

1 CORINTHIANS: LESSON 13

The Biblical Steward (1Cor. 4:1, 2)

15 September 2017

A steward is never to be viewed as a lord or a master, but as a servant who carries out the will of his master. In doing so, he serves the master, but (as we shall see) he also ministers to those placed under his care, for whom he is responsible.

1 Tim. 3:15 Paul, who has declared himself to be a minister and a steward, provides instructions concerning proper behavior **“in the house of God.”** The house of God is not the building, it is the believers gathered together.

1 Tim. 3:4-5 A man who will oversee other believers is **“One that ruleth well his own house.”** This “ruling” is further defined in the last part of verse 5. A ruler will **“take care of”** those who are in subjection to him. The ruler doesn’t make the orders, he ensures that the master’s orders are carried out.

Genesis 15:2 Eliezer was the steward of Abraham’s house. The steward serves the owner of the house. See also 1 Kings 16:9 for the connection between a steward and a house.

Genesis 43:19 Notice that the steward of Joseph’s house is also called the “ruler of his house” (vs. 16). The ruler doesn’t own the house, but he takes care of the house, as a bishop takes “care of the church of God” (1 Tim. 3:5).

If you are the ruler of your home, remember that it is actually God’s home and you are responsible to carry out God’s directions so that He can provide for you and everyone in that household.

Mat. 20:1-8 In this example, the steward is placed in charge of a vineyard. He is not the owner of the vineyard, but he carries out the orders of the owner and passes those orders on to the laborers in the vineyard.

In like manner, when Christians go out to work in the field (to preach the gospel to the lost), all the instructions for how and where to do the work come from God, but God passes that information through his stewards; men in positions of responsibility.

1. Stewards are under God and are responsible to minister to the other laborers.
 2. The laborers need to humble themselves and yield to God’s system of stewardship.
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1 Cor. 3:6-9 Within the context of stewardship (1 Cor. 4:1-2), we are given a picture of laborers in a vineyard. Paul and Apollos are set forth as “**ministers—BY whom ye believed**” (vs. 5). They delivered the gospel of Jesus Christ that the Corinthians believed. They were stewards in the vineyard.

1 Cor. 3:9-10 Once you come to Christ, “**Ye are God’s building,**” built on the foundation of Jesus Christ. Here, the steward is pictured as a “**wise masterbuilder,**” who laid the foundation and now instructs everyone in his care as to how to build thereupon. That house is built according to the grace of God which is given unto the steward and passed to the builders.

The steward is responsible for:

1. **Ministering God’s words.** (Luke 4:12 with Luke 12:41-42). Pointing people to the evidence and the clues and the information needed to solve the mysteries of God. Feeding people with the spiritual food that they need
 2. **Ministering God’s grace** (1 Peter 4:10). Let people know who God is by letting them see the attributes of the Lord in you. Be gracious to people, as God has been gracious to you.
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The steward is responsible to be:

1. **Faithful** (Luke 12:44, 1 Cor. 4:2). God’s stewards must be **consistently** ministering God’s truth and God’s grace. He must be a godly example at all times, ministering God’s word and God’s grace faithfully.
 2. **Blameless** (Titus 1:7, Hebrews 13:7). People ought to be able to confidently follow a man whose life (his conversation, his character) is patterned by the word of God. He must minister the word of God and live a godly life (ministering the grace of God).
 - a. Hebrews 13:17. In the day of judgment, if a steward is found blameless (he taught the word and he lived it), then when he gives account for those who were under his care, he can do it with joy, and not with grief.
 - b. If you rebel against a blameless steward, it is unprofitable for you (both now and in the day of judgment).
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