Annuities
- Information on RRSP/RRIF Gifts
- Information the CSS Endowment Plan
- Stewardship Education Information

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