

Lesson 2.7 – How Do I Use God's Gifts to Me?

Introduction: People sometimes say, "Count your blessings." List a variety of the physical blessings God gives to us:



1. What Is Stewardship?

Genesis 1:27,28 ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Genesis 2:15 ¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Stewardship is our management of all that God has created, given to us by God at the very beginning.

2. What does God say about our stewardship of abilities?

1 Corinthians 12:7-27 ⁷Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. ¹²The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, but one body. ²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²²On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and

has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. ²⁷Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

God has given each one of us abilities we can use to serve him. Though different, all of them are important.

Romans 12:1-8 ¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

³For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. ⁴Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Moved by God's mercy, we want to discover and use the abilities that God gives.

3. What does God say about our stewardship of our money and possessions?

Psalms 24:1,2 ¹The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; ²for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

We must recognize that none of our possessions belong to us. They all belong to the Lord who made all things.

1 Timothy 5:8 ⁸If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Romans 13:7 ⁷Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Good stewardship of our possessions will lead us to use them to support our families and government.

1 Corinthians 16:1,2 ¹Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. ²On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

Proverbs 3:9 ⁹Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.

Good stewardship will lead us to set aside part of our income for doing the work of God's kingdom. We will want to...

1. ...give God our firstfruits.
2. ...give to God regularly.
3. ...give to God a proportion, a percentage, that reflects the way God has blessed us.

2 Corinthians 9:7 ⁷Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Our giving for the work of God's kingdom will be a free-will offering from the heart.

In the New Testament, God does not tell us specifically what proportion of our income to give him. In the Old Testament his people were required to give him 10%, a "tithe" (See Lev. 27:30-33, Deut. 14:22-29). While not an absolute requirement, this is a good starting place for New Testament people who want to give God something that shows how much he means to us.

The following chart helps us to get an idea of what a "tithe" looks like for different income levels:

Annual Income	Annual Tithe	Monthly Tithe	Weekly Tithe
\$ 6,000	\$ 600	\$ 50	\$11
\$15,000	\$1500	\$125	\$29
\$20,000	\$2000	\$166	\$38
\$25,000	\$2500	\$208	\$48
\$30,000	\$3000	\$250	\$58
\$35,000	\$3500	\$292	\$67
\$40,000	\$4000	\$333	\$77
\$50,000	\$5000	\$416	\$96
\$60,000	\$6000	\$500	\$115
\$70,000	\$7000	\$583	\$135
\$100,000	\$10,000	\$833	\$190

4. Why do we manage God's gifts to us in the way which he directs?

Psalm 50:9 ⁹I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, ¹⁰for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. ¹¹I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. ¹²If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it. ¹³Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? ¹⁴Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High.

Exodus 25:2 ²You are to receive the offering for me from each man whose heart prompts him to give.

We do not offer our abilities or possessions to God because he is dependent on us in any way. Rather, he wants these things to be a token of our thankful hearts.

2 Corinthians 5:14,15 ¹⁴For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

2 Corinthians 8:9 ⁸You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that through He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

Jesus' great love for us has changed us so that we want to do what he asks us to do.

Matthew 6:31-34 ³¹So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

We manage God's gifts in a priority that trusts God's promises to provide.

5. What do we intend to accomplish through our careful stewardship of God's gifts to us?

1 Peter 4:10 ¹⁰Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

Christians strive to be faithful in their use of all of God's gifts in every area of life.

1 Corinthians 10:31 ³¹So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Christians strive to bring glory to God in their use of all of God's gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 ⁴There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. ⁷Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

Christians strive to serve the common good of their neighbors in their use of God's gifts.

6. In how much of my life does God expect me to be his steward?

1 Corinthians 10:31 ³¹So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

God expects us to live our lives as his stewards in every area, not just in our worship or work for the church.

Ephesians 5:15-20 ¹⁵Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God wants us to be good stewards of all our time, as we use it to serve him with our abilities and glorify him in words and worship.

7. Where do we find the strength to practice Christian stewardship?

Philippians 4:12,13 ¹²I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Jesus gives us the strength to practice good stewardship as he himself lives in us by faith in his grace.

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