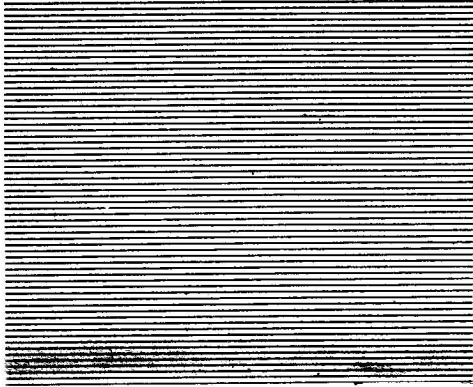
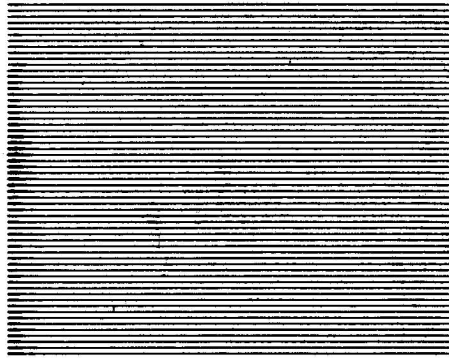
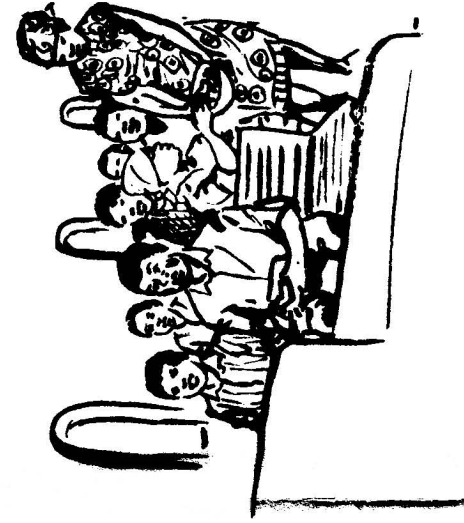




A CHRISTIAN LOOKS AT HIS STEWARDSHIP



SUMMARY:

Now that you have finished reading this book there are questions for you. These are very important questions. The first question is not have you finished the book only, or did you understand the teachings, or do you agree with the teachings as being true and good. The important question is, 'Will you now follow the important things of Christian stewardship in all of your life?'

If you agree that your giving will be worthy of good stewardship, find a quiet place to pray to God and promise Him that you will follow His purpose in stewardship of all your life. What is required of stewards is that they be found faithful. (1 Corinthians 4:2)

A CHRISTIAN LOOKS AT HIS STEWARDSHIP

of our stewardship such as our life, and the Gospel.

A. Questions to Discuss:

1. In what way are you able to increase your giving? _____
2. In your work, what things can you put to the side so that you will not forget your giving? _____
3. What needs does your church have in the usage of its money? _____
4. What plan is your church following in counting, taking care, and giving a report about its offerings? _____

B. Important Verses:

1. Ephesians 6:5-7
2. I Corinthians 4:2

4. Other needs such as help for sick, and the poor should be considered from time to time. Giving to the association and convention is very important. Also to try to begin new work to preach the Gospel in a place near the church is of most importance. Maybe this can be done by joining with other churches to begin a new preaching point.

e) The fifth step is to help the church members to measure their giving. Following are suggestions concerning this plan:

1. This plan should not be done as a tax or a necessity placed upon the member.
2. The plan should not be considered as an act such as baptism or the Lord's Supper or marriage.
3. The plan of giving should not be to praise God in front of other people.
4. The plan of giving will be increased if the member realizes that he is a steward of God and a member of the church.
5. The plan of giving should help each member give with a plan. His giving should be such as is worthy of his stewardship.
6. The plan of giving should be such as shows that financial giving is in relationship to other parts

INDEX

Introduction.....	(i)
Who are you before God?.....	1
You are a steward of all your life.	8
You are a giver before God.....	14
You and the tithe.....	21
Ways to plan your giving.....	27
Summary.....	34

Published and printed by
Baptist Publications House
Box 30370, Likoni Rd., Nairobi

Copyright 2005
International Publications Services
- All Rights Reserved -
This Manuscript and Computer File
are under copyright by
International Publications Services
P.O. Box 1759
Edenvale 1610
Republic of South Africa

for the treasurer to keep the offering in a box in his home because from time to time this money can be stolen or used by those who do not have the responsibility of keeping it.

d) The fourth step is to plan concerning the needs of the church for an entire year and to meet the needs of the church with the amount of offering that is available. Every member should know the financial state of the church. Every church should measure and consider, seriously, the way that it is going. Their needs will probably be as follows:

1. The needs of the church building. Possibly the first need is to build or maybe to repair. Maybe the church needs painting. There are also expenses of water, and electricity in the town.

2. Needs of literature for the church. Books for Sunday School, for adults, children, and teachers. Song-books are needed so that people will be able to sing better and also books for the women's organizations are needed. Also the church should have for new members the book "Your Life and Your Church," so that they can know more about their faith.

3. The needs of the pastor. The church should support the one who spends his time in the work of the church and depends on the church for his salary. The church should agree to support their pastor and try to meet their agreement. Also, whatever needs concerned with his travel, the church should try to assume.

If we try to give our money in a way that helps the work of God, we need also to take care of and to use that money in a way that is worthy for the work of the Lord.

a) The first step is to take care of the offerings in a good way. The church should have a finance record book and every receipt should be written in it. Also more than one person should count the money and sign the book on the date of every offering. Again, you could have a plan of giving receipts to those who give their offering. This would serve as a receipt that would help them to keep account of their giving.

b) The second step is to instruct the treasurer to give a regular report in business meetings of the church. This should be done every month if the church meets in business meetings every month. The report should show every receipt and every payment that was made. Also it should show the balance that is in the treasury of the church.

c) The third step is to plan a way to keep the money so that it would not be stolen or lost. Those in churches in town have no problem because they are able to put a good portion of their offering into a bank or the post office. Also those who do not live near the town, are able to send their money by a faithful member when he goes for his business in the town. Other churches ask their missionary to help them to take care of their money. It is very dangerous

INTRODUCTION

When A Christian Looks at His Stewardship has been written for the purpose of helping Christians to grow.

This book was prepared the first time in 1968 by Dr. Davis Saunders. It was used in a stewardship crusade in the Baptist churches of East Africa. Many church leaders have asked that it be put into English and printed again to help Christians to continue in their stewardship.

The book has been written for the purpose of helping pastors and churches and other leaders to teach their members about stewardship.

It has also been written so that any Christian who wants to fulfill his purpose before God can understand more his responsibility as a steward of God.

Dr. Davis Saunders has lived in Africa since 1953. Now Dr. Saunders is Area Secretary for Eastern and Southern Africa with the Foreign Mission Board of the Baptist Church.

Or you will be able to take a portion of your harvest to the market and sell it for the church.

b) Another way is to divide your shamba so that a part of it is for the Lord and all of that you harvest will be given to the church. Or if you sell it you will bring the money from that portion of the shamba to the church. Also you could bring the harvest from that portion of the shamba to the church to be sold by the leaders.

c) Another way is to give a certain amount of your time to work extra and the money you receive from that extra work, you can bring to the Lord.

d) Another way is for a group of people who have divided up the shamba of the church to farm and bring the increase. It appears that the first way is the best way. This way is for every man to determine his income and to bring a tithe on it.

Also, do not forget to bring farm animals, chickens, eggs, or whatever we have for God as our offering.

2. The way to use the offerings in the work of the Lord.

First, you as a member of the church have a part in the way of keeping and using the money that comes from the membership.

work and not be a dishonor to him or to our God.

The business man will need to work very hard to measure his giving for the Lord in the same way because many times he has to know what his profit and his total income is. If he wants to increase his giving, he needs to increase his business ability by using principles that are honest and good.

The farmer needs to remember that his income is not just the money on the harvest that he sells, but on all that he has. That what he sells, but also that which he keeps to feed his family.

The farmer is able to increase his income also by being a better farmer. If he follows better methods of farming and if he uses better kinds of seeds, he will have a greater harvest. Also he can increase his income if he can find a way to add to his farm.

Also he should be able to find a good way to measure his giving to God. People use various ways. Several ways will be explained now:

a) One way is to bring that which you feel is the tithe from the increase of all your harvest. You are able to sell part of it in the market and to bring the tithe on that money to the church, or you are able to bring part of the produce to the church and the leaders of the church will be able to sell it at the church, or in the market.

CHAPTER ONE

WHO ARE YOU BEFORE GOD?

1. You are the property of God.

David, the King of Israel, said in psalms 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein". This is the foundation for the life of every man. When you look at the world in which you live, everything that you see, has been created by Almighty God. Every bird, every animal, every tree, every flower. When you travel upon a road and see all whom you meet, you can know that they've all been created by God. Every man, every woman, every old man, every young man, and every child have been created by God. When you see where you are and the state in which you are, understand that you were created by God.

Consider every night when you sleep that your safety is in the Hands of the Almighty God. Also every morning when you awake, and breath in the fresh air and go into a new day, remember that it is God who permits you to live.

You need to understand that you should depend on God for all of your life. Every task that you do, every word that you say and every thought that you think is because of the power that God has given you. Without the power that God gives us, we cannot continue to live.

Answer these questions: Does the hoe go to the field without the farmer? Does the pencil write a letter without the hand of the writer? Does the car go on safari without the driver to drive it? In the same way, we should depend on God for all that we have. God has full control over you. In Romans 11:36, it says, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever."

2. Everything that you have comes from God.

In James 1:17 we read, "Every good and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father." Here the Bible speaks a very important thought for every Christian. You need to understand from where what you have, comes.

Many of the people are farmers and they understand the necessity of the sun, the rain, and a good harvest if they are to earn what they need to live. In Acts 14:17 we read, "He did not leave Himself without witness for He did good and gave you from Heaven rains and fruitful seasons satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."

Many times we see people who have much greater need than we do. We see those who do not have food, clothing, or a home, or any joy whatsoever. We have enough to make us rejoice. We do not live naked. We do not die because of hunger. We have a place to live. Who is it that makes this possible? Is it not

CHAPTER FIVE

WAYS TO PLAN YOUR GIVING

1. The way to measure and to increase your giving.

First you should seek God's will in your giving. Before you decide, return and study the Bible. Also study about your wealth as it has been taught in the first four chapters in this book. What is God leading you to do? Is He leading you to give the tithe out of choice with joy generously and with a plan? What amount will you give every week or every month? Or do you say it doesn't matter what I give?

The man who lives in town receives a salary of money and he has no problem in knowing how to measure the tithe. His problem is knowing how to increase what he receives so that he can increase his giving. He should be faithful in his work so that his salary would be increased and his position would let him be able to give more. The teaching of Paul in Ephesians 6:5-7 about servants can help us as workers who receive a salary. It says, "Slaves be obedient to those who are your earthly masters with fear and trembling in singleness of heart as to Christ. Not in the way of eye service, as men pleasers, but servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to men." In like manner our employer will be happy if we are faithful in our

B. Important Verses:

1. Luke 12:48
2. Malachi 3:8-12
3. Luke 11:42
4. Luke 18:12
5. Mark 10:17-22
6. Matthew 6:33

God who gives us these things? Many times we see those who are not able to take care of themselves; the sick, the blind, the lame, and others. The spirits of others are often broken because of sickness, or an accident along the way, or some other reason. And what about us? Do we not continue to be happy and have enough to live.

For a truth, all of our blessings of our life, the strength that we have, and everything that we have, come from God.

3. Our Salvation comes from God.

Do you as a Christian have something that is more important than every other thing in your life? If you consider all the days of your life through the many years, you will say without a doubt, "My eternal life is the greatest thing that I have." Because without eternal life, all of these other things mean nothing. But if you consider it with all your heart, without a doubt you will say, "My eternal life and salvation are the most important."

Where does eternal life and your salvation come from? In I Corinthians 6:19-20 the Word of God says, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you which you have from God? You are not your own. You were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." The God who created us has done more than just create us. He has given us a way to be strong. He knew

the power of sin and Satan and He prepared a way to overcome sin and Satan. Because He knew the wages of sin to be death, He has opened the door that we might overcome the wages of sin, that is we might know His salvation. He sent His Son, His beloved, that He might die on the cross for your sake. You receive the privilege of being saved and entering eternal life.

Without God and His salvation, what hope do you have? Would you not just live on your own spirit without any hope? Those who do not know God and Christ, do not have any way but to fear death. But the Christian knows that he has entered into eternal life.

4. Every man will give his account before Almighty God.

Even though we understand eternal life, and the hope that every Christian has, let us not forget one very important thing. Every man will leave life on earth when he dies. Some people will live for a very long time. Others will not spend much time here on earth, and when that time comes in your life, how will it be with you?

The Apostle Paul, talking about the Holy Spirit, said in Romans 14:12 a very important thought, "So each of us shall give an account of himself to God." In this verse, there are two very important matters.

and for other expenses. The payment of these things is not profit, but it is necessary expense to get what you have.

- e) Remember that he who has a desire to reduce his giving every time can do so. But he needs to look into his heart and its state. Does he want to give less or does he want to give more?

Are you able to understand these things yourself? Do you give the tithe to your church? With what kind of heart do you measure your tithe?

A. Questions to Discuss:

1. Is the Christian required to follow the Law of the Old Testament?
2. Does the church need to follow any other way to get its money other than the tithe and the offerings?
3. How many ways are there to determine about the tithe usage in your church?
4. How are you able to measure your receipts in such a way that you will know how much your tithe ought to be?

10:22 of whom Jesus said, "He went his way sorrowfully because he had much wealth." He put his own life, his needs, his own will, his wealth first, and God came next. But we should hear the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:33 as he said, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

4. The way to measure your tithe.

Maybe you say "I would give the tithe, but I do not know how to measure it." There are five things to consider when measuring the tithe.

a) Remember that the tithe is not a tax to be added down as far as you can, without breaking the law. If you measure your tax, for a certainty you will measure it in the smallest way possible. This should not be the way with our giving for God.

b) Determine your salary or the profit for every period of time. The business man should add up his profit and not all that he has received. Food or any other thing should be remembered.

c) The farmer should measure the tenth of all his harvest. Not just the tenth of the money on that which he sold, but the tenth on the total. Again, do not forget the profit on farm animals, chickens and eggs.

d) Take away the amount of money that you've used for seed, for fertilizer,

First, the question that we should ask is, "Am I a Christian or not?" You know for certain that one day you shall stand in judgement. All the things of your life will be known plainly. Those things that you did in darkness or in secret, the things you did that were good, and the things that were bad. Every act, great or small, will be made known in the time of the judgement.

Secondly, in front of whom will this judgement be? We will stand in front of God Himself. You are able to know that this judgement will not be before our mother or father, nor before our brother or sister, or our pastor or our missionary. Neither will it be before the judgement of our government. It will be before Him to whom we belong. It will be before Him who is the owner of all things, He who has given you your salvation and eternal life.

Because of this He has control over you. Honor God, worship Him, be used of Him, love Him, and obey His will. Answer this important question: What kind of person are you before God?

5. Every Christian needs to be a faithful steward.

Because of much teaching, the work he has to do and because of who the Christian is, he needs to be faithful. There is an example in I Corinthians 4:1-2 which has been written to explain this fact. "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and

stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy." Again in I Peter 4:10 we read, "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another as good stewards of God's varied grace."

The Bible has explained that every Christian is given the stewardship of all of his health, his strength, his ability, his wealth, and all that he has received. There is no part that we can put aside and say that God has no ability over this thing or that thing. Remember the rich man in the explanation of Jesus in Luke 12:20-21 when God said, "Fool, this night your soul is required of you and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?"

If man forgets or refuses to accept the Word of God and tries to hide himself from it, he cannot avoid this truth. And if the Christian does not agree with the teachings and the truths of God, and the many blessings that come from God he fails to understand the foundation of his faith.

Have you understood that you are the property of God? Have you understood that all things that you have come from God? Have you understood that your salvation has been given to you by God? Do you understand that you are to stand before God in His judgement one day? If you say yes for these four questions, you understand why you need to be a faithful steward in all of your life.

a) Others say that a Christian is still following the Old Testament and the Christian is required to follow the law that says give. In Malachi 3:8, 10 it says that a person who does not give the tenth is actually stealing from God, His part.

b) Others say that Jesus did not dispute the tithe, but that He followed it Himself and because of this we should follow it also as a custom that is not bad.

c) Others say that the tithe is of the Old Testament and the Hebrews. That it does not have any meaning for Christians and because of this a man does not have to give. The important thing is to give in joy. But if you give much more or less than the tithe, it is your affair.

d) Others understand more when they say, "It is not required because of the law, but because of our life as a Christian. Because of the fact we are stewards of God, we cannot give less than the Hebrews." Also Christ went to the cross and out of love we should give a tenth or more. Because of our stewardship to preach the Gospel for all people on this earth, it requires us to give generously. Also because God has blessed us, we give to Him generously. It should not be a burden for us to give. The foundation of giving the tithe is the heart and not the Law.

The man who does not want to give resembles the rich young man in Mark

faithful Hebrew brought all that the Law required up to one-fourth.

2. The tithe in the New Testament.

The tithe in the New Testament is mentioned four times only. One time it is in Hebrews 7:4-9 about the Old Testament. Three times, Jesus mentioned the tithe. This was in Matthew 23:23, Luke 11:42, and Luke 18:12. These three times were an explanation about the Pharisees and how that they gave the tithe but forgot other important matters. This explanation talked about the customs of the Hebrews. There is one word in an explanation that Jesus used in Matthew 23:23. He said, "These you ought to have done without neglecting the others." He did not say that you should not give the tithe. He was saying here that along with other things, it is very important.

If we understand about Jesus, Peter, Paul and others, we know that without a doubt they held to the Law of the Hebrews and one of the Laws that his giving should be the tithe.

3. Four ways to determine about the tithe.

Because there is no complete law in the New Testament for Christians and because many Christians do not follow the requirements of the Hebrew, what do you say concerning this matter?

A. Questions to Discuss:

1. What do you have in your life that you have received through the help of God? _____
2. Are you able to do anything without God's help? _____
3. Are you able to do anything to hide from the judgement of God? _____
4. In what way are you able to show your thankfulness to God for His many blessings? _____

B. Important Verses:

1. Romans 11:36
2. James 1:17
3. Acts 14:17
4. I Corinthians 6:19-20
5. Romans 14:12
6. I Corinthians 4:1-2
7. I Peter 4:10

YOU ARE A STEWARD OF ALL YOUR LIFE

1. All your life shows your faith.

The customs of Africans are different than their friends because of tribe, country and even religion. A man who understands the customs of a certain tribe, understands that tribe because of the face of its people, the signs of the body, or the way a man files his teeth. Also a man's relationship to Jesus Christ shows through signs in his life. The Apostle James explained this truth when he wrote in James 2:18, "But someone will say, 'you have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith apart from your works and I by my works will show you my faith."

His reason for saying this to you, as a Christian, is that you are not able to make a difference between your Christianity and your works. They need to be the same. If at work or at home, or in the field, or on the road, everything that you do and everything that you say, witnesses your Christianity. When other people see you they will learn about your Christianity. If you are a good Christian only on Sunday, they will know. If you are humble before the important people and harsh on the servants, your wife, or your children, it is plain before everyone.

Remember that your life is a stewardship, that you should use as a

YOU AND THE TITHE

A writer Robert Hastings, has explained very well the teachings about the Christian that the tithe is his method of giving. He stated that the foundation of any giving is found in Luke 12:48, In the second part of verse 48 we read, "Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required and of him to whom men commit much, they will demand the more." Because Christians have received their salvation and the blessings of knowing God, they should give with generosity and love. But how much? Should they give one part of ten parts? Let us first look at the tithe in the Bible. The word tithe is used in the Bible as one part of ten which should be given for God.

1. The tithe in the Old Testament.

This word was first mentioned as the method of giving for the sake of God in Genesis 14:18-20. It was given by Abraham because of the help that God had given him in war. Also Jacob gave a tenth to God in Genesis 28:22. Under the leadership of Moses the tithe became a part of the Law of the Hebrews. Read Numbers 18:26 and Leviticus 27:30-32 and again the teachings from Malachi 3:8-12. Teachers of the Old Testament say that the faithful Hebrews brought their tithe twice every year and one time every third year. This made a total that was near a fourth of what one had. But the

3. When your money is put into the church, it is used for what work?
-

B. Important Verses:

1. I Timothy 5:8
2. Luke 16:11
3. II Corinthians 8:5,8
4. II Corinthians 9:17
5. Mark 12:41-44
6. Matthew 6:1-4
7. Acts 11:29
8. I Corinthians 16:2
9. Matthew 23:23
10. II Corinthians 8:14b
11. Romans 10:13-15

witness of works for good. You do not want to be a servant who does not bring profit to your Lord. This is a very important way to show your stewardship.

Actions, words, and thoughts that are not known by another man at all, are known by God. Thus you become a steward before God on even your thoughts. You will answer for all things when you stand before God. Do you want stewardship of all your life to bring sorrow in the day of judgement, or joy and praise? It is necessary that you decide between these two ways.

2. Your time is from God.

It has been mentioned how your life depends upon God. This life is divided into years, months, days, and hours. Every year that you live is in the will of God. Every day that you have has been on permission from He who created you. Every hour that you have, use for whatever business God has given you.

God in His plan of creating this earth, has stated that one day in seven is holy for His use. In Exodus 20:8 we read, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Do not think that this word is for the children of Israel only. But look to Luke 4:16 where Jesus said, "And He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up, and He went to the synagogue as His custom was on the Sabbath day and He stood up to read." Also the disciples of Christ themselves followed His teachings as they continued

to set aside one day in the week in which to worship. In I Corinthians 16:2 Christians are told, "On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper so that contributions need not be made when I come." Again in Acts 20:7 it is written, "On the first day of the week when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them." Because of this you have a stewardship of every day in your life. You are not able to honor God with purpose and use that day as you please to plow in your field, or to harvest or to sell, earn and buy in business as you do on the other six days. The person who forgets this very important thing has forgotten that his stewardship is to follow the will of God in relationship to his time. But also the days which remain. Can a person use each day as he desires? No. He cannot. In John 9:4 it is written, "We must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day, night comes when no one can work." Thus the way you use your time is a witness of your stewardship. The Christian knows from where his time comes and he will want to use his time to fulfill the will of Him who gave him that time. The time that the Christian lives without any purpose at all or without using that time in a good way is lost to God. Also the Christian who uses his time for things that are not important and a way that is not good has broken the purpose for which God gave him his stewardship. In that day when you stand before God, face to face, how will you answer when

proclaim the Gospel should get their living by the Gospel."

From time to time, there are those who have much who can help those who do not have. As it is written in II Corinthians 8:14, "That as a matter of equality, your abundance at the present time should supply their want...."

The most important reason for giving is to spread the Gospel. People need to know Jesus. Many have not yet heard, and many who have heard have not believed. Giving helps these people to have an opportunity to hear and to believe. As we read in Romans 10:13-15, "For everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. But how are men to call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent...." May-be you cannot preach the Gospel to those who do not believe, but you can join together and help through your giving.

A. Questions to Discuss:

1. Why do you bring your offering to the church?
2. Is there an unworthy way that the Christian gives to God?

by their friends. Because they are not able to give with joy, or generously, they make themselves give more than wanting to give. In Acts 5:1-11 we are reminded of Ananias and Sapphira and the way they tried to fool God in front of their fellow members. And also in Matthew 23:23, Jesus warned the pharisees that they should not think that being with money and a good life was enough. He said in verse 23, "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, for you tithe mint, dill, and cummin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy and faith. These you ought to have done without neglecting the others."

3. The results of Christian giving.

A Christian will not give for the purpose of business gain or to increase his own wealth. He believes that God will bless his giving. And he cannot deny the fact that he is blessed of God. Many times these blessings are different than we would expect, but a verse that makes certain the blessings of God is Malachi 3:10, "Bring the full tithes into the store house that there may be food in my house, and thereby put me to the test says the Lord of Hosts. If I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing." These blessings are for those who give and also for those who are helped by the giving. Those who do the work of the Lord and are not able to do other work are supported by a Christian's giving. In I Corinthians 9:14 it says, "The Lord commanded that those who

He asks you about the way you used your time which He has given you? Will you hear the sorrow of His judgement or joy and praise? It is important that you determine between these two ways.

3. Your ability is from God.

Your ability has come from God as His gift. You have seen how a certain person has been given a great deal of ability to sing, to preach, or to teach the Bible. And others are seen to have strength and ability for other things. There is the man who is successful in business, or in farming and again many are seen as a good cook. There is the one who is able to lead others, or one who has a very patient spirit.

We need to understand that these gifts of our ability come from God also. These gifts are understood in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord, and there are varieties of working but it is the same God who inspires them **all in every one.**"

What kind of gifts has God given you in your life? If you do not use those gifts for God, you go opposite from His purpose. If you do not use them, is it possible that you will lose them? If you do not use them, is it possible for you to be counted as a good steward of God? Will you receive sorrow in the judgement or joy and praise? It is important that you choose between these two ways also.

4. You have the responsibility to spread the Gospel.

When Jesus said in Mark 16:15, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation," was He not explaining who would do this work? When He said in Acts 1:8, "And you shall be my ...witnesses...even to the end of the earth," is it not clear to whom He gave His work? Others will try to say that it was to the disciples during those days. Others will say it is for the missionary or the pastor, but the task of every Christian is to know that he is a steward before God. As a member, every man has received salvation from God and is a steward of that salvation. There is no one who has not been given salvation by God who is able to say "It is not I, I am not able, I do not have an education, or it is the work of another." It is true that every person is not able to preach or to teach, but every Christian by word and deed is able to witness of the blessings that have come from God and of our salvation that is able to overcome sin.

How will you answer when you stand before God and are asked the question about your stewardship of the Gospel? Will you hear sorrow at the judgement or joy and praise? It is necessary that you choose between these two ways.

A. Questions to Discuss:

1. Works show the stewardship of a person in what way? _____

another person. Many times it will bring praise to the Lord also. But he who gives generously should be clear in his purpose.

e. On the Basis of His Blessings. When the disciples came from Antioch, they heard about the condition of their Christian friends in Jerusalem. Luke tells us in Acts 11:29 that the people gave according to their ability. Luke says, "And the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability to send relief to the brethren who lived in Judea." What was the way they measured their living? It was on a man's ability. Those who had much, gave much. Those who had little, gave little. But they gave.

f. With a Plan. When we read in 1 Corinthians 16:2, "On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper...." Every man, every week shows the clear plan. Before a Christian comes to worship, he should measure the amount of his blessings and what he has for that week, and his offering should be brought accordingly. If he has received much, he should bring a greater amount. If he has received little, he should bring a smaller amount. But remember, it is not that you are made to give or that you should give without joy. But give with love, generously and with humility.

There is further explanation concerning giving. There are those who want to be praised for their giving and seen

b. With Joy. In verse 7 we read, "Not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." If a Christian does not have a heart of joy, but believes that money he has given is lost, or that his troubles would be less if he kept his money, he should not give. Rather he should give in love and love brings joy.

c. With Generosity. The story Jesus told about the poor widow when she came to the temple shows the spirit that is needed in a Christian when he gives before God. This story is in Mark 12:41-44. It says, "...And she put in two copper coins which make a penny. And Jesus said to his disciples, 'Truly I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury....' When she thought about all the blessings of God, and His watch care, she did not keep anything back from God, but put it all in the offering.

d. With Humility. Many times a man will give so he will be seen or known. It is not bad to know a man who gives generously, but if he gives to be praised of men, he has gotten his blessings from man and not God. Let us read a part of Matthew 6:1, "Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven." The Bible says that a person should not be seen as he gives. He should not give if his purpose is only to be praised by man. Many times the generosity of a person will increase the giving of

2. If an old man becomes a Christian, what has he missed that a young man experiences when he is saved? _____
3. What gifts do you have that you can use for God's work? _____
4. In what way can a man who does not have great ability witness the Gospel? _____

B. Important Verses:

1. James 2:18
2. Luke 4:16
3. 1 Corinthians 16:2
4. Acts 20:7
5. John 9:4
6. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6
7. Mark 16:15
8. Acts 1:8

YOU ARE A GIVER BEFORE GOD

1. Why does a Christian give?

A very important thing to understand is that your giving shows your Christian spirit. Without a doubt, like other things you do, your giving certifies your faith. In 1 Timothy 5:8 it is written, "If anyone does not provide for his relatives and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." Our giving is used by our relatives in the family of Christ in ways that shall be mentioned later. If we do not take care of our own, a brother or sister in Christ, our faith seems to be very small.

Also the stewardship of giving of the Christian shows his life in the Spirit. Just as Luke 16:11 says, "If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true riches?" An explanation should be given here that the wealth of the world is not as valuable as the riches of the Spirit. The Christian who continues to build his joy and his life on wealth more than on the help of the Spirit of God, is not counted as a steward of the important things of the Lord.

Christian giving is built on Christian love. Paul, when speaking to the Christians of Corinth, praised the giving of the Christians of Macedonia.

He said about them, "And not as we expected, but first they gave themselves to the Lord...", and again he said, "I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine." (II Corinthians 8:5,8) Notice how Paul joined together giving and their love. This teaches us that he who has love will give as he is able, to show his love. This also shows that he who does not have a great love will not be ready to give, if he has much or if he has little. The truth is that our giving is a measure of our love for God.

2. How does the Christian give?

The state of the Christian and his giving is more important than the plans that are used in the churches. These plans will be explained later. If you consider the words that follow, you will understand the way that you should give. A very good verse to use is II Corinthians 9:7 which says, "Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." The important words here are:

- a. By Choice. As we read, each one must do as he has made up his mind and not reluctantly or under compulsion. The Christian does not give because he is made to give. Neither is the amount or the time or the way stated that he should give. There are plans that will help people to remember to give and to want to give, but these plans will not say that the Christian must give.