

Practical Theology (CM3)

Stewardship of Time & Opportunities

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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 Time

➤ What is time?

From our perspective, *time* is the duration of our existence in this world before we enter eternity.

➤ We often forget: Time was invented by God.

And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶ God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night.

Genesis 1:14-16

Stewardship of Time

- **Time is the great equalizer: we are all allotted the same amount per day – 86,400 seconds.**
- The real questions are: ***How do we spend it?*** and ***How do we decide how to spend it?***
- Studies show that in their lifetimes the average person in the US spends:
 - ❖ 70 days reading the Bible
 - ❖ 6 months sitting at traffic light
 - ❖ 8 months opening junk mail
 - ❖ 1 year looking for misplaced objects
 - ❖ 2 years on the internet
 - ❖ 5 years waiting in lines
 - ❖ 5.5 years driving a car
 - ❖ 7.5 years listening to the radio
 - ❖ 10 years watching television.

Stewardship of Time

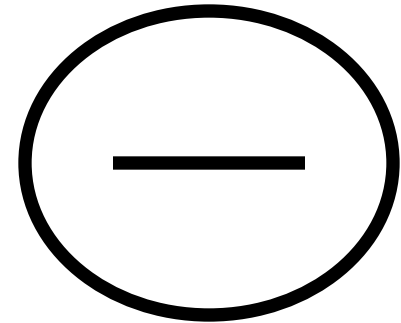
- **God does not experience time as we do.**

A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.

Psalm 90:4

With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. *2 Peter 3:8-9*

- Francis Schaeffer's symbol for the relationship of God to time:



- *“Humans live in time and therefore attend chiefly to two things: to eternity itself and to the Present. For the Present is the point at which time touches eternity.”*
C.S. Lewis

Stewardship of Time

➤ Our task?

To determine how best to use the time God has allotted to us. This is “*Stewardship of Time*” – to use time wisely, living in a way that pleases God and accomplishes his purposes.

Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. *Psalm 90:12*

Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” ¹⁶ As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷ If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them. *James 4:14-17*

Stewardship of Time

- **Our primary model on how to use time is Jesus.**
 - ❖ Jesus never hurried, and he never worried.
 - ❖ Never a sense of panic, or remorse for time lost.
 - ❖ Jesus took 30 years as a small-town carpenter before starting his ministry – was that time wasted?
 - ❖ His ministry was to change the world for all eternity, yet he showed no signs of obsessive drivenness.
 - ❖ His focus was people, even when that was inefficient.
 - ❖ At some of the most pressing times, Jesus went away to spend time with the Father or with his friends.
 - ❖ He never fixated on ***activity*** to the expense of ***right attitude*** – toward the Father and people he served.

Stewardship of Time

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5-11

Stewardship of Time

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

¹⁴ Do everything without complaining or arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe ¹⁶ as you hold out the word of life — in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.

Philippians 2:12-16

Stewardship of Time

“Work out your salvation...”

...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Philippians 2:12-16

- *“work out” means “to work to full completion,” like “working out” to get healthier, or “working a field.”*
- To allow God to *“work in us to will and act according to his good purpose”* means **to let God direct our time and how we spend it, to grow us in our spiritual service to Him.**
- This is the focus of so many biblical metaphors – we are *clay, branches, soldiers, watchmen, servants*, etc. – all meaning we are in the service to someone else (God), and so we are not our own – as reflected in how we spend our time.

Stewardship of Time

“Shine out your testimony...”

Do everything without complaining or arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe... *Philippians 2:14-15*

- We, like Paul, live in “*a crooked and depraved generation*” – a generation without hope or light.
- And so we are commissioned to live by God’s plans for us (“*without fault*” does not mean *perfect*), in order to be a light to the lost and broken. (salt, light, etc.) And this directly affects how we spend our time.

Stewardship of Time

“Hold out the Word of Life...”

...as you hold out the word of life — in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.

Philippians 2:16

- We are able to stand against evil because God has spoken his Word – both in Christ Incarnate and in Scripture – so that we may go in the name of Jesus and transform the world.

Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

John 20:21

Stewardship of Time

- **Three central elements in our Christian Stewardship of Time:**
 1. ***“Work out your salvation...”***
 2. ***“Shine out your testimony...”***
 3. ***“Hold out the Word of Life...”***

- *For Christians, the issue of managing our time is not efficiency (as in business), as much as it is spiritual effectiveness.*
 1. *What is really going to have mattered when I come to the end of my earthly days?*
 2. *How does God want me to spend my time in ways that will both honor Him in my own life, and effectively share Him with others?*

Stewardship of Time

- **What will be the *measure* of our lives?**
- Length does not matter – God has done miraculous things with those who died young but were committed to Him.
- DEPTH is what matters – the depth of our devotion to God, as reflected in how we spend our time on earth. Even the most mundane of tasks are made sacred and have eternal value when they are dedicated to God and his glory (rather than simply for our own gratification).

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31-32

Stewardship of Time

- **What will be our source of satisfaction?**
- Every day we make decisions about how to spend our time, and we need to be asking, ***“What is the criteria on which I am deciding what I will spend my time on?”***
- Time is a resource – something we have and that we must spend – so how are we deciding what to spend it on?

This is the day which the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24

- The only true source of satisfaction and happiness is found in the Lord and in our service to Him, as good stewards of time He has allotted to us.

Stewardship of Opportunities

- **Have you ever missed an opportunity and regretted it later?**
- Almost all of us have a natural tendency (inertia?) to do the expected and comfortable, rather than the risky and potentially extraordinary.
- But we need to always remember that being a Christian – a commissioned servant of the Most High God – in our world is an inherently adventurous business!

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

Ephesians 5:15-17

Stewardship of Opportunities

➤ **Scripture is FULL of people who were willing to take risks by seizing opportunities for God:**

- ❖ *Noah*
- ❖ *Abraham*
- ❖ *Moses*
- ❖ *Joshua*
- ❖ *Gideon*
- ❖ *Deborah*
- ❖ *David*
- ❖ *Daniel*
- ❖ *Esther*
- ❖ *Nehemiah*
- ❖ *Peter*
- ❖ *Paul... and on and on*

Stewardship of Opportunities

- **What opportunities has (and does) God place before me?**

- ***Opportunities to Evangelize***

Then 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.

Matthew 28:18-20

- A primary assignment for all Christians (the *last thing Jesus told us to do*) is the *Great Commission*. To tell others about Him, sharing the Good News (“Gospel”) of life and salvation that people are looking for, whether they realize it or not.

- For many of us, the question is – ***Do we really believe it?***

Stewardship of Opportunities

- **What opportunities has (and does) God place before me?**
- ***Opportunities to Evangelize***
- ***Opportunities to Empathize***
- To identify with what others are thinking, feeling or experiencing; to be compassionate (literally “*to suffer with another*”) about another person’s situation or need.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

¹⁵ *Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.*

¹⁶ *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

Romans 12:14-16

Stewardship of Opportunities

- **What opportunities has (and does) God place before me?**
- *Opportunities to Evangelize*
- *Opportunities to Empathize*
- ***Opportunities to Act for others***
 - We all have opportunities to proactively change other peoples lives – in large and small ways – to the glory of God.
 - A kind word, a 5 peso coin, a carwash, a meal, a job, a prayer, remembering a name, forgiveness, a scholarship...
 - All around us there are people who are in need of love and help and healing. **What are we going to do about it,**
in the Name of Jesus?

Stewardship of Opportunities

- **We must always remember – we are not along, and we are not unprepared!**

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”
Matthew 28:20

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. ...¹³ so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesians 6:10-17