

Lesson One**I SHALL NOT WANT**

Read Psalm 23

The twenty-third Psalm begins with a startling proposition. Verse one teaches that God is your shepherd, therefore you have no needs. In other words, since the Lord of the universe is caring for you, then you can trust Him to provide for you. Too often the truth of this kind of passage is blunted by concentrating on what it does not mean. The logic goes something like this:

The psalm cannot mean that we are not supposed to work but just lie around all day. Obviously, I have to do something. Therefore, the statement is to be taken in a spiritual sense, that God will watch over my spiritual needs. So I don't have to worry about that. But I do have to worry about my work responsibilities.

When the focus is only on what the psalm does not mean, the psalm is robbed of its power. The powerful message for stewardship is easily missed. Jesus taught that one should seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all the physical needs will be taken care of as well. (Matt. 6:33)



Read Matthew 6:25-34

This passage has the same thrust as Psalm 23:1 and often suffers the same handling — stressing what it does not mean at the expense of what it does mean.

YOU ARE A STEWARD

God calls you to be a steward. This means that He wants you to take care of something. He is placing something in your care. The Scriptures teach that God has placed you, His child, in charge of something that is His. He expects you to take care of this charge. Christ has endowed His church with gifts and abilities that He expects will be cultivated and used for the glory of God. Therefore



1 Making the Most of Every Opportunity™

you are a steward. You have gifts and abilities. You have an obligation to use these for God. Jesus addresses this very point in the parable of the talents.



Read Matthew 26:14-30

OF WHAT, THEN, ARE YOU A STEWARD ?

Think of what would happen if your whole family and church began to use these talents from God for His glory and His kingdom. What a marvelous impact this would have on your community for the cause of Christ!

With all this ability available, why is it that we don't make more of an impact for Christ?

Ah, here is the catch. If you and your family and your church are to use these talents for God and not only for yourselves, it will cost you something. You see, it might appear that you cannot afford to use your talents for God and His service. After all, you have your own needs to worry about.

One of the primary objectives of this course on Stewardship is to help you see that you cannot afford not to spend the energy to be a good steward. You are here on God's timetable, not yours. Examine again Matthew 25: 24-30.



Slowly read Matthew 25:24-30

God wants you to work, provide for your family, plan for the future and be responsible. Yet He wants you to do these things with the understanding that He is the One Who has given you these responsibilities. He wants you to make the most of these opportunities for His glory. You have the time to be a good steward. If you are not a good steward, what will be lost? Think about this.

If you do what God wants He will take care of you. This is the real point of Matthew 6:33 and Psalm 23:1.



Read Matthew 6:33 & Psalm 23:1



You see these passages powerfully promise you that God is committed to you. You may think that you cannot tithe because you can't afford to. God says that He knows what you need and He will care for you as you seek His Kingdom first. He says that He is your Shepherd. Therefore, you will be well cared for.

The world, your flesh and the devil will all tell you that you cannot afford to invest your talents, your gifts and your abilities in the service of Christ the King. God, your Shepherd, tells you that you can do nothing less.

REVIEW

What mission has God given you?

The Apostle Paul became content because he was on God's mission. He was a steward of what God had given him. He became a man of peace and confidence in His God. This is one of the many benefits of being a faithful steward. Paul concerned himself with how to serve God in any situation and with the resources God had given him at that moment. Paul was keenly aware that God was his active Shepherd!



Read Phil. 4:4-13; focus on content in verse 11.

This is what happens when you are consumed with stewardship. You seek the Lord's welfare and not your own. The confidence that comes from being on this mission results in a settledness to life that can be found nowhere else.

This course will cover many aspects of stewardship. There will be examples from church history. You will be given instruction about being a faithful steward in your family. You will learn about stewardship of time, money and gifts. Pray with me that God will use this time to increase our desire and ability to please Him.

