

THE BIBLE ON STEWARDSHIP: Some Key Passages

For use in Bible study, sermon preparation, stewardship training and theme selection

These ten passages are from a broader selection that appears in Inspiring Generosity, a stewardship resource from the United Church of Christ.

2 Samuel 24:24

Knowing the quality of life made possible by the power of God, David is not about to give less than his best—something possible for all of us, and irreplaceable when we know our own blessing. He is not about to make an offering to God that, in effect, costs him nothing.

1 Chronicles 29:1-19

About the giving required to build the temple, the house of God. “For all things come from you, [O Lord,] and of your own have we given you.” (v. 14b) Leaders must “walk the talk,” letting their own generosity be an example and inspiration to others.

Malachi 3:6-10

God’s house—in those days, the temple— was the place from which the produce, the abundance, of the land was redistributed. Dereliction in fulfilling one’s rightful “tithe” upset the harmony that alone could assure prosperity in the land. Restoration of this commitment will issue in “overflowing blessing” for all. (v. 10) Don’t let argument about “tithing”—giving a tenth of annual giving—upstage the main point about giving, its motivation and outcome: generosity comes from an experience of “abundance,” the blessing of which is literally lost unless shared with others, and impossible to gain alone.



Matthew 6:19-21

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (v. 21) Faith and money are two sides of the same coin. Where the one is, the other is also. We easily pretend otherwise, making faith immaterial or money unspiritual.

Matthew 14:13-21 (see also Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:1-14)

Jesus feeding the five thousand with “nothing here but five loaves and two fish.” (v. 17) Often thinking we don’t have enough, we fail to see and take seriously what we already have. It is from what we have, not what we don’t, that we find what we need...and then some!

Luke 12:13-21, 48

The parable of the rich fool is clear: life’s abundance does not consist in possessions. Those who “store up treasures for themselves” (v. 21) become victims of anxiety, always wondering if they have enough. Real security is found—and the true richness of life experienced—not in guarding what we have

but in giving what we can. “Abundance” is not a private possession but a shared experience.

Luke 16:1-13

Easily confusing, this parable of the shrewd steward is also provocative. It emphasizes the importance of being astute in using possessions so as to gain rather than lose one’s future. There is no way to acquire money that is pure and perfect, unsullied by questionable means and motives. That should not become a pious excuse to avoid responsibility for its wise use.

I Corinthians 4:1-2

The word rendered “servants” means, literally, “under-rowers.” The figure is that of a ship impelled by oars under the command of a captain. “Stewards” as “servants [or ministers] of Christ” labor under the inspiration of the truth about life—“God’s mysteries”—disclosed in Jesus. Their most important quality, given the challenge involved, is fidelity, *faithfulness*—staying true to the cost and joy of an understanding of life at odds with prevailing sensibility. (See Isaiah 40:29-31 and Matthew 11:29-30).

Galatians 5:22-23a (NRSV)

“Abundance” is the truth about life made known in the spirit or disposition of Jesus, the driving force of the church. So Paul says in these verses that “generosity” is part of the “fruit” of the Spirit. It is impossible to turn on the lights of greater giving when the power is off...or low. Morale, or what the church calls Spirit, is “the power that turns on the lights”—and the number one stewardship challenge!

Ephesians 3:1-21

Contrary to what God’s people often believed, outsiders (“Gentiles”) not just insiders (“Jews”) have always been part of the divine plan wherein *all* are meant to know the good news of abundant life. Paul sees himself as making this “mystery” plain. He prays that the power of God at the heart of life—part of “the boundless riches of Christ” (v. 8)—make us “bold and confident” (v.12) so that we may be “filled with all the fullness of God” (v. 19), which is the fullness of life (John 10:10).