

Stewards Over Things

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God has entrusted us with many things in this life. Some are inanimate objects (car, house, cash...). He has also given us time, health, and a mind with which to choose. When we use the mind to choose selfishly, use our energies to do what we want, and waste our time on worldly pleasures; then we have failed in our stewardship. We are not serving the Master with the things He has given us. We are not pleasing Him with our use of things.

There are two extreme views in regards to inanimate objects. Some people feel they own them. They love their possessions above all else. Things become their god (Col. 3:5). The rich young ruler loved his possessions above eternal life. He learned what he needed to do to be saved, but he rejected the command because of his attachment to things (Matt. 19:16-22). This attitude is also seen in a man who interrupts Jesus' spiritual teachings to tell him to get him a portion of an inheritance. Luke 12:13-15 *And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them, **Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*** This man coveted wealth he did not yet possess. The outlook toward physical possessions is not limited to the rich. Anyone can love things above God.

The other extreme position is to view all things as worthless and meaningless. Obviously things are not as valuable as God or people, but things do have a purpose. They are needed for survival in this physical world. They have been provided to us by a loving God who created us in a way that we need them. Money is not condemned but the love of money is. These inanimate objects are tools. They are to be used properly in God's service. They belong to Him and should not be abused or

neglected. Think about the value of things in your life. You use the **time** God has given you to work at a secular job. The job may require you to use a great deal of physical or mental **energy**. For the work you do you receive **money**. With the money you buy the **things** you have. These things cost you time, energy, and money. They can be used to serve God. They have value. They should not be mistreated by ourselves or others.

Think about the church building, the pew Bibles, and the hymnals we have. Some people allow their children to wreck the building, color in the Bibles, and tear pages out of the hymnals. Because the child is more valuable than the objects should we totally disregard his behavior? If he took a knife to your car seats would you say anything? If he torched your house would you remain quiet? When someone demolishes church property then we need to replace it. This requires more time, energy, money, and contributions of that money to get it replaced. If someone flushes toys down the toilet we need to pay the plumber to fix the commode. That is money that cannot be used in support of a preacher, to buy lesson books for the church, or to buy food for a needy saint. Obviously things have value and should not be neglected or abused by us or others. There is a reason God gave all the laws to Israel about not stealing or damaging another's property. Things have value in this life even though they will be melted eventually and not pass into eternal life (2 Pet. 3:10).

God expects us to use the things He has given us to bring glory to His name. I need a car to drive to worship services. If someone destroys it or steals it I will need to buy a different car. It will require work, money, and time. It will take time to shop for the car as well as to pay for it. It needs to be cared for properly and used faithfully.

It is easy to confuse our priorities. The things we worked for and spent money on can become too valuable to us. We can turn from using it **for God** to treating it **as god**. We can imagine all the things we **use** becoming all the things we **have** (possess and own). Time, energy, money, and things all have value. We can see that. But we must not overemphasize their value.

The Bible condemns covetousness. The greed that lusts after things we "own" and wish to own. One reason we give as we are prospered is to combat covetousness. Giving helps us to remember that these things are only on loan to us anyway.

The Bible also condemns slothfulness. The lazy man who will not take care of the things God has entrusted to him is also not acceptable with the God of righteousness. Consider Proverbs 24:30 -34 and the lesson it teaches.

*Prov 24:30 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man **void of understanding**; 31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. 32 **Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction.** 33 *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:* 34 *So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.**

The owner of the field had no understanding. He did not see the need of giving the property attention. It decayed from his neglect. The wise observer gained the instruction we all need to gain. Laziness shows God you do not value Him or His gifts. Like the one talent man who buried his master's money in the ground, we will be condemned as wicked and slothful if we do not work with what we have been given (Matt. 25:26-30). Use the gifts God has given you to glorify Him. We can neglect our minds, time, health, and opportunities as well as our physical possessions. Be faithful stewards of all that God has entrusted to you. Use them to glorify Him.