

Who's In Charge Here?

"3 Traits of a Good & Faithful Steward"

Matthew 25:21 & 23

Intro: There is an old saying some of you may have heard and here it is: "Inspect what you expect." So, as you think about a good steward what do you think God expects? Here are 3 things.

1. A good & faithful steward lives an Examined Life.

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves.

1 Corinthians 11:28 That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup.

Jeremiah the prophet in the Old Testament in the book of Lamentations 3:40 told the people "Let us test and examine our ways."

It is a wise, smart person who from time to time periodically checks themselves to see how they are doing, with anything!

Unfortunately, and somewhat sadly, the only time some folks check their lives to see if they're on track or not, is when they're in a major crisis and it's obvious to everybody that something's wrong!

Don't wait until you have a wreck or a tragedy to check things out.

Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living."

2. A good & faithful steward lives a Controlled Life.

Galatians 5:23 Now the fruit of the Spirit is...gentleness, and self-control.

Here Paul says that a Controlled life is one of the fruits or results of the Holy Spirit – and really, it's when He is in control, when He is in the driver's seat that things run smoothly and work the way they are supposed to.

Paul also lists this as one of the qualifications of someone who is an elder, in Titus 1...

Titus 1:8 Rather, he must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must love what is good. He must live wisely and be just. He must live a devout and disciplined life.

Paul also uses the discipline and training of an athlete in training to illustrate what controlled life looks like.

Look at 1 Corinthians 9:25, 27 All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize.

I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

King Solomon made the point best when he said that “A man without self-control is like a city broken into and without walls.” He has no boundaries, no fences to contain him and his life spirals out of control. We all know of people who can’t/don’t control their tempers...they can’t control their appetites...they cannot control their emotions...they cannot control their tongues...they can’t control their sex drives...they can’t control their spending. In one or more ways they are broken

Here’s a good quote from someone who learned the hard way he was chasing the wrong things.

“Thomas Merton, the American monk, pointed out that we may spend our whole life climbing the ladder of success, only to find when we get to the top that our ladder is leaning against the wrong wall.”
Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life— Richard Rohr

“You don’t want to get to the top of the ladder only to find out you had it leaning up against the wrong wall.”

— Jack Canfield, Chicken Soup for the Soul

On the opposite side of the fence or wall... notice what God says in

1 John 2:16 Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you.

For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world.

And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

John Milton said, “He who reins within himself and rules passions, desires and fears is more than a king.”

Would the word “Controlled” describes your life as a steward?

3. A good & faithful steward lives a Sacrificial Life.

Romans 12:1 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable.

Listen to what Jesus said in Luke 9:23 Then he said to the crowd, “*If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me.*”

Note the word “daily” – I have to die daily to my own desires and wants. That’s what Paul was talking about in Galatians 2:20.

“If our God is self-sacrificing and seeks to bless others who have done nothing to merit it, then we should be people who are self-sacrificing and who bless others who have not earned it.”

The Kingdom & the Cross by James Bryan Smith

Turn to 1 John 3:16 We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God’s love be in that person?