

# “STEWARDSHIP”

## The Author of Stewardship

In Colossians 1:16-17 we are told the following:

“For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

God is the creator of all things. In fact, Paul said above that all things were created for him and have been created *through* him. This means that everything that has ever been created, everything that is created and everything that will ever be created has passed through the hands of God. So when we talk about stewardship, we must begin with the idea that God is creator and owner of all.

In Genesis 1:26 God created man and put them in charge of creation. This implies that man is not the owner but God is. Man is just the manager or steward. God’s ownership expands to everything (Colossians 1:16). This includes visible things such as your house, food, clothing, money, TV, iPod, and whatever else you can see, taste or touch. This also includes the invisible things such as your thoughts, feelings and emotions.

## The Recipients of Stewardship

God giving man the responsibility to rule over creation was the first example of stewardship. Adam was the very first steward (Genesis 2:15). He was in charge of managing everything God owned. The implication of this is that Adam did not own anything. In the same way, you and I do not own anything. So, when we speak of “owning a house” we are not really the owner, God is. Our ownership is relative to one another. In other words, relative to God, we own nothing, but relative to our neighbor we do.

## Some Practical Implications

One of the most common applications of the idea of stewardship is in the concept of the tithe. The word *tithe* comes from a Greek term meaning *the tenth*. The tithe represents a tenth of one’s gross earnings. It was a practice that was established from the Old Testament and continues into the New Testament. God established himself as the creator and author of all things in Genesis (Genesis 1:26-30). He later

commended the tithe which we see the beginnings of in Genesis 4:4-5 where Abel brought his first fruits. We get a clearer picture of God's desire for the tithe in Genesis 14:20 where Abraham brings a tenth of his earning to Melchizadech. This was not only a practice for Abraham as we learn in Hebrews 7:4-5, the descendants of Abraham bring their tithes to the priests as well. In verse 17, Jesus Himself is linked to Melchizedek and is called a priest. As followers of Christ (descendants of Abraham), we too are to bring our tithes to our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:14).

Giving acknowledges the following:

1. God is the source of all that we have
2. God is the creator and we are the created
3. Giving is a voluntary act of worship
4. We practice putting God first

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Read 2 Corinthians 8-9 and answer the following questions
  - a. What was the attitude of the Macedonians in giving their money to God (2 Corinthians 8:2-5)?
  - b. Based on this, what do you think God is more interested in?
  - c. In what sense does one who sows sparingly also reap sparingly (2 Corinthians 9:6)?
  - d. What kind of attitude does God want you to have in giving (2 Corinthians 9:7)?
2. To whom do your possessions belong (Psalm 50:12)?
3. What should be your motive in the use of your possessions (1 Corinthians 10:31)?
4. Why did God make Adam and Eve stewards of the earth (Genesis 1:26-28)? To answer this question correctly, consider the connection with Matthew 28:19-20.

**Personal Application**

1. Is your heart attitude one of joy and gratefulness when you give? If not, explain what adjustments you need to make.
2. When is it typically hard for you to give cheerfully?
3. List the financial areas that are hard for you to put into God's hands:
4. What will happen if you make God's promises the foundation of your financial security (Proverbs 3:5-6)?