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Amphlets

# I WORK FOR GOD

by  
**M. E. REES**

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Every individual is a steward of God whether he chooses to recognize it or not. He may be a faithful steward, or an unfaithful one—but he becomes a steward at birth and remains one until death.

This course has been prepared for those who wish to acknowledge their relationship to God as stewards, and have a desire to understand more clearly the responsibilities of this relationship.

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# STEWARDSHIP IS A RELATIONSHIP

*Definition* – Stewardship is the management of that which belongs to another.

## CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND GOD

There is a widespread misconception of the true meaning of the term stewardship because it is usually associated with the raising or giving of money. Stewardship was ordained by God at the creation of man to establish his relationship to Him.

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have *dominion* over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” Genesis 1:26

Dominion denotes authority, rule, control or management. Man was given the management of everything on this earth which God had created.

## EVERY MAN IS A STEWARD OF GOD

A man may be a good steward or a bad one, faithful or unfaithful, but he becomes a steward at birth and remains one until death. He is responsible to God and is accountable to Him for the management of all the things with which he has been entrusted.

## ONLY IN THE CONTEXT OF STEWARDSHIP DOES LIFE HAVE MEANING

Without a clear understanding and acceptance of the principles of Christian stewardship, life is empty and mean-

ingless. Even though a man might pass through this world in comparative ease and comfort, all his labors will not benefit him at death. The wise man said, "what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?" (Eccl. 5:16)

But an active acceptance of this divine concept places the life in harmony with God's master plan, under His constant direction and control. Every facet of life has meaning and the future becomes bright, not only with promise but fulfillment.

## **CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP INVOLVES A TOTAL COMMITMENT**

Acceptable service by a steward depends on his total dedication to the interests of the owner. Half-hearted attention will never do. The Christian steward must not have divided interests.

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matthew 6:24  
"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

(verse 33)

## **A CHRISTIAN STEWARD IS RESPONSIBLE TO GOD FOR THE MATERIAL THINGS WHICH HE POSSESSES**

The Christian steward is an agent of God, placed in this world to oversee the management of the things which are entrusted to his care. These things not only serve to provide for his needs and those of his family, but also serve as a test to determine his obedience, love and gratitude to God.

"God tests us here by committing to us temporal possessions, that our use of these may show whether we can be entrusted with eternal riches."

*Counsels on Stewardship, page 22*

## **A CHRISTIAN STEWARD HAS AN ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SHARING THE PLAN OF SALVATION TO THE WORLD**

Adam had only the management of the earth for his responsibility at creation. After sin entered, he had the additional responsibility of conveying to a lost world the good news of salvation made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

“Ye are the light of the world.” Matthew 5:14

This soul-winning responsibility supercedes even the management of material things, for the worth of a human soul exceeds the total value of the world.

## **BY FOLLOWING GOD’S PLAN MAN CAN ENJOY UNENDING SOCIAL SECURITY**

By accepting God’s plan man can enjoy a life free from the concerns associated with making a living.

“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things . . . and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:31-33

Trust and confidence in God at all times and under all circumstances will free the mind from daily worry and concern. Circumstances may appear dark and foreboding but faith in God’s promises will dispel the dark clouds of despair. We are God’s children and He wishes us to trust Him as our children trust us.

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## STEWARDSHIP INVOLVES RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### OWNERSHIP DENOTES UNLIMITED PRIVILEGE

An owner has complete control over his possessions and is not answerable to anyone for his decisions regarding their use or disposal.

### STEWARDSHIP (OR MANAGEMENT) IS ALWAYS SUBJECT TO SOME RESTRICTION

A steward is always subject to the desires of the owner. Whatever decisions he is permitted to make must be in perfect harmony with the wishes of the owner. Therefore even the use of entrusted goods is subject to some restriction.

To take or appropriate to his own use any portion of the goods belonging to the owner constitutes theft or embezzlement for which the penalties are very severe.

Joseph recognized that there were restrictions in the management of his master's goods when confronted with the impure suggestion of Potiphar's wife.

“. . . Behold my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I; *neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee.*” Genesis 39:8, 9  
(Italics supplied)

### STEWARDSHIP INVOLVES DOING SOMETHING

If there was nothing to do, the owner certainly would not entrust his goods to another. He would care for them himself for no work would be involved. Because stewardship

denotes activity, no owner would knowingly hire a loafer for a manager. And should he inadvertently find that he had engaged an unproductive worker, he would no doubt dispose of him at once.

Jesus used the parable of a master and his steward to explain the relationship every person will bear to God at His second coming. The important point is that the servant was either doing something or not doing anything.

“And the Lord said, who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” Luke 12:42, 43.

Contrast the “doing” servant with the slothful one.

“And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.” (verse 47)

## **STEWARDSHIP IMPLIES RESPONSIBILITY**

The very term stewardship means to care for those things which belong to another. This may take the form of care, use, protection or some other directive by the owner.

Notice how a prophet used this principle in a story to rebuke the wicked king Ahab.

“Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and, behold a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, *Keep* this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver.” 1 Kings 20:39

While the illustration gives no hint of a reward for seeing that the man did not escape, it does outline the penalties for failure to carry out instructions. This would imply that responsibility is directly associated with obedience to an explicit command with no reward promised. But failure to assume this responsibility would justify some penalty.



## STEWARDSHIP INVOLVES ACCOUNTABILITY

Every workman, regardless of his field of labor, is required to render an account of his work in some way. This might vary from a detailed written report of his progress to the casual observation of the owner or overseer. There is always accountability implied in all stewardship.

Paul called special attention to each person's accountability to God. This is true whether a person chooses to recognize his responsibility to God or not—or even if he denies there is a God.

“So then everyone of us shall *give account of himself to God.*” Romans 14:12 (Italics supplied)

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# **THE TOOLS OF STEWARDSHIP**

## **TIME IS THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY INGREDIENT IN STEWARDSHIP**

During the period of responsibility, each steward has exactly the same amount of time, i.e., 60 seconds in each minute, and 60 minutes in each hour. The difference in productivity depends on the effective use of this time.

Solomon made a long list of the activities of men and said:

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.” Eccl. 3:1

While an employer may only think of the talents of an individual he hires, actually its a portion of his time that is involved or more specifically a portion of his life, for time is life.

Each Christian steward has been given the same amount of time in each day. There can be no excuse for its unwise use. In this respect each individual is equally responsible and accountable.

## **TALENT IS THE VARIABLE IN STEWARDSHIP**

Every person is given a measure of time and a measure of talent. While the time interval is the same, the talent factor is highly variable. There are one-talent individuals and those with many talents. A steward is only accountable for the talent, or talents, entrusted.

Jesus referred to this in the parable of the talents. The

man with ten talents had no more than the man with the one talent. It was the use made of this time and with the talents entrusted that made the difference.

It must be remembered that God never gives a person more talents than he can handle wisely. The ability to use a talent is given with the talent. Only a person who works to the limit of his capabilities is accounted a good steward.

“His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter into the joy of thy lord.” Matthew 25:21

In Christian stewardship eternal rewards are promised in return for the faithful use of talents in this life.

## **TALENTS MUST BE USED AND PERFECTED**

God gives each person a talent, or talents—but they must be used and perfected. Talents can be perfected through instruction and experience. Only through use can they be retained.

They have a unique quality. Their growth and perfection can never reach an end. Further growth and perfection is always possible.

## **MONEY IS ONLY A COMPOUND OF TIME AND TALENT**

Time and talent cannot be stored. Nor can they be separated from the individual. In a simple society, through the barter system, time and talent could provide the necessities of life. In a more complex society it may be desirable to store these for future use or to transport them apart from the individual. Therefore time and talent can be converted into money which can be easily stored or transported.

## **MONEY HAS NO INTRINSIC VALUE OF ITSELF**

Money would make very poor clothing, a very uncomfortable bed and an impossible substitute for food. Although some of the metals from which it is made may be precious because of their rarity, an abundant supply or lack of demand may render them worthless. As an example, diamonds or gold would be valueless to a man on a desert in desperate need of water. Money is of no value where it cannot be reconverted.

## **TO BE VALUABLE MONEY MUST BE RECONVERTED INTO ITS ORIGINAL COMPONENTS**

To be useful, money must be reconverted into time and talent, or into some product which is the result of the use of time with talent. Reconverted, it can furnish clothing and food, shelter and warmth. In this frame of reference it is one of man's most useful tools. But it must always be considered for what it really is, the very life of an individual transformed into a commodity convenient for storage or transport, but subject to reconversion before it again becomes useful.

## **TO HOARD MONEY IS TO BURY LIFE**

As money is representative of life, hoarding represents death. A person's time and talent ceases at death. Likewise, money buried in some vault or other depository effectively buries the time and talent which produced it. In circulation it is in a continual state of being reconverted into time and talent, but in hoarding it ceases to be useful.

## **TO WASTE MONEY IS TO WASTE LIFE**

Just as the time and talent of a person can be wasted through misuse, or no use, just so money wasted is life

wasted. Body-destroying habits can waste life and in the same way money which serves no useful purpose is a waste of life.

“Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?  
and your labour for that which satisfieth not?” Isaiah 55:2

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## THE PLANS OF GOD

### IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MEASURE GOD'S PLANS BY HUMAN STANDARDS

God's plans rarely, if ever, look reasonable from the human standpoint for two general reasons.

- (1) How could finite man possibly understand the plans of an infinite God when gaps in time, space, wisdom, experience and knowledge are so wide.

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”  
Isaiah 55:9

- (2) God leaves the details and workings of His plans clothed in mystery so man will be able to develop faith and confidence in Him. By obeying explicit directions to implement a plan which doesn't look reasonable from the human standpoint, man will develop faith and confidence in God as he witnesses their success. Each time this procedure is followed, faith is increased until hopefully the time will come when he will obey without question.

### IN ORDER TO PARTIALLY UNDERSTAND GOD'S PLANS ONE MUST REMEMBER THEY OFTEN ARE EXACTLY OPPOSITE TO MAN'S METHOD

Jesus gave the keynote to this when He observed that the poor widow who had cast two tiny mites into the great temple treasury chest “had given more than they all.” (Mark 12:43)

### MAN IS IMPRESSED WITH AMOUNTS— GOD REGARDS ONLY THE SACRIFICE

Big things seem to impress people: Big trees, big bridges,

big buildings, big states, “big” people. But imagine how big the biggest things of earth must appear from the unlimited distances of space. Like miniature toys? Smaller, infinitely smaller. Sacrifice is the “big” thing in heaven. God gave His Son. The Son gave His life. Infinite sacrifice, unmeasurable.

## **GOD ISN'T INTERESTED SO MUCH IN WHAT PEOPLE DO, AS WHY THEY DO IT**

Like big things, people are impressed with accomplishments. But God is vitally interested in the motive behind the deed. Good deeds may result from wrong motives. And failures sometime result from the best intentions.

The truly motivated person doesn't need the structure of manipulation to spur him into action. In fact it is difficult to stifle the enthusiasm of a properly motivated person. Every new believer is a living testimony to this premise, often to the embarrassment of longtime members.

## **FREEWILL SERVICE IS THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE SERVICE**

In God's work no pressure is to be used. The command to keep His commandments is prefaced by the phrase, “If ye love me, . . .” God will accept no unwilling offering nor a pressed sacrifice. Everything that is done for Him must be motivated by love and gratitude.

## **IF ONE LISTENS TO THE VOICES OF MAN IT IS DIFFICULT TO HEAR THE VOICE OF GOD**

As a steward under God's direction and control, it is imperative that the ear be carefully tuned to the voice of God. God speaks through His word, through His messengers, through the conscience and through the circumstances of His leading. But one must be spiritually awake to hear His voice.



In our giving to God it is essential that we hear His voice in our incomes, for if we do not, then we shall hear another voice—for “money talks”. This insistent voice is responsible for the needless expenditures on self. Only the still, small voice of God can drown its clammering.

## **MAN’S PLANS ARE LIMITED— GOD’S PLANS ARE UNLIMITED**

The plans of man are limited to the narrow confines of his own existence. Time, space, finances, and ability are limiting factors. But no such factors affect the plans of God. He is the Creator. Whatever is essential for the accomplishment of His desires He can provide. Man, the steward, is *limited* to obeying the instructions of God. God is *unlimited* in producing results.

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## THE TITHE

### THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL WAS THE RESTRICTION IN ADAM'S STEWARDSHIP

In all creation God set apart one tree as His. This was the restriction in man's dominion.

“But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.” Genesis 3:3

### THE TITHE AND THE SABBATH ARE RESTRICTIONS IN MAN'S STEWARDSHIP

“And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord.” Leviticus 27:30

“But the seventh-day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God.” Exodus 20:10

### THE TREE AND THE TITHE WERE TO KEEP MEN FROM FORGETTING GOD'S OWNERSHIP

Had man kept these divine ordinances he would have been protected from forgetting God's supreme ownership. This has always been man's greatest danger.

“Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God.” Deut. 8:11

### SATAN SUBSTITUTED A FALSE SABBATH TO ERASE THE IMAGE OF GOD THE CREATOR —HE HAS ADULTERATED THE TITHING PRINCIPLE TO ERASE THE IMAGE OF GOD THE OWNER

Notice some of the methods Satan has used to confuse and downgrade the great tithing system which would have

prevented man from forgetting his stewardship relation to God.

- The Jews of Christ's time laid down such arbitrary rules that none knew whether his tithing obligations were met or not.
- During the time of Papal supremacy the tithe became first a law of the church, then a law of the state.
- The Reformers taught New Testament principles but failed to apply these, accustomed as they were to compulsory church support. England, during the time of Wesley, had the most severe tithe-tax system the world has ever seen.
- The early settlers of America, having fled the oppressive tithe-tax system of England would have nothing to do with the tithe considering it either Popish or Jewish.
- Modern churches, for the most part, consider the tithe only as a measure of giving rather than belonging exclusively to God as the Owner of everything.
- Because the tithing issue has been so confused and clouded many Christians regard it as a tax or a duty and fail to understand or experience its true significance. They fail to reap the rich blessings from its observance.

## **THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF THE TITHE IS THAT IT MUST BE FIRST**

Before any portion of the income is used for personal needs, the tithe is to be set aside. God must be first in everything.

“We are not to consecrate to Him what remains of our income after all our real or imaginary wants are satisfied; but before any portion is consumed we are to set apart that which God has specified as His.”

*Counsels on Stewardship, page 81*

## **THE TITHE IS TO BE RETURNED ON THE PROFITS MADE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF HIS GOODS**

God requires that ten percent of the profits be returned for His use. This works no hardship on either the rich or

poor, for each has as much as he had before. It was ordained to show whether a man will recognize God's ownership or not. The fact that the tithe is used by God for the support of the gospel ministry is not the reason for its return. God has a right to use his means as He desires.

## **AFTER THE TITHE IS SET APART, A MIRACLE OCCURS**

God has promised that the remaining nine-tenths will have more efficiency than the ten-tenths, for His blessing will now rest on the balance of the income. Tithing is a most reassuring experience for it is the special occasion when a man is again made aware of his partnership relationship to God. At this time he is reminded that God has promised to supply all his needs regardless of any circumstances which he may encounter.

## **IN FRINGE AREAS, WHERE IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE IF THERE IS OR IS NOT A PROFIT, THE SAFE COURSE IS TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE**

If there is to be an error in tithing, let it be on the safe side. (Never shortchange God—He never shortchanged you.)

There are occasional fringe areas of Christian conduct where it is difficult to determine precisely what is right or wrong. This may occur in estimating the tithe. In such instances the motive must be the guideline. If the heart is right with God, the pure motive of love will prompt one to act on the liberal side.

## **EVERYONE MAKES HIS OWN DECISION IN TITHING**

Never should one person be a conscience for another. This is especially true in tithing. Everyone is to be his own

assessor. While there are general principles which govern the return of God's share of the increase, how much it is and upon what portion of the income it is to be figured is left wholly to the individual. It is not subject to the rules and interpretations of men. It is to be a personal recognition of God's ownership.

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# OFFERINGS

## **OFFERINGS ARE THOSE THINGS WHICH ALLOW A PERSON TO OUTWARDLY EXPRESS AN INWARD FEELING OF LOVE AND GRATITUDE**

Offerings are as old as time itself. Because God's kingdom is based on love, the very atmosphere of heaven is characterized by giving. Probably the offerings of heavenly beings consist of willing service to their Creator.

Man experienced his first evidence of God's love for him when he looked at the marvelous world God had created for his use and enjoyment. It was a perfect gift.

“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.” Genesis 1:31

Man's second encounter with God's unfathomable love came after he had sinned, and God promised him redemption from eternal death through the gift of His only Son Jesus.

## **THE LOVE PRINCIPLE IN MAN'S HEART DEMANDS EXPRESSION IN GIVING**

The feeling of love is inseparable from the desire to express it in some tangible way. The greater the opportunity for expression, the greater the satisfaction. This love principle can be enlarged by continual giving or stifled by selfishness. Life reaches its fullest meaning when there is a constant flow of love through giving.

## **GIFTS TO GOD MUST BE SET APART AFTER THE TITHE BUT PRECEED ANY EXPENDITURES FOR SELF**

The same “God first” principle applies to offerings as it does to the tithe.

“After the tithe is set apart, let the gifts and offerings be apportioned, as God hath prospered you.”

*Counsels on Stewardship, page 81*

## **THE SIZE OF AN OFFERING IS IMPORTANT ONLY AS IT RELATES TO POTENTIAL**

The amount is important, for each man is required to give “as he is able” (Deut. 16:17) or “as God hath prospered him.” (1 Cor. 16:2). This places the offerings in an equitable relation to ability. Paul summed it up this way, “it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.” (2 Cor. 8:12)

## **OFFERINGS CAN NEVER BE A SUBSTITUTE FOR OBEDIENCE**

This has always been a real danger. The Bible records that the farther the Israelites drifted from God, the more numerous and spectacular were their offerings and sacrifices. They substituted offerings for obedience.

“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams . . . bring no more vain oblations . . . Learn ye to do well: seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” Isaiah 1:11-17

“For I spake not unto your fathers nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.”  
Jeremiah 7:22-23



## **ALL GIFTS SHOULD BE MADE TO GOD— THEN DISTRIBUTED TO THINGS**

Giving to “things” can be dangerous. The generous impulses of the heart are easily disturbed by the emotions if the “things” do not accomplish what the donor had in mind. If one gives to God, the rewards are just the same whether the object of the gift succeeds or fails. This is disinterested benevolence.

In practice this means that although the donor should have a vital interest in those things to which he gives, he will not allow his feelings to affect his generosity for his giving is to God and not subject to unfortunate circumstances or human errors.

“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.” Psalm 119:165

## **NEEDS ARE OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPRESS LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO GOD**

Instead of regarding church operating expenses and mission appeals as a burden, the Christian steward will consider these as opportunities to express love and gratitude to God through the gifts he has set apart. The wise steward looks for ways in which to invest his Master’s means which will produce rich dividends in souls for the kingdom. Every part of the work has a direct bearing on the total effort. Thus church expense is as vital as funds for evangelism; keeping God’s house in repair as important as the preaching of the gospel.

A faithful steward recognizes and is proud of the fact that he is God’s agent placed in this world to carry out an important part of the great plan for the salvation of man. His position is one of great dignity.

## **THE MOTIVE IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE**

Only those offerings which are given from love and gratitude are acceptable to God. The size of the gift never impresses God, it is the motive that prompts it and the degree of sacrifice which it represents.

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## ACCEPTABLE OR UNACCEPTABLE OFFERINGS

### THE TITHE MIGHT NOT BE PERFECT BUT OFFERINGS MUST BE PERFECT TO BE ACCEPTABLE

On first thought it may appear strange that the tithe was not required to be perfect. This was due to the fact that in the partnership relation which man bears to God, losses are just as possible as gains. God shares loss along with His partner, man.

“And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it.” Leviticus 27:32, 33

Every offering had to be perfect to be accepted.

“And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein.” Leviticus 22:21

### THE TITHE REPRESENTS A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN MAN AND GOD, THE FREEWILL OFFERINGS ARE TO BE AN EXPRESSION OF LOVE AND GRATITUDE

The principle of the “imperfect” tithe proves that God is fair. The freewill offerings are a different matter. They are not a requirement but a privilege which God gives man

in order that he may express his love and gratitude. If the love is perfect, the offering which expresses it must also be perfect.

## **OFTEN THE GIFTS OF PROFESSING CHRISTIANS DO NOT REFLECT A PERFECT HEART AND THEREFORE ARE UNACCEPTABLE**

The devil's efforts to adulterate the tithing principle have had their baleful influence on the giving of offerings to God. As men turn away from God's plan for financing His work they employ methods to secure funds which are an abomination because they are a substitute for sacrifice and reveal a selfish heart. Such funds lack efficiency for God does not bless them.

## **GOD ORDAINED ONLY ONE PLAN, THE TITHES AND OFFERINGS, TO FINANCE HIS WORK**

This plan is so simple and beautiful in its simplicity. It creates no burden on anyone but causes the responsibility to rest lightly on all. God blesses men with means. The faithful return of the tithe and the giving of freewill offerings "as God hath prospered" will provide abundantly for the support of His work.

If God needs more money for His work He simply blesses men with more property. This will increase the tithes and offerings. But notice who is blessed first! Before God receives anything for His work He blesses man first!

## **THE REJECTION OF GOD'S PLAN HAS PRODUCED AN OFFENSIVE LIST OF METHODS FOR FINANCING HIS WORK**

Notice some of the plans which men have used to secure means for the Lord's work instead of following His instructions.

Corn feeds, the goose plan, excise tax on rum and wine, lotteries, pew rents, doughnut sales, coupons, bingo, popcorn plan, whiskey and tobacco sales, carnivals, the cakewalk, nickel sales, Lord's acre, auctions, investments, bazaars, Pony Express plan, suppers, pancake breakfasts, concerts, etc.

## **CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS MUST NEVER EMPLOY ANY METHOD WHICH IS A SUBSTITUTE FOR PERSONAL SACRIFICE**

While there may be some (few) means that would be acceptable as an addition to personal sacrifice these must never become a substitute. The selfish heart will always seek a substitute but wholehearted service to God expressed in freewill offerings will starve covetousness to death.

## **OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE TO GOD'S CAUSE MAY BE REGARDED AS PEARLS**

“Every opportunity to help a brother in need, or to aid the cause of God in the spread of the truth, is a pearl that you can send beforehand and deposit in the bank of heaven for safekeeping.”

*Testimonies to the Church, Vol. 3, page 249*

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# **HOME MANAGEMENT**

## **THE HOME IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SEGMENT OF SOCIETY**

The success or failure of the community, the church and the nation depends upon the influence of the home. The future of any society is conditional on the manners and morals of the youth who grow up within it. The home is the unit which determines destiny.

## **THE HOME IS THE CHARACTER BUILDING SCHOOL FOR ETERNITY**

Character is the only thing which will be transported from this world to the next. Much of the character of men and women is developed during the early formative years in the home. Because this is true, the conditions surrounding the home as well as within it must be wisely established to produce the greatest efficiency for good.

## **THE LOCATION OF THE HOME IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE**

The country is the ideal location for the home for here the family will be surrounded with the influences which are conducive to Christian training. The wickedness, noise, confusion and pollution of cities has a degrading influence on children as well as adults.

## **THE CONDITION OF THE HOME IS IMPORTANT**

The home should be situated on land that is well drained. The house should be built where it can get plenty of sun-

light. It should be well ventilated as well as insulated against cold and damp weather.

## **THE HOME SHOULD BE KEPT SCRUPULOUSLY CLEAN**

Not only is cleanliness vital to health, it is essential to a Christian atmosphere. God will not tolerate uncleanness.

“Truth never places her delicate feet in a path of uncleanness or impurity. . . . Truth does not make men and women coarse or rough and untidy.”

*Counsels on Health*, pages 101, 102

## **THERE SHOULD BE ROOM FOR A GARDEN**

Not only will a garden provide fresh, wholesome food for the family but it will teach a valuable spiritual lesson. In the tilling of the soil, as in no other activity, is demonstrated God’s plan for the coordination of human effort with divine power. This essential principle can be indelibly etched on the minds of the children as they actively participate in growing vegetables and fruits.

## **THE HOME SHOULD BE GOVERNED BY DEFINITE RULES**

Discipline is an essential part of home training. Administered with fairness and love, it is the very essence of happiness. The child who learns to respect parental authority will respect civil authority. Obedience to parents is a prerequisite for obedience to God.

## **BEWARE OF OVERMANAGEMENT**

Overmanagement and stern discipline are almost as bad as no management and lax discipline. While the home is to be conducted under good business procedures, it is not a business. The rules which regulate the lives of both parents and children should be established and administered in a framework of mutual love. The home is to be a haven of rest



providing its members with a feeling of security. It must provide the right conditions for the development of individuality based on Christian principles.

## **CHILDREN MUST LEARN TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY**

Each member of the family bears a responsibility to every other member. Those who assume this responsibility in the home find it easy to carry this into the business or professional world. Responsible children become responsible adults. The church and society are the beneficiaries.

## **THE HOME IS A POWERFUL WITNESS**

The home in which the members live and work together in peace and harmony is a most powerful witness to the message of the gospel. As the families go about their daily tasks cheerfully laboring not only for themselves but for others, neighbors are made aware of the transforming power of God.

“A well-ordered Christian household is a powerful argument in favor of the reality of the Christian religion—an argument that the infidel cannot gainsay.”

*Adventist Home, page 36*

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## HOME AND PERSONAL FINANCE

### THE HOME IS THE SCHOOL WHERE PERSONAL FINANCE SHOULD BE A MAJOR SUBJECT

Habits of thrift and the wise expenditure of money should be taught and practiced from early childhood. As soon as the child is able to count he can be taught the tithing principle, the giving of freewill offerings and habits of thrift. As he grows older these lessons will be invaluable.

### BEWARE OF A CONSTANT CONCERN OVER MONEY

One must avoid a constant concern over money—either the lack of it, or the inordinate desire for more. This is detrimental to the peace and happiness of both individual and family.

Nor should one dwell on probable future problems. Undue concern is evidence of a lack of trust in God. One should be content with that which God has provided and rest in the assurance that He will provide for all the necessities of life.

### PARENTS MUST SET THE EXAMPLE

The children will probably learn more about the handling of money from the example of their parents than from any other source. Therefore, the wise parent will remember that

he is a steward of God and accountable for the means entrusted to him. This realization will guide him in the handling of money.

## **BEFORE EVERY OTHER CONSIDERATION, GOD AND HIS WORK SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FIRST**

The needs of God's work should have priority in every home. This can be kept constantly before the family as the tithe and freewill offerings are set apart before personal needs or wants are considered. This will provide an effective barrier against spending money for nonessential things.

## **THE HOME SHOULD BE COMFORTABLE**

It is possible to have comfort without extravagance. One should practice economy without stinginess. These specifics will serve to clarify this.

- The furniture should be usable. Nothing is more useless than a chair no one is allowed to sit in.
- Appliances which will lighten the work of the mother should be provided as the family budget will allow.
- An abundance of healthful food should be secured for the family. The emphasis should be on healthful.
- Suitable clothing for both summer and winter wear is a necessity. Avoid waste brought about by changing styles.
- The best recreation is found in outdoor activities in which the whole family can engage. Family fun draws the members together in unity.

## **A BUDGET IS A MUST**

Every home should operate on a budget. This will prevent a hand-to-mouth existence which is so prevalent today. Budgeting will place needs and wants in proper perspective. The budget must accurately reflect the anticipated income and be carefully followed. Credit spending

should be avoided unless absolutely necessary and then only in the framework of a planned rate of payment within the structure of a carefully controlled budget.

## **OPERATE ON A BALANCED BUDGET**

If the outgo exceeds the income trouble lies ahead. These must be brought into line for the successful operation of a home.

## **WISE BUYING IS LIKE RECEIVING EXTRA INCOME**

The wise family buyer will take advantage of “specials”. By anticipating the needs of the family, substantial amounts can be saved by buying at times when sales are offered. But remember one cannot save anything, regardless of the price, by purchasing an article which is not needed. Many people have “saved” themselves into bankruptcy by gobbling up bargains which they didn’t need and would have been better off without.

## **NEVER SACRIFICE QUALITY FOR PRICE**

Quality merchandise usually costs more but is cheaper in the long run. Nothing is so unsatisfying as a badly constructed piece of merchandise made of poor material. Beware the sign which states that its product is “just as good” at “half the price”.

## **PROVISION SHOULD BE MADE FOR THE “RAINY DAY”**

Life is subject to emergencies in a world where accident and sickness are commonplace. The family should systematically save a portion of the income to provide for an emergency.

“Every week a portion of your wages should be reserved and in no case touched unless suffering actual want.”

*Adventist Home, page 396*

## **DEBTS MUST BE AVOIDED AT ALL COSTS**

These quotations will suffice.

“When one becomes involved in debt, he is in one of Satan’s nets, which he sets for souls.”

*Adventist Home*, page 392

“Deny yourself a thousand things rather than run in debt. . . . Avoid it as you would the smallpox.” *Ibid*, page 393

## **ECONOMY SHOULD BECOME A WAY OF LIFE**

Economy should be practiced in all things. Remember that things wasted are to be accounted for just as things used. Proper care and maintenance will add years of usefulness to every item used in and around the home.

## **EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE AN INCOME OR AN ALLOWANCE**

One learns to manage money by handling money. The wife should have an allowance so she can exercise her tact and skill in its use. Children should have allowances until they are old enough to earn, so they can learn lessons of wise handling and thrift. They should return their own tithe and give offerings from their incomes or allowances.

## **BEWARE OF SHARP DEALING**

In every business transaction honesty is by far the best policy. Eternal lessons of Christian integrity can be taught by parents who make the golden rule the measurement of every transaction.

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## **BUILDING A HOUSE FOR GOD**

### **ONE OF THE GREATEST PRIVILEGES GRANTED TO MAN IS THE OPPORTUNITY OF BUILDING A HOUSE FOR GOD**

David was so overwhelmed at the thought of preparing a dwelling place for the Most High that he said it would only be “a footstool of our God.” (1 Chron. 28:2) Solomon questioned his ability to prepare a house for God, except “to burn sacrifice before him.” (2 Chron. 2:6)

### **IS IT TO BE A CHURCH OR A HOUSE OF GOD**

There could be a difference between a church and a house for God. A church is an architectural design, a house of God is a people dwelling together in unity, worshiping God. If these conditions exist within the structure of a church, then it is indeed a house of God.

### **A SPIRITUAL PREPARATION MUST BE THE FIRST CONSIDERATION**

Site, plans and money are usually considered the requisites for building a church but they are not the requisites for preparing a dwelling place for the Most High. Building a house for God demands an entirely different set of values. It calls for a heart experience.

The Israelites had the site, plans and materials for the construction of the tabernacle but God wouldn't allow them to build because they had turned their worship from Him to a golden calf which they credited with their marvelous

deliverance from Egypt. It wasn't until they were once more taken into favor with heaven that their leader could carry out the divine command.

Those desiring to build a house for God must be sure they are in favor with heaven before they can expect the blessing of God.

“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.” Psalm 127:1

## **THE REQUISITES FOR BUILDING A HOUSE FOR GOD ARE DIFFERENT**

The requisites for building a house for God are: (1) Devotion to God (2) a spirit of sacrifice. A devotion to God will impel each member to give the very best of his time, talent and means for the construction of a place in which to worship God. No pressure of any kind will ever be needed.

A spirit of sacrifice will produce an atmosphere of unity which is essential before God will bestow His blessing on any undertaking. This spirit of sacrifice will prompt each person to defer his individual judgment to the judgment of the church as a whole. Unity is an essential ingredient.

## **SITE, PLANS AND MEANS ARE IMPORTANT AFTER THE PRIMARY REQUISITES HAVE BEEN MET**

Divine guidance should be sought in the selection of a site. It is God's house and His desires should be paramount in its location.

Plain beauty, utility and good taste should characterize the building. While it must represent God's character and majesty, ostentation and show must be avoided. Good materials and the best possible workmanship should be used.

The size of the facility is important. While it should be large enough to care for the future growth of the congregation, care must be used to avoid overbuilding.



Sufficient means should be freely given so the building may be dedicated free from debt as soon as possible. To allow God's house to remain in an unfinished condition or burdened with debt is a dishonor to God. It is almost a denial of faith.

## **AFTER THE REQUISITES HAVE BEEN MET, GOD'S FORMULA FOR SUCCESS COMES INTO ACTION**

After complying with God's express instructions regarding the preparation of His dwelling place, men need not be concerned with the results of the venture. As in every other endeavor, human effort must be combined with divine power. Although from the human standpoint there might appear to be insufficient means to accomplish the task, this will prove to be no problem, for God makes Himself responsible for the results.

He does not expect men to work beyond their ability but He expects every individual to work to the limit of his capacity. When one reaches this point, God takes over. Man may be limited but God is unlimited.

“Let none waste time in deploring the scantiness of their visible resources. The outward appearance may be unpromising, but energy and trust in God will develop resources.” *Prophets and Kings*, page 243

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# **THE CARE OF GOD'S HOUSE**

## **IT IS JUST AS IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN THE HOUSE OF GOD AS TO BUILD IT**

There are many who show great zeal in building a house for God but who feel no responsibility for its maintenance. One cannot dishonor God more than to allow His house to be in an unkept condition amidst unlovely surroundings. What must be the reaction of those who see it? The church structure bears a constant message to the world and its care will reflect the attitude of its members.

## **CAREFUL PLANNING AND BUDGETING ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE PROPER CARE OF THE HOUSE OF GOD**

Many churches are forced to depend on the uncertain gifts of impulse for their operation and are constantly begging for means enough for the bare essentials. Good budget procedures would remedy this situation. The church treasury should be the recipient of systematic support of its constituents, sufficient for the efficient operation of every department. The benefits would be twofold: (1) the spirituality of the church would increase as systematic giving drove selfishness from the hearts of the members (2) the

church would be able to fulfill its role as a soul winner rather than a fund-raiser.

“Those churches who are the most systematic and liberal in sustaining the cause of God are the most prosperous spiritually.” *Testimonies to the Church*, Vol. 3, page 405

## **EACH MEMBER SHOULD FEEL A RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CARE OF GOD'S HOUSE**

When one becomes a member of a group he assumes a proportionate responsibility to the group as a whole and to each member of the group. As a member of the house of God each has a dual responsibility, first to God and secondly to the membership as a whole. If one shirks this responsibility then others must bear a heavier burden. This is a dishonor to God and unfair to the group.

## **ADEQUATE INFORMATION IS THE KEY TO PARTICIPATION**

Each member of a congregation should thoroughly understand not only the various functions of the church but the expense involved in its operation. While there are those who do not make it their business to learn about the church, its objectives, progress and requirements, information must be made available in a form which will make it impossible for them not to know. This responsibility must be brought to their attention for their own spiritual well being.

## **INFORMATION CAN BE CONVEYED FULLY BY HOME VISITATION**

There is no substitute for home visitation. In the quiet intimacy of the home, questions can be asked which would not be raised in a public meeting.

The visitor must be fully informed concerning every as-

pect of church operation. Questions must be answered clearly and openly. (The business of the church must always be conducted in a way that no question can prove to be embarrassing.)

## **EACH MEMBER SHOULD PLAN HIS GIVING— IT SHOULD NOT BE LEFT TO THE IMPULSE OF EMOTION**

Giving to God should be as systematic as His blessings. Budgeting for God's house should be as carefully planned as one should budget for his own home. The divine rule is that one must give to God before his own needs are taken care of and this giving must be according to ability. Planned giving will not only adequately care for the church program but prove to be a real blessing to the giver.

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## **THE TERMINATION OF A STEWARD'S RESPONSIBILITY**

### **AT DEATH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A STEWARD ENDS, BUT HIS ACCOUNTABILITY MAY CONTINUE**

At death the steward is no longer able to manage the things in his possession. Whether his accountability for his possessions ends or continues on after death depends on his disposition of these things.

### **ALL ENTRUSTED THINGS MUST BE RETURNED TO THE OWNER**

A faithful steward, recognizing God's ownership of everything in his possession, will realize that he cannot leave his trust in a way to suit his own wishes. It must be returned to God in some manner acceptable to Him. This may be done directly or indirectly as long as the control is placed in God's hands.

### **THE BUSINESS OF THE STEWARD SHOULD ALWAYS BE IN SUCH CONDITION THAT IT WILL BE SAFELY RETURNED IF HE SHOULD DIE SUDDENLY**

In an uncertain world no one knows at what moment he may die. The good steward will always have his business affairs in shape, so if death came suddenly he can be assured

that his accountability will end. If he has not made provision for its proper disposition then he remains accountable for its use after his death.

## **EITHER A TRUST OR A WILL IS THE PROPER INSTRUMENT FOR THE DISPOSITION OF ONE'S PROPERTY**

Some leave their affairs in such a condition that much of it is consumed by unnecessary legal procedures. A waste of property is just as sinful after death as it is in life. Expert help should be engaged in the preparation of one's trust or will. No expense should be spared in the preparation to be sure that the administration of one's property will: (1) be in accordance with God's wishes (2) stand the test of law.

## **A DYING LEGACY IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR LIVING BENEVOLENCE**

Some get the idea that they can selfishly hold back their property during their lifetime, then give it to God when they can no longer use it. This is a specious error. As stewards they are responsible for the constant support of God's cause during their lifetime. A trust or a will should only be an instrument to: (1) properly care for their property should death overtake them suddenly (2) dispose of the remnant of their estate in an approved manner.

## **REMEMBER GOD AND HIS CAUSE FIRST**

The God-must-be-first principle applies here as it does in all aspects of faithful stewardship. All property belongs to God, and His cause should be considered first before any other commitment. Placing means and property in the work of God brings it directly under His control.



## **DO NOT FOLLOW CUSTOM**

Often some leave property and means to relatives and friends who have no need, or to some foundation which brings honor to the donor. This practice should not be followed. Bequests to needy friends or relatives could be a way of returning the trust to God indirectly through the care of His children. A foundation under the right circumstances might also serve the same purpose.

## **IT IS A DUTY TO MAKE ADEQUATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CARE OF WIFE (OR HUSBAND) AND CHILDREN**

The family is a sacred trust and God expects His stewards to care for them both in life and after death. After God and His cause have been duly considered the next priority should be the family.

## **PARENTS WARNED IN LEAVING MONEY TO CHILDREN**

God only entrusts each steward with as much goods as he can handle wisely. Leaving large sums of money to children can be a dangerous practice, for the parent is thus putting himself in the place of God deciding how much they can handle wisely. Very often this brings a real curse to the children. The world is filled with opportunities, and young people should not be deprived of the privilege of developing their own resources under God's guidance. The same holds true for grandchildren.

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## STEWARDSHIP IS COMMITMENT

### A FAITHFUL EMPLOYEE IS COMMITTED TO HIS EMPLOYER

There is a responsibility of faithfulness which an employee bears to his employer. The employer has the right to expect wholehearted efficient service from his employee just as the employee has the right to expect remuneration for his labor.

As men expect good things from God such as food, shelter, clothing, health just so God has a right to expect his stewards to labor willingly and efficiently. Faith by the steward in his employer is demonstrated by his works.

### THE PROBLEM TODAY IS THAT MEN DO NOT CONSIDER THEMSELVES STEWARDS

Just as long as an individual considers himself as the owner of the things which he possesses he will never recognize the claims of God. There is little difference between a man who refuses to recognize God's claims and one who denies there is a God.

The believers after a period of heart searching, confession and prayer just prior to the great day of Pentecost drew together in complete harmony. It is recorded, "neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own." (Act 4:32) The wrongness is not in possessing things but in claiming ownership of these things.

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." Psalm 24:1

## **OUR NEED TODAY IS FOR A REVIVAL AND REFORMATION**

The Israelites of the prophet Malachi's time were denying God's ownership by withholding the tithe and offerings. Because of this they were in a desperate condition materially, physically and spiritually. God called for them to return.

“Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts.” Malachi 3:7

A similar condition exists today in which covetousness, the sin of the world, has become the sin of the church. Men refuse to recognize God as the Owner and are robbing Him while still praying for His blessings.

## **TOTAL COMMITMENT TO THE STEWARDSHIP RELATION IS ESSENTIAL TO THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

“When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure.”

*Evangelism, page 699*

“When all are faithful in giving back to God His own in tithes and offerings, the way will be opened for the world to hear the message for this time.”

*Testimonies to the Church, Vol. 6, page 450*

## **FAITHFULNESS IN STEWARDSHIP IS VITAL TO A FINISHED WORK**

Each steward has an essential role in God's plan for the redemption of the world. Man is the channel through which the blessings of heaven flow to earth. He can choke it with selfishness or keep it wide open by wholehearted commitment and service.

Human effort combined with divine power is the medium through which God works for the saving of men. Man working with and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is the key to success.

## **THE REWARDS OF FAITHFULNESS IN THIS LIFE ARE GREAT**

Very often only the future, heavenly rewards of the faithful steward, are emphasized. But there are rich rewards in this life. Jesus promised peace and this is unquestionably the greatest blessing in life. Solomon placed peace above great riches. Paul extols its virtues and tells how it may be obtained.

“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.” 1 Timothy 6.6-8

Jesus left His peace as a legacy to those who would cheerfully accept the service of God as His stewards. This peace comes by faith in God, believing that whatever is for our good He will abundantly provide.

## **THE FUTURE REWARDS OF FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP ARE FANTASTIC**

Paul said that no matter how hard a person tried he could never come close to explaining what heaven and the new earth would be like for there was nothing in this world with which to compare it. He said the wildest imaginations of the mind couldn't begin to describe it.

In reality, heaven and the new earth will only be a promotion for those who have been faithful stewards in this life. This life then is an apprenticeship for eternal responsibilities. God is testing men and women with material things to determine their fitness for these eternal responsibilities.

## **GOD'S STEWARDS WILL ONCE MORE HAVE DOMINION OF THE EARTH**

Man was created to have dominion over all the earth. He lost his position as manager when he sold out to Satan. God plans to restore this dominion to those who have dem-

onstrated their faithfulness as stewards and recognize Him as the Owner of all.

“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.” Daniel 7:27

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