

Living Each Day as a Steward!

The Steward's Lifestyle

What do people who live a faithful steward's lifestyle look like? Can you tell by their appearance that they're faithful stewards? Do they do certain things that would identify them as faithful stewards? Maybe they drop a big check into the offering plate on Christmas and Easter. Maybe they serve Thanksgiving dinner every year to those who are in need. Perhaps they serve as ushers or care for little ones in the nursery once a month in their churches.

These certainly are laudable acts of service but the word lifestyle suggests that more is involved. If you look closely you will see that faithful stewards are different because they are "new creations" (2 Corinthians 5:17). They have "*put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness*" (Ephesians 4:24). As "new creations" they seek God's will (Ephesians 5:17), and sporadic acts of service become part of daily life, namely the steward's lifestyle.

Because our sinful natures no longer control us, our lifestyles reflect the presence of the Holy Spirit. Our minds are set on doing what the Spirit desires. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to put off the "*old self, which belongs to [our] former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of [our] minds...*" (Ephesians 4:22-23).

The Lifestyle of Witnessing

As stewards of God's grace, we have been called and chosen to be his mouth, feet, and hands to help seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). The Apostle Paul tells us, "*Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us*" (2 Corinthians 5:20). Knowing that God "*desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*" (1 Timothy 2:4), we have a great privilege and responsibility as Christ's ambassadors. "*...As servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God...it is required...that [we] be found trustworthy*" (1 Corinthians 4:1-2). With the Holy Spirit working in and through us, we can faithfully and boldly proclaim the Gospel to those around us. Paul tells us that we should witness to our faith so that "*the sharing of [our] faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ*" (Philemon 6).

The Lifestyle of Serving

We are reminded by the words of Matthew 20:28, "*Even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many,*" that the life of Jesus was one of total sacrifice. By this remark, Jesus makes it clear that he wants to develop a servant spirit in his disciples and us. He said in Matthew 20:26, "*...whoever would be great among you must be your servant.*" He lived for his heavenly Father and for others. Since Jesus put himself in submission



to the will of his Father, how much more should we be willing to submit to our Father's will! Being conformed to the image of God, we take on the role of servants.

The concept of serving rather than being served is not a natural one. We have an inborn desire to want to be served ourselves and to have our own needs met rather than to see to others. It is our nature to want to be "number one." God's love changes our mindset from wanting to please ourselves to a desire to serve others. Seeing others as our brothers and sisters in Christ helps us follow God's command to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31).



The Lifestyle of Giving

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Church of Corinth: "...see that you excel in this act [giving] of grace also" (2 Corinthians 8:7). God's will for us is not only that we should be saved (1 Timothy 2:4), but also that we should be sanctified—live a faithful Christian life (Ephesians 4:1). In Christ, we can stop putting our self-interests first and seek to be giving and sharing people. We **live each day as stewards** because we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. In faith, we want to give and serve generously and cheerfully, witnessing to friends and neighbors as God gives us opportunity.

Love is what motivated God to give. He didn't give leftovers; he gave his best. He gave what we need—his own Son. Through faith, we begin to understand God's tremendous love for us, and we are compelled to share with others the love of God that fills our hearts. The more fully we understand how richly God has blessed us, the deeper will be our love and gratitude to him and the greater will be our desire to respond in generous giving of all that we have to offer.

"In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another." (1John 4:10-11)