

Faith Raising, Not Fund Raising

The 4 Faces of Stewardship

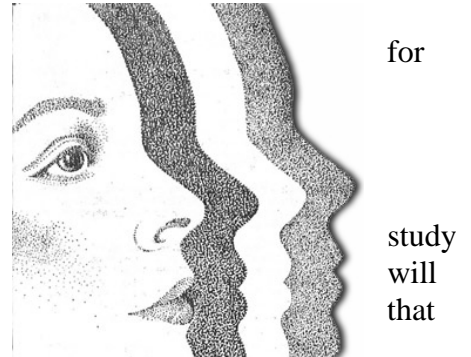
Our responsibility goes beyond money.

Mark 4:21–25; 1 Corinthians 15:58

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

Note Mark 21-23 - Here is another practical illustration. **Candle** refers to a small lamp. Jesus' point in **verses 21** and **22** seems to be that God's in-breaking kingdom, which it is Jesus' task to reveal in God's time, must now be partially hidden. But the time will come when it is gloriously revealed.

Note Mark 4:24-25 -This may be paraphrased: "Give careful attention to what you hear. For according to the proportion of given God's Word, a corresponding amount of knowledge be given you, and generously multiplied at that." The point is God's truth, instead of being divinely hidden from man (**vv.21-22**), will be understood in proportion to one's attention to and study of it.



I have four things to say about stewardship, and only one of them has to do with dollars. Not that I mind talking about money. I think the organized church is not always honest on the subject.

1. We are stewards of relationships. The early church was not famous for how it grew, nor for its balanced budget. It was known for the way people loved one another.

The church is more like a family than a business. The relation is more important than the production. We get into trouble if we start borrowing the language of figures from business and measuring the church with it. Instead, we have to use terms like "healthy," "unhealthy," "improving," "deteriorating," and "spiritual." As part of that stewardship, we owe each other encouragement.

Acts 2:29-47

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| 1. Baptism | v.41 | Baptizes into the Body of Christ. |
| 2. Bible Study | v. 42 | Study together to show themselves approved. |
| 3. Church Fellowship | v. 42 | Encouraged one another in practical living. |
| 4. Lord's Supper | v.42 | Identified themselves with Christ death. |
| 5. Prayer Life | v. 42 | Prayed for one another / for the kingdom of God |
| 6. Giving | v. 45 | Financially supported the work of the church |
| 7. Witnessing | v. 47 | Shared the love of Jesus |

As a steward of relationships, I am doing:

Well

Fairly well

Not too well

2. We are stewards of a special identity. The pastor of the Church in Romania once explained to me, “We have some people who come but aren’t ready yet to take on the identity of a Christian.” I must accept the fact that I am a Christian and behave like one. True Christians have a stewardship of identity within them; they are pilgrims, sojourners, citizens of heaven on their way home. That makes them participants, not observers. I wonder if the Lord will someday say to us observers, “I never really knew you; I only met you while you were observing my participants.” We have a choice:

1. TO BE SPIRITUAL OR CARNAL.
2. TO BE SCRIPTURAL OR LOGICAL. (HUMANISM)
3. TO BE SAFE IN GOD’S WILL OR YOUR OWN WILL.

As a steward of a Christian identity, I am doing: *Well* *Fairly well* *Not too well*

3. We are stewards of our gifts. We talk a lot about talents and sometimes not that much about spiritual gifts. But I am convinced that gifts are what the Spirit uses. I believe gifts are simply talents that have been unctioned by the Spirit. Since all of us have at least one talent, we all have a potential gift. Stewardship of gifts is not a trivial matter. We must take them seriously.

Romans 12: 1-21

1 Corinthians 12: 1-31

Galatians 5:16-26

As a steward of gifts, I am doing: *Well* *Fairly well* *Not too well*

4. We are stewards of money. All I know about giving can be put into three points:

- (1) Those who legalistically give a tithe never really enjoy it. Those who give out of love enjoy it and are not worried about figuring on the net or gross, or even more.
- (2) Giving is the only drain plug I know for greed. Giving is the way to drain greed out of the soul.
- (3) God is interested not in our money but our maturity. Some people try to substitute service for giving, while others give to avoid serving. Neither one works; both are required for Christian maturity.

As a steward of money, I am doing: *Well* *Fairly well* *Not too well*

Discuss

1. Be honest: in which area of stewardship are you doing the best? In which would you most like to grow?
2. How well are we doing as a church in each area? What is one action that would help us grow?
3. What motivates people to be good stewards (one example: **1 Cor.15:58**)?