



The Faithful Steward

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Rightful Ownership

"The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters." Ps. 24:1-2

"For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is mine, and all its fullness." Ps. 50:10-12

The first indisputable Law of Stewardship is the Law of Rightful Ownership which says, nothing really belongs to us; everything belongs to God. King David acknowledged this when he stated unconditionally, "everything in heaven and earth is yours, O Lord." He adds, "wealth and honor comes from you; you are the ruler of all things."¹

When we are blessed with money and material things, and when we receive acclaim for any accomplishment, we're getting not what we deserve, but what God in His grace lovingly allows us to enjoy and care for. "The essence of life is not ownership, but stewardship; the faithful management of all that God entrusts to us. There is only one rightful owner. True satisfaction comes to us only in acknowledging Him and wisely managing His resources.

God is the Creator

Genesis 1:1 starts with the following words: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." He gives us life and sustains us.

Psalms 33:6-9 explains the creative power of God in the following manner: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." (NKJV) The Bible is very clear: God made the

world in which we live and we were put here by His loving hand.

In *Counsels on Stewardship*, page 18, the author reaffirms what the Bible says, but in practical way. "We are sustained every moment by God's care, and upheld by His power. He spreads our tables with food. He gives us peaceful and refreshing sleep. Weekly He brings us the Sabbath, that we may rest from our temporal labors, and worship Him in His own house. He has given us His word to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path."

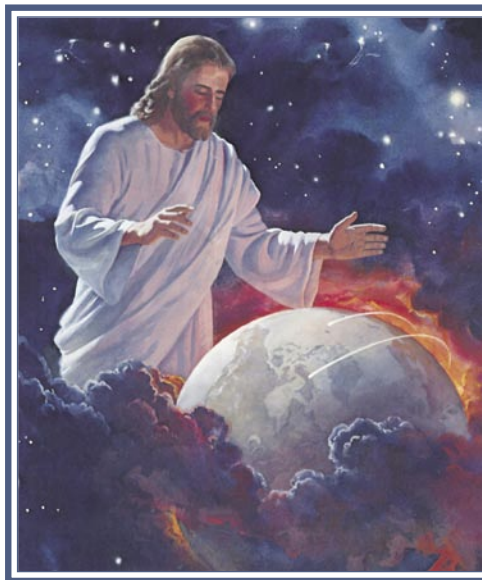
God is the Owner

Since God created the earth, the logical conclusion is that he is the owner of it. The earth belongs to God; He made the earth and the sea;² the cattle and all the beasts are His;³ God is the owner of the gold and silver.⁴ In other words, throughout the Bible we find that God is owner of everything. If God is the owner of everything, what do we own? Can we rightfully claim anything as ours?

One problem that we have is that we want to be owners of anything and everything. Our society is consumed with the desire to possess everything. We

acquire cars, houses, boats and clothes. The words mine, me and I are music to our ears. If God is the owner of everything, then we as humans do not own anything. Everything we have belongs to God.

Let me ask: The car that we drive, is it really ours? Let's assume for argument sake that we purchased a house and took out a 30 year mortgage? Does that house really belong to us? What happens if we do not make a payment on the house or three monthly payments? Can the bank take it away? How can we say it's our house



when in reality it belongs to the bank until it is completely paid for.

Man has a special relationship to God. If we are going to use the term "absolute ownership" in its right terminology, then God will be the only one who is the absolute owner.

Everything that we have here on earth has some restrictions. There are always legal terms and conditions attached to any purchase or document. The way it applies in the material realm also applies to the spiritual realm. There are limitations, restrictions and conditions applied to our stewardship.

We are NOT owners; we are simply "administrators", "managers", "supervisors", and "caretakers" of God's creation. In everything God has given us, there are always some restrictions involved.

"There is no absolute ownership, except that belonging to God. True ownership is when one has complete and absolute control over the things he possesses. He is responsible to no one.

"All ownership on this earth is conditional. In reality, it is possession, rather than ownership."⁵

them everything for their use. There were some restrictions or stipulations. They could eat of the fruit of all the trees except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God's creation was placed under man's care.

When He gives us everything, He wants us to choose obedience. All things belong to God, not only by creation, but also by redemption. Because we have violated God's confidence like



Adam and Eve, we have to be tested to see if we are going to obey or disobey God's requirements. God is the giver of everything, but he is looking for faithful persons to administrate His creation, His belongings, His world! He has chosen you and me!

"Stewardship is an action word. If there was nothing to do an owner would certainly not engage a steward to care for his goods, he would look after them

"Stewardship is an action word."

himself. The very fact that he assigns these things to the care, use and protection of another is proof that he expects and is entitled to some kind of labor."⁶

Larry Burkett rightly defines a steward as, "one who manages another's resources. Each of us is a manager, not an owner. God is the owner, and we are to manage according to His plan."⁷

As a steward, we have to learn our proper role in God's plan and creation. We are to manage God's goods according to His plan, NOT our plan, or what we think is best for God.

Let's give God first and foremost of our lives, our time and our resources. Let us learn our respective role as stewards, but more importantly, let us recommit our lives so that God can use us. God is asking us to be faithful stewards. Will you respond to His calling? How about making a total commitment to your Creator today?

**The Owner Has No Restrictions
The Steward Has Some Restriction**

Stewardship is delegated and assigned control by an owner (God) to a steward (us) with restrictions.

God is the Giver

When God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, He gave

steward? A Christian steward manages God's belongings or Creation, while he waits for God to take him home. A steward manages for his lifetime.

Stewardship then is not an option, but a necessary part of our every day lives, because nothing belongs to us.

What is Stewardship?

What is a

(Footnotes)

¹ I Chronicles 29:11, 12

² Psalm 24:1

³ Psalm 50:10

⁴ Haggai 2:8

⁵ M. E. Rees, *I Work for God*, (Color Press, College Place, WA, 1974) page 2-1

⁶ M. E. Rees, *I Work for God*, page 2-3.

⁷ Larry Burkett, *Your Finances in Changing Times*, page 39.