

# Stewardship



# Stewardship - The best sacrifice

'For the world and everything in  
it are His,  
We are the best creation of His,  
And He has commanded us to  
nurture it.'

Do not live an ordinary life,  
As this life is His gift,  
We are the steward of it,  
Made in His likeness,

'Let this life glorify Him.'

My soul belongs to God,  
I'm the steward of this relation,  
I shall not corrupt it,  
Nor break it.

Mind comes from Him,  
So does the wisdom in it,

Fill my mind with your words,  
Let my heart meditate on them,  
Let my ears listen to them,  
Let my eyes see through them,

I shall use them for your glory,  
Oh my Lord, Oh Holy Spirit.

This body is Yours,  
Yours is my soul and life,  
Steward them to give You,  
The best sacrifice.



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2. July-August 23- Coping with Fear and Anxiety
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# Responsible Custodian

God created the earth and everything in it and made humans the crown of creation to take care of it (Gen 2.15). Hence, we are not owners but custodians of the earth. John MacArthur said, "All Christians are but God's stewards. Everything we have is on loan from the Lord, entrusted to us for a while to use in serving Him". This calls for responsible stewardship of the environment, time, talents, and treasure. God has bestowed resources on us, not for hoarding but to be a blessing to others and to promote better community living. Throughout the Scripture, the call is given to be faithful stewards of God-given resources and to be agents of change in bringing back God's original design to its full potential.

John D Dingell said, *"I believe we do not inherit this Earth from previous generations, but we borrow it from the future ones"*. Therefore, we are accountable and must safely return the earth to the next generation. Exploitation and greed to satisfy our own selfish desires create an imbalance in the whole system. "All I have is mine, so live as kings" is the world's motto. But as stewards of God, we need to swim against the tide. As the saying goes, "When God blesses you financially, don't raise your standard of living. Raise your standard of giving".

Responsible stewardship should be practiced even in little things like using water sparingly, saving electricity, buying for the needs and not for the wants, not littering the earth, and using eco-friendly things. We should use our gifts and talents faithfully, not for self-promotion but with the consciousness that we are accountable to the Owner. We should be good stewards not only when it pinches us, but even with others' property, not only when human eyes are on us but even in their absence, knowing that whatever we are doing is for the Lord. We do not seek human approval but God's validation, "Well done, good and faithful servant"!

As we dive into this topic, the authors take us through various aspects of stewardship:

"The God who created and gifted us a resourceful planet . . ."

"stewardship of time begins with . . ."

"we are all like jars of clay and within us all there is a treasure . . ."

"our study is meant to bring glory to God . . ." and much more!



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## SUBSCRIPTION

**For Students**

One Year Rs. 100/-

Three Years Rs 200/-

Others

One Year Rs 200/-

Ten Years - Rs 1500/-

**Overseas:**

1 Year - \$ 20

10 Years - \$ 200

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articles, write to the Hon. Editor.

## DEPOSITING SUBSCRIPTIONS & CONTRIBUTIONS

A/c Name: **UESI Publication Trust**

A/c No: 1229135000004997

Bank: Karur Vysya Bank,

Branch: Purasawalkam

IFS code: KVBL0001229

Inform details of deposit to  
campus.link@uesi.in

**Ph: +91-9176 988 987 (CL Desk)**

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# Stewardship of God's Creation



**H**ow beautiful it is, to be in a lush green surrounding, enjoying the colors of the flowers, hearing the birds chirp, feeling the gentle breeze, looking at the far mountains and saying, "Praise the name of the LORD, what a great Creator He is!

It is true, that nature, provides the best setting for worshiping the Creator. In other settings, we will have to imagine more than seeing and feeling, to be able to worship naturally.

However, unfortunately, such settings are becoming extinct. It is a sad sight to watch God's beautiful creation getting ravaged by human sinfulness.

## The glorious beginning

Genesis 1: 31 -2:1 *"God saw all that He had made and it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning the sixth day. Thus, the skies and the earth were completed in all their vast array"* – What a glorious beginning!

No poetic expression will be enough to describe the wonders

This is my Father's world,  
And to my listening ears  
All nature sings, and round me rings  
The music of the spheres.  
This is my Father's world:  
I rest me in the thought  
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;  
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world,  
The birds their carols raise,  
The morning light, the lily white,  
Declare their maker's praise.  
This is my Father's world,  
He shines in all that's fair;  
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass;  
He speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Father's world.  
O let me ne'er forget  
That though the wrong seems oft so  
strong,  
God is the ruler yet.  
This is my Father's world:  
why should my heart be sad?  
The Lord is King; let the heavens ring!  
God reigns; let the earth be glad !!

**Maltbie D Babcock**

and beauty of God's great creation. The more we get into its intricacies, the more we find God's great wisdom and creativity manifested in it!

## The Call for Creation Care

Humankind got their first appointment letter (call to work) in Genesis 2: 15 "The LORD took man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and to take care of it."



The Hebrew usage for 'to work' is **"aw-wad"** which also means, to serve, and worship with. And the Hebrew usage for 'to take care of' is **"sa-maar"**. It is interesting to note that the same Hebrew word **"sa-maar"** is used when God tells Israelites, **"Keep"** my Commandments (as many as 59 times in Deuteronomy; example : Deuteronomy 4:2- "you shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may **KEEP** the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you"

The study of the word **"sa-maar"**, would indicate that we should have the same attitude of, "keeping the commandments /word of God" even 'keeping' the creation of God. It is with this great expectation that we are called to take due care of His creation, the one that He gifted us, His beautiful and resourceful planet.

Further, as image bearers of God, to His creation, we reflect a responsibility of representing Him, and His caring nature. L T Jeyachandran used to ask a question, "what would have been the thoughts in the mind of a Tiger, when humankind ran a save-the tiger campaign?" Obviously, the human feeling to save the tiger comes from the 'image' that the creator installed in us.

**The ravaged creation today - that exposes human sinfulness and**

## **the exploitative nature of human greed**

The world is no more as beautiful, as it was originally, when created by God. The unsustainable ways of development and lifestyle is costing humankind beyond recovery. Yet, even after knowing and reeling through the pains of environmental issues and climate change, humankind is not relenting. It is important that we wake up, and be on guard as stewards, of God's creation, with a sense of urgency.

The pollution and the biodiversity loss that is happening at a fast pace, are also breaking the beautiful ecosystem. God created the ecosystem as an interdependent chain of cooperation, and co-existence. The loss of biodiversity is one of the biggest threats to the ecosystem itself. The flora and the fauna are now groaning for their deliverance; to be cared for, by us. Romans 8:18-27 describes the groaning of God's creation, and our call to involve, sigh and pray. And when we do so, the Spirit of God too, joins us, in our groaning.

## **What then shall we do today, recapturing our Gen 2:15 responsibility?**

We live in a time, where God's beautiful planet is being destroyed, at a faster pace, than ever. Unfortunately, directly, and indirectly we all are part of this destruction.

**Revelation 11: 18** says, *“The nations were angry, and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets, and your people who revere your name, both great and small—and for destroying those who destroy the earth”*.

It is important to note here that the judgment as it unfolds in **Revelation 11 :18**, is also for destroying the destroyers of earth- God’s beautiful creation. We need to take conscious efforts to ensure that our lifestyle will not be contributing to the destruction of the planet. As people of God, at a generation as ours, let us consider the following;

**Action 1: Keep worshipping the Lord in natural settings, describing the beauty of His creation and the wisdom therein and His creativity**

David wrote in **Psalms 19**: - *“The heavens declare the glory of God and the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Truly, the wisdom of God as we see in His eco system is beyond human expressions. Its then, when we are trying to find, see and enjoy God’s wisdom and beauty, we get lost in awe and wonder of Him and say from our heart- How great thou art.”*

David wrote most of his songs in his journey through natural settings. So did several of God’s people. Yes,

we sing in our Sunday school, *If I were a butterfly, I thank you Lord for my good wings and if I were a robin in a tree, I thank you Lord that I could sing, etc . . .* But, beyond that, can we describe of God’s intrinsic wisdom in the Creation that we see? When we have our worship sessions in natural settings, that will transform us beyond that we can imagine in our closed room settings. Let us take our worship sessions to God’s beautiful world, as much as possible, and as often as possible.

**Action 2: Develop a lifestyle with Creation care**

As worshippers of the God who created and gifted us a resourceful planet, we can’t be mute witnesses to the destruction around. We have to adopt a lifestyle that will reflect a conscious stewardship.

**The 5R Principle**

- **REFUSE**- There are certain things we should say NO, to. Some plastic items, single use and throw items, all that which are harmful to God’s planet, which we can refuse, if we

**Protect our Ecosystem**

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.  
- Genesis 2:15





can, and switch to natural/eco-friendly options.

- **REDUCE**- That which we cannot refuse, let us reduce. Reduce usage of things that add to the pollution. Eg; Plastics, paper, fossil fuels etc

- **REUSE**: - Why do we need so many new things? Why can't we re-use things, if not, gift to others to use it. There are quite a lot of things that we can give away in each of our homes, to be re-used by others.

- **RECYCLE**: Recycling is making a new product from old used products. There are quite a lot of things that we can recycle and find new purposes.

- **REDEEM**: It is about buying or back-taking efforts to redeem the things we are losing at a fast rate. May it be the effort for redeeming bio diversity or even spending an extra amount on redeeming / arresting the loss of a link in the eco-system. As people of God, there are several collective actions that can be thought about in this category.

Developing a creation care lifestyle calls for conscious actions/ choices

as individuals / families/ communities / companies and nations.

### **Action: 3 – Consider WORK/ CAREERS with a Creation Care Perspective**



There is an urgent need in the world for more creation-care professionals, who will infuse the stewardship of God's creation in their respective fields. The Govt. of India is actively promoting environmental stewardship through concepts of Green GDP, Social Stock Exchanges, BRSR (Business Responsibility & Sustainability Report), the thrust for renewable energy, the call for net zero, ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) and several similar practices. Accordingly, several new needs and opportunities are emerging.

God is looking for professionals to work on sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals. With the training in any field, we can integrate the Biblical call for the Stewardship of Creation.

***May God find us as good stewards of His creation in our generation.***

### **Betsy & Reji Koshy**



**Betsy**, a creation care enthusiast, is currently serving as Creation Care Co –Ordinator (Hon) with Interserve India, equipping missions for environment stewardship, along with a host of home-based endeavors. **Reji**, a sustainability professional, is currently serving as Head- Sustainable Banking at ESAF SMALL FINANCE BANK. **Reji & Betsy** make their home in Pune and are members of Pune EGF.





# Meaningfully Managing Minutes . . .

**D**uring CMTC 1985, a session on Time Management was handled by a graduate. He galvanized the gathering through his concept and understanding of Time Management. That session was a propelling force that instigated me to chart out my plans for managing my time constructively. Returning from CMTC, I planned for a week on scheduling and managing time. Truly the action commenced, but hardly 48 hours had lapsed, I got back to square one. This became a recurrent pattern at the beginning of every New Year, as I tried to revive my learning about time management, yet fell short off. If you look for a prescription or a description on the subject, I am afraid that I have nothing to offer. As a co-learner with you, I would like to reflect on a few principles that can guide and motivate us towards the stewardship of time. C.S. Lewis said, "Think of me as a fellow patient in the same hospital who, having been admitted a little earlier, could give some advice."

## **Time Alone with God**

Begin your day with Quiet Time. This is the secret of stalwarts who successfully managed their time effectively. This sets the tone for the day. Spiritual insights and inputs received at the beginning of the day provide you with the needed impetus and innate ability to manage your time. Even in prime time amidst all busy schedules, quiet time can never be taken for granted for this defines the rest of the day. Those night birds, who are not fresh in the morning, may spend time alone with God by night to calibrate themselves. If someone claims that they managed their time effectively and did great things for the Lord, it is the sheer grace of God, not the talent or experience of the individual. God's pruning of our inner being, God's power for our spiritual warfare, and God's wisdom for excelling in studies and profession are imminent. It is better to place our challenges and constraints, works and worries, lists and limitations at the feet of the



Master and allow Him to guide our paths through our life.

## **Identity – Goals, Roles and Responsibilities**

You should be clear about your call and goal in life; your vision and mission; and your roles and responsibilities. Effective management of time starts from defining yourself in the light of your faithful answers to the above questions. Let me illustrate with a couple of examples.

As a student, your call is to be salt and light on the campus including the hostel. For an evangelical student, it is important to be a living testimony of Christ through faith in actions and reactions on campus. At the same time, you need to be a role model – leading by example as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ – by giving your best efforts in studies, exams, seminars, projects, presentations, co-curricular activities, etc. Your goal is to bring glory to God on the campus through your performance in academics. As part of the ICEU Committee or a cell leader, you may need to fulfill your roles in addition. You need to apportion your time in that order, not in reverse.

For a graduate, next to God, it would be the family – you, spouse and children; then comes the rest of the world. As a teacher/

professional/businessman, you are called to give your best for the glory of His most Holy name and the extension of His kingdom. Further, added responsibilities in EU/EGF ministry and church come to the fore. This order should define your time, failing which problems and predicaments galore.

Every act, activity, role and responsibility demands time and is mostly fixed within the time frame of 24x7. Hence, stewardship of time begins with our understanding of who we are, what we are, and what we need to do.

We should learn to say NO to those which are not part of our call, vision, mission, role, and responsibility, since quite often we end up wasting much time doing what we are not, and what we should not be doing. Beware of pleasing people and accepting too many responsibilities that you cannot handle.

Gaining clarity in your roles and responsibilities enables you to balance your time in a meaningful manner.

## **Manage Your Priorities**

Prayerfully seek wisdom to distinguish between what is 'important' and what is 'urgent', which will help us to balance our time. Eisenhower Matrix found in TODOIST website provides the needed insights for balancing time.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	<p>✓ <b>DO IT</b></p> <p>Things with clear deadlines and consequences for not taking immediate action.</p> <p><b>Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finishing a client project</li> <li>• Submitting a draft article</li> <li>• Responding to some emails</li> <li>• Picking up your sick kid from school</li> </ul>	<p>⌚ <b>SCHEDULE IT</b></p> <p>Activities without a set deadline that bring you closer to your goals. Easy to procrastinate on.</p> <p><b>Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic planning</li> <li>• Professional development</li> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• Exercise</li> </ul>
Not Important	<p>👤 <b>DELEGATE IT</b></p> <p>Things that need to be done, but don't require your specific skills. Busy work.</p> <p><b>Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uploading blog posts</li> <li>• Scheduling</li> <li>• Responding to some emails</li> <li>• Meal prep</li> </ul>	<p>🗑️ <b>DELETE IT</b></p> <p>Distractions that make you feel worse afterward. Can be okay but only in moderation.</p> <p><b>Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Watching TV</li> <li>• Video games</li> <li>• Eating junk food</li> </ul>

(Courtesy:<https://todoist.com/productivity-methods/eisenhower-matrix>)

The above matrix gives deep insights to effectively manage time. Many times we are forced to do what is urgent but not important. Majority of our time gets wasted doing things that are, neither important nor urgent viz., our time on Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, TV, Sports, etc. Watch out for these time wasters and conserve your time to do something noble and beneficial.

## Effectively Organize Yourself

To lift a load, a fulcrum is useful. Even the tiniest sliver of wood can serve as a toothpick. Following tips assist in organizing oneself in managing time:

- **TO-DO LIST:** Have a pocket diary or desktop planner, where a TO-DO list can be made. It could be for the day/week/month. Keep checking this list twice or more a day. This helps to organize systematically. You may give ranking and prioritize based on the urgency of the situation so that the order of our execution of work is regulated.

Students may list out a study plan, academic and EU activities. Graduates may list out various assignments and activities. This can be done in the morning after Quiet Time and reviewed by night.

- **CHECKLISTS:** This is also a wonderful tool for our studies, especially for semester or competitive or departmental exams. This helps during planning and executing a big project or event and ensures coverage of all aspects of requirements for effective delegation of responsibilities. Depending on the magnitude of the event, there could be multi-layer checklists.

- **SCHEDULE:** Scheduling is an important element in time management. This comes through



practice. Sometimes we learn from mistakes but mature over time. As students, scheduling of studies – on a daily, weekly, monthly basis, and ahead of examinations would produce expected outcomes. Have cushion time or additional allowance as tolerances and avoid planning very tightly.

- **PLAN-B:** During execution, it is important to always have Plan B or Contingency Plan so that we do not fail in our plans. This defines our success and defies all odds that compound or complicate our plans and projects.

- **REMINDERS:** Set reminders through stickers, mobile phones, and diaries that would facilitate you to do the work without delay and on time. Keep white boards to scribble.

- **REFRESH:** Press ‘refresh’ button quite often. Your best output comes out when you are fresh, not in sleep mode. Find pockets of time that suit you to do the best. Power naps help us to recharge ourselves quickly. A

small game or workout outdoors can revive our energy. Even walking through a garden or sighting a wonderful environment can relieve from stresses.

- **REST COMPONENT:** In organizing your time, deliberately plan and schedule times for resting your mind and body – on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis so that you can recoup, recreate, revive and rejuvenate and prepare for greater roles.

We do not live in a perfect environment with a perfect setting. We live alongside our limitations and fear failure which hinders our pursuit of excellence in all our dealings and puts us off from initiating any enterprising activity. Failure is one of the better teachers. Rev. Dr. Theodore Williams wrote, ‘Failure is never final with God; our God is always a God of a second chance.’ Hence, in the pursuit of managing our time, we should keep learning and growing so that we may glow for the glory of His most Holy name!



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# Caretaker Principle

*"I own a car and a house. I own mutual funds and stocks, and I have this much money in my savings account. As soon as I said this to myself, I heard a still small voice from behind say, 'The earth is mine and everything in it; the world and all who live in it.' By the time I turned my back, I heard it again. 'Remember, I gave you the ability to produce wealth.'"*

Often, what we say, feel, or believe to be the truth need not be true. Our thoughts and beliefs are a result of our worldview about life. What we hear, learn, read, and feel shapes our beliefs, which then become our worldview, which can be completely wrong. If you were to ask anyone, "What is it that is yours, or, in other words, what is it that you own?" Without wasting a second, anyone would tell you exactly what they own, and that may not seem wrong at all. However, it is fundamentally incorrect, because the truth is that

we own nothing on this planet. The Lord says *"the earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it"* (Psalm 24:1 NIV). This should be our worldview if we believe the Bible is the word of God and he can't lie or exaggerate.

## Not owners

That settles it; we are not owners. Then who are we? What is our role on this earth if God is the owner? When God created Adam and Eve, he gave them a mandate as his most intelligent creation, made in his very own image and likeness.



He said in Genesis 1:28 *"Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, and over every living creature that moves on the ground."* God gave them instructions to take care of his creation. He made them stewards or caretakers of his property.

Stewardship is both a privilege and a responsibility. God, the creator, chose us and entrusted his creation to our care, that's a privilege. We bear a great deal of responsibility because the creator himself entrusted us. The parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14–30 is probably the best analogy of what stewardship or caretaking means. Stewardship encompasses everything that we are entrusted with, including money, which is by far the most sought-after resource on earth to own. Only if we knew the truth about the caretaker principle, we would not pursue it with this vigour because we will have to one day give an account of every single rupee or dollar we possess. Our attitude changes the moment we realize, "It's not my own, I need to give an account."

There is a difference in the way an owner uses money compared to how a caretaker uses it. Let's see.

## Spending

As owners, we can spend money on anything we want, as much as we want, without thinking twice about whether it is right or wrong. Who cares? It is our money, and we can spend it on anything as long as it serves our purpose and we have money to spend. However, the moment you become a caretaker, the equation changes.

We cannot spend on anything we want, as much as we want, without thinking twice about whether it is right or wrong because we need to report to the owner what we spent and why we spent it.

If you remember the parable of the talents, the master asks for the accounts. In the parable of the shrewd manager in Luke 16:1–8, the master asks for the accounts.

Many in our generation have accumulated a lot of things in their homes and personal lives. Some are also in debt. Sadly, in our generation, we spend borrowed money as if we owned it. No wonder many are deep in debt. The Bible says, *"The wise have wealth and luxury, but fools spend whatever they get."* Proverbs 21:20 (NLT). Caretakers are wise and grow wealth, but fools who think they own everything spend recklessly.

Those with a caretaker attitude, plan their spending. They have a budget. They plan how much they will spend and how much they will save and give because the master will ask. The caretaker also thinks about what the master wants me to spend this money on. They frequently ask for and commit their spending to prayer to avoid making a mistake.

### **Saving and investing**

How does an owner save, and how does a caretaker save? Have you ever considered this thought? Is there a difference? Are they not pretty much the same? Many save in our time, and there are several saving options. Why do we save? We save for the future expenses and uncertainties of life. Then how does a caretaker save?

The caretaker saves not just for his or her future and the uncertainties of life but also for what the master would want him to do. The caretaker goes beyond just saving but also thinks, "Did I save on the right options?" "Are my savings yielding the best returns?" "Will my master be happy because it is his money and he will ask for an account?"

The parable of the talents in Matthew 25 gives us a lot of insights into what the two faithful servants did. They grew the wealth

their master entrusted to them. Speculating on what they could have done, it seems they saved in instruments that gave high interest, or they possibly traded with high profits, or they bought seeds and grew crops that could give high returns, or they took up some entrepreneurial ventures and became very productive. To get high returns, you need to take some calculated risks. No risks, no returns—that is the principle of investing. You need to inquire about investment options that you are unfamiliar with or that are new to you. You need to take initiative and try new things. Remember, we need to tell our master that we significantly increased his wealth. That does not come from safe savings or conventional ways. That's being lazy. The servant who buried his talents was labelled lazy and wicked. A caretaker is wise and hardworking, always remembering that he is saving or investing his master's money, not his own, and that his master must be pleased. So, it is not greed but the motive to please the master is what drives saving and investing.

### **Giving**

We all know that giving is not optional for a Christian. There are several parables and teachings of the Lord that emphasise giving. The





Lord makes it clear in the parable of the rich fool in Luke 12:13–21 that selfishness and pleasure-seeking are not acceptable to God.

So can there be different attitudes towards giving? An owner attitude and a caretaker attitude? Absolutely! Remember the Pharisee and the old widow? The Pharisees gave but received no credit from the Lord. They gave out of compulsion and religiosity because they believed tithes belonged to God but the rest belonged to them, but the poor widow gave all she had out of love for the Lord.

Many give, even in our generation, but few give with a caretaker attitude. You can give with a caretaker attitude only if your heart believes God owns his or her money. It is not the size of the giving that matters, it is the heart of the giving that matters. We can give lots of money out of our abundance and still be wrong, but we can give less money and still be right. Remember Cain and Abel? Both gave, but God only accepted Abel's. The one who believes he or she is a caretaker gives priority to giving, as Proverbs 3:9 says, "Honor the Lord with your

wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops." (NIV)

### Conclusion:

How do we make this paradigm shift from an owner attitude to a caretaker attitude if we are not already there? It begins with our relationship with God himself. If we are close enough to God and spend enough time with him, we experience the Lord Jesus' stake in our lives. He purchased us with his precious blood by dying on the cross, and so we belong to him. We don't even own ourselves, let alone all our possessions. When we are committed to him, all that we receive, we believe, is from him and not the result of our efforts and intelligence. We start feeling indebted to the Lord and want to offer ourselves to him, including our possessions.

*"For a moment I thought it was mine, Lord," I said to the Lord. "This belongs to you. My mutual funds, stocks, house, car, and every other possession I cherish are all yours. Please give me another chance to spend, invest, and give as a caretaker, and I would love to hear from you, "Well done my good and faithful servant".*



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# A Holy Pursuit of Academics

*"You say grace before meals. All right. But I say grace before the concert and the opera, and grace before the play and pantomime, and grace before I open a book, and grace before sketching, painting, swimming, fencing, boxing, walking, playing, dancing and grace before I dip the pen in the ink." - GK Chesterton*



I have many fond memories of my time in undergrad, but one of them is taking part in treasure hunts that were often organized during our fests. There's a real thrill in the competitive spirit, the excitement of discovering a good clue, the exhilaration of figuring out what the creator intended with it. Later, I discovered there was a greater thrill to be felt when you simply read your Bible. This may be why Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a man discovering a pearl in a field. The Bible never downplays the glory of what it contains. The gospel of God *is* treasure. To discover it truly is the most exhilarating thing in the world. We are all called to mine the scriptures for all they have to say, to dig deep into what our Creator intends with it. This is a *holy* pursuit, a divine gold hunt.

## What are studies for?

Perhaps the reason we don't know what to do with studies is that we don't know what to do with ourselves. In short, we don't know what education is for because we

don't know what *people* are for. Think about it. What use is money to a baby? Until he grows up, there is no point trying to stuff cash in his chubby little hands hoping he knows what to do with it. He's not going to invest it in stocks, is he? Until he grows into understanding, he can make no good use of the riches he holds. Until we truly learn to grasp what we are heading for, we face the same challenge.

Our modern world has a broken view of what people are for and therefore what education is for. A view that logically boils down to *nothing*.

However, the Bible teaches us that we exist to glorify God and enjoy him forever. Out of this foundation flows everything else that brings meaning and purpose to our lives. When we learn to see this as a reality in our lives, questions and motivations for studies or any other pursuit become much clearer.

People are meant to bring glory to God, therefore our study is meant to bring glory to God.



Here's one analogy that's helped me build that vision into all my thinking. Imagine a great writer. When I see how wonderful his story and characters are, what I praise is not the characters but the storyteller. This world is a story whose Author is God. When we are amazed at the mystery and beauty of the world, we praise the Writer of it all. Try it for yourself and you'll begin to see the world differently. Search the scriptures and we see that all things were created through Jesus and *for* him. In him all things hold together (Col1:17). In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col2:3). That's why the concept of a university is a very Christian idea. Christ is the 'uni', the point that ties everything diverse together.

The logo of Harvard is an interesting display of what that looks like. Look it up and you'll see 'VERITAS', the official crest inscribed in three parts on three books: (1) God's words, (2) God's works, and (3) God's reason. God's words being the scriptures, God's works described the study of the natural world while God's reason pointed to the immutable laws of logic through which we make sense of the world.

Students were meant to earnestly study all three 'books' to understand what they revealed together about God's world.

## How then should we live?

"... whether you eat or drink, you do it unto the glory of God" (1Cor. 10:13).

We have a tendency to think that the only real God-honouring use to studying well or pursuing excellence in our domains is so that evangelism is made easier. But this is a mistake. Every good and perfect gift is from the Father (James1:17). Science, literature, music, even food. All of it. They're all gifts that God has given us to use well. That involves evangelism, but it also involves actually enjoying the gift. Think of how pleasing it is when you see someone enjoy a gift you've given them. It makes sense then that God wants us to do the same with the gifts He's given us.

We have a long history of men and women that realized this truth and put their shovels into the ground of God's word and God's world to astonishing results. Men like Pascal, Newton, Leibnitz, Heisenberg, Bacon and so many more, all delighted to understand the mysteries that God has written into the curvature of our world. Men like C.H Spurgeon and George Muller and so many more modelled ways to counter various social ills of the age. Men like CS Lewis and Chesterton show us what it means to write of everything with a Christian joy. This is our

inheritance. Think of all that is yet to be discovered, pursued, invented, written, enjoyed, all to the glory of God. Figure out what God has gifted you with and pursue it to His glory. Begin each day with a prayer that God would show you how you can steward what He has entrusted to you-in your relationships, your studies, your work, and whatever else you do. All of life then, including your studies, *is a holy pursuit*.

College is a wonderful place to start working out the actual ways we can make this true in our lives. I have seen many friends in EU circles work on research and tech with a mindset of honouring Christ in their domain. Some who've recorded whole Christian music albums during their time in university. Some who've organized events and grown into valuable leaders in our country. Many who've been rank holders and given all the glory to God. Start today. Maybe you're a good writer. Take the chance to write content from a Christian worldview and put it out in your college circles. Maybe you're interested in a particular field. Work hard on it and see if God does not help you both enjoy it and glorify Him.

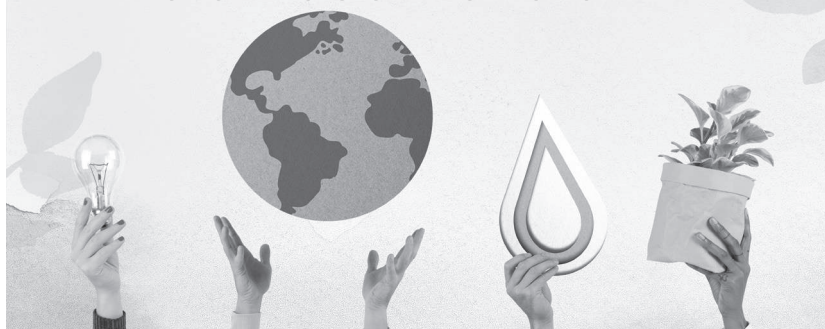
Perhaps some of you reading this think that you couldn't possibly have much to contribute compared to great scientists and such. Some of you probably don't even want to try. But if you realize that your God has a habit of doing amazing things with nobodies, you really shouldn't avoid trusting God for what He has in store for you. Daniel and his friends worked hard in a pagan land and God blessed them with knowledge and wisdom far beyond their peers. They were given positions of authority that led to God being glorified in the whole land. God could do the same today through anyone, as long as we desire to honor Him through it. Good books that shaped the mind of generations were written by Christian men and women. Music that brings even the staunchest atheist eye to shed tears. The science that changed the lives of millions. Architecture that still takes our breath away. All this and more is only the start of a story into which our roles are being written. The parable of the talents shows us that God is not pleased with a slothful man that leaves his gifts unused. Whatever God has called us to do, let's be faithful to what He has given us.



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# Be a Good Steward!



**"T**he Christian should never worry about tomorrow or give sparingly because of a possible future need. Only the present moment is ours to serve the Lord, and tomorrow may never come... Life is worth as much as it is spent for the Lord's service." These are some famous words by George Muller, the man who was originally a thief before accepting Jesus as His Lord and Savior, who then shaped the many lives of orphan children and served God preaching the gospel of Christ. These words are an excellent reminder that God wants us to be good stewards of all He has entrusted to us, not worrying about the future but serving Him in the present.

A steward can be anyone with a certain responsibility or something to manage, which makes us all stewards. A steward is different from an owner. A steward doesn't own something but is trusted to take care of and manage that something given to him/her by the owner.

1 Peter 4:10 tells us, *"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms"*.

So as stewards of God, think about all the things that God has entrusted to you and how you can use them as He intends you to.

Being a follower of Christ, stewardship is necessary for the following areas of life and all these are owned by God. We may possess it but God owns it.

One such area is Time. From age to age He stands and time is in His hands, beginning and ending. Seasons may change but our God is the same yesterday, today, and forever! Think not about spending your time on things but investing it in things. How can you use your routine or daily schedule to honor God? What are the things you can add or subtract from it to be a good steward of your time? Living in the hustle and bustle of this life, do not forget to prioritize your time with

God which is most important. Take out time to do things that you love, such as jamming with friends and worshiping God after a hectic day at college or on the way back from work, baking and cooking some comfort food and spending time in nature, going for a swim or a hike or just relaxing. Manage your time well which can help in maintaining a balance between your career, ministry and fellowships which does not leave you exhausted. The best way to balance that is to plan things ahead of time and note them down.

Another important area is our Gifts and Talents, not owned but endowed to us by God. Romans 12: 6-8 talks about different gifts, given according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. And talents can be such as, writing poems or songs, playing music, singing, painting or making creative things of art, cooking and baking, decorating, playing sports, and so on. So what are you using your gifts and talents for? Is it for your own glory or the glory of God? We need more people to come up and worship the Lord through

music, write, for sharing His great love, stand up for the truth, open their homes and welcome people, provide hospitality for His people, encourage those who are suffering, help in educating small children and mentor those in need of spiritual growth. Remember that the treasure is not yours to bury but to use it for the Lord.

Be a good steward of your money by contributing it consistently to the Lord. Everything in this world belongs to the Lord, and so we simply share not from our money but from what the Lord has blessed us with. The Macedonian church is a great example for us in 2 Cor. 3:8 where they gave beyond their means even in the midst of severe trials and poverty. Giving our money as a freewill offering should be cheerful, never forced, and wisely planned according to the needs of our Church, our EU&EGF programs, and the people around us. Giving can also be indirect in many ways such as gifting our dear ones according to their specific needs or paying a bill for our friend who is in need, paying the tuition fee for a student in need, or even buying groceries and medicines for our friends who are sick and cannot afford it. Remember that the Lord loves a cheerful giver and He doesn't look at the quantity of the amount you give but at your heart



and the way you give, not for the motive of seeking self praise but giving Him all the glory.

Lastly, be a good steward of the plethora of resources that are there at your disposal. One of the greatest resources we have is social media. We may not realize but our social media posts affect the lives of the people around us in many ways. There have been times that God has used the biblical quotes and bible verses posted on WhatsApp and Instagram to heal people, make them repent and even encourage them when they were at their breaking point because the power does not lie in the way it has been posted or the graphics of its design but the power lies in the scripture itself which is sharper than a double-edged sword. At times when physical fellowships are not possible then meet on platforms such as zoom/google meet to build each other in Christ but do not stop meeting. Share the kind of content with your friends which truly can make a difference in their lives such as Christian videos from Youtube, animated illustrations to understand the Bible better, online books and magazines, songs

about Jesus and so much more! Use the internet to strengthen your knowledge about the doctrines of our faith and apologetics, and refer to commentaries and podcasts online too.

Use your vehicles to offer a ride to your friends after a fellowship time, cook a meal and provide it to those who are sick, and best of all, open your home for God's people to display the love of Christ Jesus through your servanthood. Use these resources recklessly just to go an extra mile for the Lord's service and remember that none of these efforts are in vain but God in His time will make us reap the harvest of these seeds sown in His vineyard.

I being a flawed and imperfect human am a work in progress who is still learning to be a good steward day by day and would encourage you to do the same! As Don Moen sings, "Two hands, one heart, one life to offer you. Two hands, one heart, one life I give to you" may we come with all our gifts, talents, resources and complete submission of our heart at the feet of Jesus and see God do great things through it, much more than we can imagine!



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In 2019, a 16-year-old Swedish environmental activist named Greta Thunberg received an honorary title from the Lakota Native American people with an indigenous name “Maphiyata echiyatan hin win” which translates to “Woman who came from the heavens.” The reason for such recognition was Greta’s support for the community and taking a stand in opposing an oil project that would lead to the contamination of drinking water, consequently affecting the Lakota community. But why was such a divine title given to a teenager for what we would typically see as something common or regular? Well, for the indigenous community, this oil project runs right down to their livelihood and will disrupt their existence. For something that has

fed and sustained them for ages, the environment is nothing less of a deity to them, and thus in this context, Greta’s activism made her something akin to a savior or a herald of hope and strength. The environmental crisis is a reality that affects every individual and community the same, and as such, this is one concern that unites [or ought to unite] humanity as one. Ranging from something as small as using plastic in our everyday life to something as big as the Govt or a company pushing for a major project, our environment always gets affected, resources get exploited, and so on. In such a time and such a world, what message does/can a Christian bring? Much to our shame, being faithful stewards of the environment is one responsibility that is perhaps the most neglected or overlooked.



What does the Bible have to say about taking care of our environment? Is there any scriptural mandate to begin with? The answer is a resounding "Yes!" I want to bring clarity to this point by talking about it from 3 different perspectives: Creation, Redemption, and Mission.

Talking from Scripture, being a faithful steward of the environment goes right down to the very heart and soul of creation. God gave the mandate to take care of His creation to our first parent in Genesis 1:28, where God told them to "be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground" in other words to take care of God's creation. This is not just a normal or an ordinary role, for we see the discussion taking place in the heavenly council before the creation of mankind in Genesis 1:26. In every single instance of creation, God assigns a role to the creation and sees it as a good thing, it is only on the sixth day, God does not directly assign the roles but first "blessed them"(Gen 1:28) and only

then proceeds to give them the command, we are to infer from here that taking care of God's creation is a divine role that has a divine initiative and mandate having its origin in the Triune God Himself. This command to take care of the creation is again made very clear in Genesis 2:15 "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." It should not come off to us, as a reader, that this responsibility is limited only to the garden and our first parent only. For we see this command is repeated in Gen 9:1-3, and Gen 35:11-12, there is a clear indication here that even after the fall, God is reminding the people about His original and intended plan for mankind. To be "fruitful and multiply."

Of course, the fall happened, and it is beyond mankind's ability to redeem and restore the creation. We have failed and distorted the beautiful creation; we are not fruitful, and by multiplying, we further exploit and use God's creation for our selfish desires and greed. This was taken care of by another divine initiative, the incarnation. Christ

### Readers' Response

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Hon. Editor

came to redeem the lost sinners but more than that, He also came to redeem the whole creation. The book of Revelation enthusiastically talks about the new heavens and the new earth, Peter reminds us to look forward to this new creation (2 Peter 3:13), Paul labors to make this point over and over in his epistles in Romans 8, Colossians 1 and Ephesians 1 that Christ will reconcile all things in heaven and on earth. Have we discriminately lost sight of God's holistic redemptive plan by focusing too much on ourselves at the expense of the whole creation? This could very well reveal the crack in our theology, to accept Christ as a one-way ticket to heaven but never really being transformed to render our service sacrificially for His kingdom "on earth as it is in heaven." If it is the case that other belief systems that are based on works of righteousness have utterly misunderstood grace by working very hard to earn something that is already freely given as a gift losing out on the gift altogether, then it can be said of the Christian that we have received the gift with open arms and then immediately proceeded to throw away the gift. We have taken grace for granted and have forgotten that not only is the atonement a gift of grace, but so is the very environment and ecosystem that surrounds us, "He

causes the sun to rise on the evil and good, and causes the rain to fall on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matthew 5:45). Those things we take for granted, at the end of the day it is still grace, undeserved. To overlook our responsibility as a steward of God's creation is to overlook the gracious providence of God and ultimately to overlook the work of Christ on the cross to redeem the whole creation.

The Great Commission reminds us that we are God's instrument in proclaiming the gospel, but there is also another thing that God uses as His instrument to make Himself known to every individual, and that is the creation itself. Romans 1, in particular, tells us that God's eternal power and divine nature are made known through His creation, so much so that people are without excuse; God has reached out to every individual through this general revelation. Whenever there is an attack on the churches in India (becoming increasingly common), or there is an attempt to suppress a believer from freely proclaiming their faith, we become indignant, and that is a good thing. We recognize injustice not only against humans but against God. All the more, it grieves us of the fact that they are suppressing or destroying the very instrument that God is using for their own good. Now, why



don't we see the same amount of indignation or grief when people, including Christians, destroy or suppress another instrument of God, namely His creation, our environment?

This should cause a stir in Christians worldwide to actively pursue protecting and conserving the environment keeping in mind that this in itself is a part of God's mission, and as such, it is an essential responsibility of every Christian.

It is definitely a sin to deify the environment, which will amount to idolatry, and this could very well be the reason why Christians are lacking so much in environmental care: Why bother to join hands with a certain group to protect the environment (their deity)? Why risk taking a stand when it might give out a message of affirmation for idolatry? "There is an easy way out just believe in Jesus and stop caring about trivial matters, the world is dying anyways!" This sums up a typical Christian response to the environmental crisis around us. And yes, while it is true that believing in Jesus is the only way,

it is a sin to deify the environment. Still, even an idolatrous world experiences, without realizing, the reality of the consequences of sin when they see the destruction and exploitation of their environment. Even an idolatrous world longs for some kind of a savior and finds hope in someone like Greta Thunberg, a "woman who came from the heavens." The world will have a different reason for why they are doing what they are doing, but Christians have a biblical answer, the problem is sin that has distorted the creation, and yet the world will not die because a Saviour has already died and rose, our hope is not in the "women who came from the heavens" but in the One who actually came from heaven "Immanuel, God with us", the eternal Word who became flesh and dwelled among us. He saves us and calls us to be His hands and feet in this world. We have the great, unthinkable privilege to be stewards of his creation, faithfully and patiently, while we wait on Him, and in doing so, we also fulfill his commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves.



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# Treasure in Jars of Clay



*"Gold is most excellent, gold is treasure, and he who possesses it does all he wishes to in this world..." – Christopher Columbus, Four Voyages*

*"The man might have died in a fit; but then the jewels are missing," mused the Inspector, "Ha! I have a theory. These flashes come upon me at times... What do you think of this, Holmes? Sholto was, on his own confession, with his brother last night. The brother died in a fit, on which Sholto walked off the treasure! How's that?" "On which the dead man very considerably got up and locked the door on the inside," said Holmes." – Arthur Conan Doyle, The Sign of Four*

*"That was Flint's treasure that we had come so far to seek, and that had cost already the lives of seventeen men from the Hispaniola. How many it had cost in the amassing, what blood and sorrow, what good ships scuttled on the deep, what brave men walking the plank blindfold, what shot of cannon, what shame and lies and cruelty, perhaps no man alive could tell." – Robert Louis Stevenson, Treasure Island*

*"Not all treasure is silver and gold, mate." - Jack Sparrow, Pirates of the Caribbean*

**“W**here your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” 1 Cor.15:26, the Bible as well as in Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows.

When we look at the array of quotations from popular media, we see

that the the word “treasure” seems to have different connotations so to simplify it for us let’s look up a dictionary.

**Noun** - a quantity of precious metals, gems, or other valuable objects, a very valuable object



or a much loved or highly valued person.

**Verb** - keep carefully (a valuable or valued item), value highly.

When we check the given meaning, we see that a treasure is a valuable thing, something that deserves or requires to be well protected. Keeping these things in mind let us look into 2 Cor. 4.1-15. This letter is in many ways a letter of reconciliation, where Paul explains himself and his actions to the Corinthians who seem to have been misled by some others into thinking that Paul is not worth their attention. It was Paul who toiled amongst the Corinthians and helped them in their formative years. As he defends himself Paul tries to help them understand that he does not have any personal agenda here but rather his actions are rooted in this "treasure" that he possesses "in jars of clay".

Jars of Clay, in Calcutta often one would find these earthen vessels kept by the side of the road during summer times and anyone is free to drink the cool water from them. It is refreshing indeed. Jars of Clay are incredibly useful objects, especially in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. They were easy to make, relatively inexpensive but also easily broken.

One wonders then why would Paul paint this word picture for

us – Treasure in Jars of Clay. On one hand, we have a precious and highly valuable object that needs to be protected and on the other, we are talking about its container which is a common everyday used item, cheap and easily broken, what kind of dichotomy is this?

Yet at the same time, one also has to remember that treasures have this ability to transform things around them.

The moment the treasure is kept inside the jar of clay – the value of that jar becomes as precious as that treasure itself. Now if the treasure is sought the jar is sought and if the treasure is to be protected jars need to be protected.

You see that treasure inside the jar has suddenly transferred its worth or value to the humble jar also.

It's similar in ways to an egg, as long as the egg is not boiled, we are careful not to damage its shell, but the moment we boil it and have to get the egg inside of its shell, the shell is broken up quickly and thrown into the dustbin. Similarly, no one pays much attention to a random empty envelope falling from the table but the moment an envelope containing a cheque or an important letter falls, we waste no time getting it back and under some paperweight.

A glass bottle is just that but with a dark and fizzy liquid inside it could well be a Coke, its value increases manifold. It is not just with objects it is similar with people too, Messi and Dhoni would be just like any other guy if not for the sporting skills in them. Bill Gates or Mark Zuckerberg would also be just like any other college dropouts if not for their skills in coding. **What's inside gives worth or value to what's outside!**

Consider with me for a moment a few questions:

1. Who or what do we aspire to be? What is our understanding of success?
2. What is the purpose of our possessions or pleasure-giving habits?
3. Will we lose our identity if we fail in our aspirations or lack some of our much-valued possessions?
4. Why do we seek to be fairer, fitter, smarter and richer?
5. Will others accept us if we lack any of these things? Will we accept ourselves?

What is your treasure? Remember that treasures have this innate ability to transform their containers. How is your treasure impacting you? It can be anything, it can be your ideas or philosophies, habits, or activities. We seek to fill up the emptiness within our treasure

chests with these and often they end up transforming us in ways we did not initially desire.

One would think that the rich and educated will be satisfied but history and current affairs tell us they are involved in costly and more mind-boggling scams. The emptiness within demands to be filled. It's an innate desire of every human - we seek fulfilment.

*"What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace?"*

*This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words, by God himself" - Blaise Pascal's Pensées*

Thus, we all are in one way or the other an empty jar. Paul also describes himself as a man who is like a jar of clay – easily molded by external agents and often broken down to pieces yet the treasure that he receives not only fulfils him but fills him with passion and conviction amidst trials and terrors (2 Cor. 5:8-10).

During trying times, Paul's treasure has sustained him, never left him





alone but rather empowered him to press and overcome. It gave him hope when there was none, it was his foundation and his anchor. Do the treasures we hold onto do the same for us?

Paul's treasure does not force upon him an obligation to conform neither does it judge him for being a persecutor but rather it makes itself at home in whatever little place Paul can give. The treasure that Paul possesses here is the gospel of the risen Christ. This good news was the treasure Paul received by grace through faith and with this treasure in his jar of clay, he could see that the emptiness within is filled. There was a joy that was complete, a peace that was complete, and a love that was complete.

When we see Paul's life we see him transformed, from someone who killed Christ-followers to someone who shared Christ with others. We see his treasure endure despite accusations, public beatings, Roman prisons and even a shipwreck. We see his treasure build him up to be someone who built instead of someone who was broken. This is

what the gospel does to us, this is what it has done to me as well.

We are all like jars of clay and within us all there is a treasure, the difference is that some of our treasures have been causing strife within us and outside as well much like Captain Flint's treasure in *The Treasure Island*. The question before us then is, 'which treasure will we keep in our Jar of Clay?' Will we continue with our treasures or will we turn our hearts and allow the gospel to permeate within us and make us anew?

This gospel of Grace is described by Dietrich Bonhoeffer as *"the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble; it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him."* He goes on to say that it *"is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock."*

Are you ready to knock?



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# Stewards with Kingdom Values

God has an intent for each and every one of our lives. Any area, sphere, or facet of our existence may serve as the source of His calling. Every life that God has fashioned has a specific goal for which he sent us to the earth. Within itself, creation is a miracle of God that shows the character of our heavenly Father. His divine insight concerning creation is always superior to anything our feeble minds can understand or surpass. Discipline, obedience, and holy life are vital for surrender to Christ. God's calling can have something to do with our profession, a particular vocation, or even both. Stewardship is a core obligation and is fundamental for Christian living on earth. All of us are key stakeholders entrusted with resources by our Master. To exploit our potentials to their fullest, the Most High has given us freewill. The following outlines a few of the areas where stewardship can be demonstrated and is frequently disregarded.

## 1) Stewards of Environment

The diversity that the Artist envisioned while creating each snippet of the infinite universe is still a marvel to behold. The fragrance of clean earth after a heavy downpour, the way the ocean waves curve up



into a satin wrap as they hug the land, cotton candy-like clouds, the myriad color palette woven into a rainbow, the gushing sound of streams, the crystal-clear waterfalls, the majestic mountains coated in greenery along as the bed of snow, the cool and eerily quiet forests, the sturdy rocks, the splendor of the rising sun in the early hours and the crimson glow of the evening sun are just a few examples that declare how exquisitely beautiful, considerate, and highly detailed the workmanship of God is. How fortunate we are to be able to experience all of nature while we are travelling in this tent made of earth! In Genesis 1:28, scripture urges and mandates that we should protect nature. His calling never grants us the authority to abuse the diverse elements of nature, mishandle, mislead, or destroy them but to ultimately transfer the resources on to the subsequent generation. Some of us waste water, spit and



urinate in public, dump garbage all over, release waste into rivers, create noise pollution, harm animals, cut down trees, burn trash, upset our neighbors thoughtlessly, and destroy the ecosystem. All such behaviour patterns are actually considered “okay” by most people.

The solution is to live consciously. Avoid littering, contaminating water supplies and the environment, making efforts to keep the area clean, being friendlier to people and animals, and, most importantly, practicing “live and let live.”

## 2) **Stewards of Treasure**

Both, the OT and NT provide extensive information about managing wealth and stories of those who inflicted destruction upon themselves out of the love for riches. Even Jesus’ tale of the rich fool instructs us not to hoard money for the uncertain future. Cherish what you possess instead of yearning for what you lack are just a handful of the remarkable insights and teachings found in Ecclesiastes chapter 6. Achan, son of Carmi, who stole the loot designated for the Lord and taught us that hunger for riches is equivalent to calling for active ruin (I Timothy 6:9,10). God has placed each of us in a distinct set of financial circumstances. As followers of Christ, it’s crucial

that we submit our finances for Kingdom purposes. The first step in demonstrating financial stewardship is setting aside one-tenth of our income deliberately (Malachi 3:10-18). God desires for his children to have a generous heart, especially toward the destitute, widows, and fatherless (Proverbs 28:27, 11:25). To distinguish between “want” and “need,” seek the Holy Spirit’s counsel, and then allow God to guide you. Whatever we have is a gift of God’s grace, and when we are richly blessed, it is our duty to use it for the sake of the Kingdom and the glory of God, particularly at a time when many mission areas are battling to stay afloat. When we are walking through this transient sanctuary, having wealth and becoming wealthy seem foolish pursuits to have, especially when we consider the eternal riches that await us as believers. The devil’s plan is to get us to fall for his trick of loving and chasing wealth. Remember: “A good person leaves an inheritance for their children’s children, but a sinner’s wealth is stored up for the righteous” (Proverbs 13:22).

## 3) **Stewards of Time**

One of the most undervalued Christian stewardship principles is time management. Our time is numbered in God’s hands from the

moment we are sewn together in our mother's womb (Psalms 31:15).

Each day brings us renewed grace so that we may use it wisely. As we move nearer to the Lord, one of our main priorities should be to spend the time we have wisely in this rapidly advancing world. Due to the upsurge in media addiction, it is easy to become lost. Since time is money, at least ten percent of each day should be devoted to reading the Bible, maturing in it, praying, and praising God. Our Heavenly Father is expecting our symphony of prayers to reach Him every day. When the Creator of the sun, moon, stars, and entire cosmos decided that one of you also had a purpose to be placed on earth, just think of the conversations you could have with Him daily since He knew us before we were even conceived (Jeremiah 1:5). To doubt our lives is to doubt God's perfect will. If you are daily pursuing the will of the Holy Spirit, you will be aware of the reason you were called, and you will exhibit the gifts of the Spirit in your life as a response of obeying Him.

The Bible encourages us to be mindful of the hours and times. 'Right now,' is what we hold in our hands. Tomorrow is not guaranteed, so we cannot lay off the tasks that God has given us to accomplish (Proverbs 27:1). Even though

you might feel ready and willing to defend the Lord "tomorrow," your vocation was for "today," and the opportunity you lost has undoubtedly passed.

Similar to the tale of the five virgins who did not carry oil, we will pay the price for not being watchful enough to be prepared every day for Jesus' return (Matthew 24:44). Most significantly, as the adage goes, "Time and tide wait for no one," which emphasizes that time lost is lost forever.

#### **4) Stewards of Talent**

Every person is a masterpiece in God's eyes and is sent with God given gifts.

Our capabilities organically develop as a consequence of the situations in which we find ourselves and also the support we obtain to pursue them. However, a person may possess many more gifts than they are aware of. Only the Holy God, who created us, is acquainted of our true potential for He is the one who wove our soul. Praying to God about our talents can be helpful if we want to comprehend them. The most essential thing is to faithfully use our gifts, no matter how insignificant we may think they are. Do whatever you do—whether it's singing, dancing, praying, serving, or conversing—as though it were for the Lord



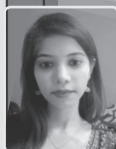
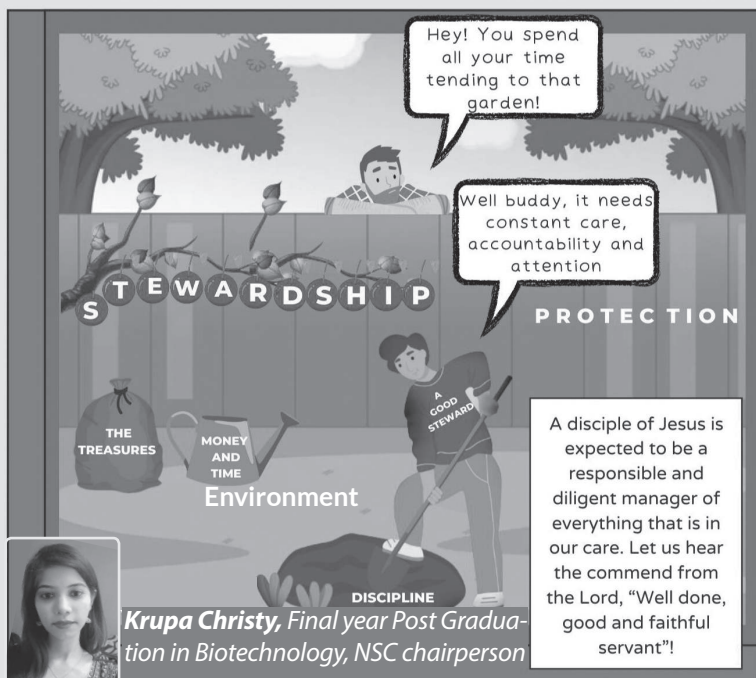
(Colossians 3:23). Don't merely use your talent for its own sake. Instead, use them in conformity with the Master's flawless will while feeling grateful. There will undoubtedly be a day when we must settle our accounts with the Almighty, who laid the earth's foundation and set its dimension. Nurture your talents so that you can bear fruits for the Kingdom of God.

God intends for us to be courageous enough to confront our anxieties and be faithful in whatever he wants us to put our focus on during various seasons. As the Holy Spirit dwells within a follower of Christ, He disciplines us so that, when He takes control of the situation, we will be better managers.



**Sruthi V Roy**, Completed BTech from TKM College of Engineering and MTech from IIT Bhubaneswar. Currently working as Junior Research Fellow at NIT Surathkal EU group: NIT Surathkal

## HIS BELONGINGS, WE THE CARETAKERS...



**Krupa Christy**, Final year Post Graduation in Biotechnology, NSC chairperson

"The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it". Genesis 2:15



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## UESI PUBLICATION TRUST

Published by Mr. Saji Easo & Printed by Mr. D. Devavaram on behalf of UESI PUBLICATION TRUST.

Printed at Meipporul Achakam, No.278, Konnur High Road, Ayanavaram, Chennai 600 023.

Published from New No. 19, Old No. 10, Millers Road, Kilpauk, Chennai 600 010.

Editor Mr. T. Athma Soruban.