

Practical Theology (CM3)

Stewardship of Faith & Commitment

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Lakeside institute of Theology**



Practical Theology (CM3)

Aug. 14 – Intro to Practical Theology & Stewardship

Aug. 21 – Stewardship of Call & Vision

Aug. 28 – Stewardship of Faith & Commitment

Sept. 4 – ***No Class***

Sept. 11 – Stewardship of Time & Opportunities

Sept. 18 – Stewardship of Resources

Sept. 25 – Stewardship of Influence

Oct. 2 – Call to Action; Final Exam

What is “Stewardship?”

“The conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially, the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care.”

A steward is someone who cares for something that belongs to someone else.

As Christians, we know that all things are made by God and still belong to Him, and we are called to be stewards of everything God places (or entrusts) into our lives

What is “Stewardship?”

Christian Stewardship has to do with every aspect of our lives and with every choice we make.

Jesus calls us to be disciples. As disciples of Christ we must have a clear understanding of the biblical call to ***Whole Life Stewardship*** as our most fundamental act of obedience.

Stewardship of Faith

➤ What is faith?

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. ² This is what the ancients were commended for. Hebrews 11:1-2

➤ From the Greek word ***pistis*** (>240 times in NT)

➤ *“to trust, to have confidence, faithfulness, to be reliable, to assure.” “to be persuaded”*

“An act of trust and self-abandonment by which people no longer rely on their own strength and policies, but commit themselves to the power and guiding word of Jesus Christ, in whom they believe.”

New Jerusalem Bible

Stewardship of Faith

- **What is faith?**
- **Faith is a gift from God.**

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. *Ephesians 2:8-10*

... fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith... *Hebrews 12:2*

.... think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. *Romans 12:3-4*

Stewardship of Faith

- Is faith “blind”?
- Soren Kierkegaard’s “blind leap of faith” versus Francis Schaefer’s “informed leap of faith.”

“Faith is not blind, but intelligent, and commences with the conviction of the mind based on adequate evidence.” W.H. Griffith-Thomas

“The classic Christian tradition has always valued rationality, and does not hold that faith involves the complete abandonment of reason and will in the teeth of evidence.” Peter Williams

“Evidence-based faith is the normal concept on which we base our everyday lives.” John Lennox

Stewardship of Faith

➤ Is faith “blind”?

“Christian belief is produced in the believer by the internal instigation of the Holy Spirit, endorsing the teachings of the Scripture, which is itself inspired by the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit is faith.”
Alvin Plantinga

No one can have true faith unless they are called by the Holy Spirit and taught the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But to accept that offer, the new believer must understand in whom and in what they are called to have faith. So there must be *understanding* – built on the testimony of Scripture, the Church community, and the personal experiences of the believer, as affirmed by the Holy Spirit.

Stewardship of Faith

➤ What are we to do with our faith?

1. Receive it.

Faith comes from God, offered to us by the Holy Spirit, but God does not force anyone into his will – we do have the choice to accept or reject the faith.

“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Mark 1:15

2. Hold onto it; be sure of it.

“Faith... is the art of holding on to things your reason has once accepted, in spite of your changing moods.”

C.S. Lewis

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1

Stewardship of Faith

➤ What are we to do with our faith?

3. Practice it – apply faith in *practical* ways to all aspects of life.

You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹ Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. ²⁴ You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. ... ²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

James 2:20-26

Stewardship of Faith

➤ What are we to do with our faith?

4. Be prepared to explain and defend it.

*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. ¹⁶ But do this with gentleness and respect...
1 Peter 3:15-16*

5. Share it with others.

*Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”
Matthew 28:18-20*

Stewardship of Commitment

➤ What do we mean by “commitment?”

“the determination to do what needs to be done, whatever the cost.”

God modeled just such a commitment, as reflected in John 3:16: *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

“You never hear Jesus say in Pilate's judgment hall one word that would let you imagine that He was sorry that He had undertaken so costly a sacrifice for us. When His hands are pierced, when He is parched with fever, His tongue dried up like a shard of pottery, when His whole body is dissolved into the dust of death, you never hear a groan or a shriek that looks like Jesus is going back on His commitment.”

Charles Spurgeon

Stewardship of Commitment

Love of Christ cannot mean merely a feeling or affection, but a commitment to follow Him all the way and to obey his commandments.

Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.” *Luke 9:23-24*

“If you love me, keep my commands.” *John 14:15*

Commitment to Christ means we go where he sends us, we do what he tells us to do, and we say what he tells us to say.

Commitment of this kind is built on and dependent upon faith. Chapter 11 of Hebrews – the “Hall of Faith” – is full of people who demonstrated their faith by their acts of obedience and commitment. (Abraham, Noah, Gideon, Samson, Samuel, David, etc...)

Stewardship of Commitment

Commitment is the demonstration that we trust in God and rely on him only.

If you do not plan to live the Christian life totally committed to knowing your God and to walking in obedience to Him, then don't begin, for this is what Christianity is all about. It is a change of citizenship, a change of governments, a change of allegiance. If you have no intention of letting Christ rule your life, then forget Christianity; it is not for you.

Kay Arthur

Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him to help you do it, and he will.

Psalm 37:5-6 (TLB)

Stewardship of Commitment

1. Commitment to Christ.

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:21-22

2. Commitment to People.

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13:34-35

3. Commitment to Prayer.

Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Stewardship of Commitment

4. Commitment to Principles.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9

