

Surrendering My Stuff: A Stewardship Devotional

PRACTICAL IDEAS

If you have teenagers, try a "Visual Budget".

Take your monthly salary in cash and have your kids allocate where the money has to go, and see how much is left over.

Decide as a family what is fair for spending money, and how God wants you help others.

You'll find a practical spending plan at: www.salvationist.ca/2007/stewardship under "Debt-Free Living" and titled "A Balanced Check book".

A steward is a manager of another person's property. As a follower of Jesus, everything you have belongs to God, and He has called us to be stewards, or managers, of all that He has given us. Will our management of His resources please Him?

It's clear that God intended us to get the clear message about this management as it relates to money. There are over 2,300 Bible verses about money (second only to love), and it is the subject of 2/3rds of Jesus' parables.

In teaching about stewardship, Larry Burkett (*the late founder of Crown Financial Ministries*) says that how a person manages his or her money is an external indicator of what he or she believes about who they are in Christ. Burkett says, "As a steward of God's money, I don't have the right to spend everything that comes into my possession."

Burkett contended that God wants our heart with him, and that is reflected in our giving, because giving naturally flows as a result of our relationship with the Lord. As we give, out of our time, talents and treasures, we witness to God's faithfulness in our lives. Have you ever stopped to ask yourself, "What is God's purpose for stewardship in my life?"

God's purpose for stewardship in your life and mine is very specific. It is to see what outward signs our lives show of our inward spiritual condition. For example, when Jesus talked about "the

least of these" in Matthew 25:31-46, he was saying, "Don't ignore people who need your help. If you can pass by people in need and have the means to help them, how can you say the love of God lives in you?"

Stewardship is a gift from God, because it gives us the opportunity, every day, to demonstrate with our lives that we either believe God and trust His Word, or just say that we do.

When it comes to giving, many people are frustrated by the struggle between the desire to be generous and the demands of bills and creditors. God's Word says that when you owe money, you are a slave to the debtor (see Proverbs 22:7, 25-27). If this describes your situation, we strongly recommend that you find godly counsel and get out of slavery so you can experience the freedom of cheerful, generous giving! In fact, experience has shown that the simple act of giving of our material resources can be a way God uses us to share the good news of Jesus Christ with another person.

Together with your family, read Matthew 25:31-46 and consider your response to Jesus' words. It may help you to think about:

- Your current level of giving
- Your desired level of giving
- Needs you feel God has equipped you to meet
- Opportunities to give that you have missed
- Commitments you'd like to make to meeting needs as God directs you



Budget Guide Online Calculator:

www.crown.org/Tools/budgetguide.asp

Monthly Cash Flow

Planning Form at:

www.daveramsey.com/media/pdf/fpu_monthly_cash_flow_plan_forms.pdf

Article: *A Budget is Your Friend...Really!*

Search under "Budget" in: www.familylife.com/articles/

Practical Money Skills for Life

www.practicalmoneyskills.com/english/at_home/consumers/budgeting/