
“All In” Stewardship Series

Lesson 2

God Owns it All

Lesson Objectives:

Know God owns everything and he has entrusted us to be wise stewards of his ownership.

Understand God has called us to use the possessions he has given us to bless him and others.



SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Psalms 24:1
Psalms 50:10-12
Haggai 2:8
Deuteronomy 8:18
Deuteronomy 10:14
I Corinthians 6:19-20
I Chronicles 29:1-20

Introduction

Have you ever heard the phrases “we are doing a series on stewardship” or “the church is doing a stewardship campaign”.

What is stewardship?

Webster's online dictionary defines stewardship as; the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; *especially* the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.¹

Vision Point/Icebreaker

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

How many times have we seen two children argue over a toy proclaiming, “It's mine”, or “I had it first”. It seems that all of us are born with the innate desire to proclaim ownership of our possessions. Maybe you have even witnessed a similar battle among your own children or grandchildren. Sometimes as adults, we still want to cling tightly to our possessions.

- Do you recall uttering "Mine!" as a child? What were the circumstances?
- How do you struggle with claiming possessions as your own today?
- Why can this self-centered thinking be troublesome?

A right perspective of wealth and possessions begins with the recognition that everything we have belongs to God and comes from God. We are accountable to Him for how we use whatever He entrusts to us. Such an attitude stands in sharp contrast to the world's prideful illusion of self-sufficiency. A balanced growing relationship with God means that we live out His values in ethics and morality. This lesson helps us put our possessions in perspective by recognizing that God is the Owner and Giver of everything we have.

God Owns it All

Call on several people to read the following verses

Psalm 24:1 (NASB)

¹The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it.

Psalm 50:10-12 (NASB)

¹⁰ "For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills.

¹¹ "I know every bird of the mountains, And everything that moves in the field is Mine.

¹² "If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains.

Haggai 2:8 (NASB)

⁸ 'The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,' declares the LORD of hosts.

Deuteronomy 8:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ "But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.

Deuteronomy 10:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ "Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NASB)

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

²⁰ For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

- Have the group make a list of all of the things these passages say God owns.
- What is God trying to communicate to us through these verses of scripture?

When our possessions are in proper focus, they present a crystal clear picture that can bless God and others. If they are not in proper focus, like a fuzzy picture, they can be quite harmful in our lives. Today we'll look at a time in David's life when his possessions were in proper focus and how it became a blessing to God and to the people of Israel.

Have a volunteer read 1 Chronicles 29:1-9

- In Verse 1 for whom does David say they are building the temple?
- What example did David and the leaders of Israel set?
- Why did the people rejoice?
- How did their attitude toward their possessions affect their giving to the work of God?

Have a volunteer read 1 Chronicles 29:10-11.

“My” is one of the most misused words in our vocabulary. We are quick to declare: my job, my money, my talents, my wealth, my belongings, my family, and, even, my life. Biblically speaking, God owns it all, and we are managers of what He has entrusted to us during for our brief stay on earth. King David understood this principle and communicated it clearly in 1 Chronicles 29.

- What things do you consider rightfully yours (such as jobs, home, titles, possessions, family, savings, etc.)?
- What would you find the most difficult to freely hand to God without further claim to it?
- If you were to give your very best to God, what would that include?

At this juncture in Israel's history, David was an old man about to die and knew his reign was ending. This was his final chapter of a well-lived life. To accomplish the task of building God's temple, David spoke words of encouragement to his son Solomon, provided the workforce to complete the task, and bestowed his wealth (along with the gifts of others) to pay for the construction. David planned then prayed. This magnificent prayer is probably the best-known passage in the Books of Chronicles. David praised God for His greatness and recognized that He owned everything. As

with any effective prayer, we are encouraged to follow David's example of praising God for His eternal greatness and power.

Have a volunteer read 1 Chronicles 29:12-16.

Verses 12-16 form the heart of David's prayer as he expresses thanksgiving and joy. After David acknowledged that God owns everything, he then provided four manifestations of God's ownership: (1) He is Creator, (v. 11b); (2) He is the King (v. 12b); (3) from Him comes all human wealth (v. 12a); and (4) He is the Source of humanity's power (v. 12c).

- What are three things for which you can thank God? Three ways you can personally praise Him?
- How would you answer the question David posed in verse 14, "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this?"

In Verse 15 does David is recognizing that we are just sojourners and tenants in the land. In verse 14 & 16 David refers to Israel's gifts to God as coming from God.

- What does recognizing that we are sojourners and tenants in between these two verses imply about our relationship to our possessions?
- Since our very lives are gifts from God, how can we effectively give ourselves back to God in an act of worship?

Have a volunteer read 1 Chronicles 29:17-20.

David planned for the temple (1 Chron. 28), provided for the construction (29:1-9), praised God (vv. 10-16), and then petitioned God (vv. 17-20). Notice, how often the word "heart" is employed in this section. David knew God tests or examines the heart and is pleased with what is a right and upright heart, one filled or controlled by integrity and sincerity. David knew that giving was not about money. The outer reality of proper giving always follows the inner workings of the heart.

- What are some reasons you think David prayed what he did for Solomon?
- Why do you think an upright heart pleases God?
- Who is watching you and following your example of generosity?
- How does this affect your giving?
- What do others see from your example?

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

The same two signs—joyfulness and willingness—are found in our giving when our hearts are right. Our attitudes toward money and use of material possessions always reveal the true nature of our hearts. When our hearts are in sync with God we give freely and are not pressured, enticed, manipulated, or intimidated. And, we give without reservation to God's work and His kingdom cause, the true response of a loyal follower and wholehearted devotion.

- What positive results do we experience when we remember great times of worship?
- How do our attitudes toward money and giving reveal the true nature of our hearts?
- After I give, what does the amount I have left reflect about my heart?

Pray

Ask God to show your group areas of their lives where they may be clinging to things too tightly. Also pray that they would use all they have been given for Him and His glory and to bless others.

Commentary

1 Chronicles 29:10-11

Here we see David as a visionary, a steward who wanted to leave a great legacy. David assembled the leaders of his kingdom and presented his vision of building a palace (temple) for the Ultimate King. This holy place would be recognized as God's dwelling place among His people. David shared his feelings and how God had worked in his heart. He knew the kingdom, this soon-built temple, and the wealth in his possession were not his—they were God's.

At this juncture in Israel's history, David was an old man about to die. This was his final chapter of a well-lived life. He knew his reign was ending. A successor would follow—his son, Solomon.

To Solomon, David presented a great vision of building a magnificent temple and its furnishings for the worship of Almighty God. It would be the grandest building ever constructed. His fondest aspiration was to honor his God by building this palatial structure. To accomplish this feat, David spoke words of encouragement to his son,

provided the workforce to complete the building project, and bestowed his wealth (along with the gifts of others) to pay for the construction.

David acknowledged Solomon, his heir, was “young and inexperienced” (1 Chron. 29:1). Interestingly, Solomon and not David was chosen by God for the task of building the temple. David was “a man of war” with blood on his hands (28:2-3), whereas Solomon was a man of peace. It was as if David were the architect and Solomon the general contractor.

David planned, then prayed. This magnificent prayer is probably the best known passage in the Books of Chronicles. David praised God for His greatness and recognized that the Lord owned everything. The word praised, used twice in verse 10, originated from the verb that means “blessed.” Usually we think of God’s blessing us rather than our blessing God, but David reminds us that God deserves and desires to be blessed. The word praised also means “to bend the knee.” As David prayed, he stood no longer. He knelt, expressing his adoration to God.

As with any effective prayer, we are encouraged to follow David’s example of praising God for His eternal greatness and power. I recall as a young person being taught the A. C. T. S. acronym as an outline for pray. The letters stand for adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication.

Note the word everything in this text: Everything belongs to God (v. 11,14); God is “the ruler of everything” (v. 12); “everything comes from” God (v. 14). These statements summarized the basic principle of biblical stewardship: God owns it all. Because God is the rightful Owner of everything we have, we have a responsibility to manage well all He has entrusted to us.

1 Chronicles 29:12-16

After David acknowledged that God owns everything, that He is the Source of all wealth, he then provided four manifestations of God’s ownership: a) He is Creator, He brought everything into existence (v. 11b); b) He is the King (see “kingdom,” v. 11c) and exalted, the only ruler over the world (v. 12b); c) from Him comes all human wealth—riches and honor come from Him (v. 12a); and d) He is the Source of humanity’s power and might. In His hand are power and might (v. 12c) and it is in His hand to make great and to give strength (v. 12d). (God’s hand is an idiom referring to His ultimate power and authority.)

Verses 12-16 form the heart of David’s prayer as he expresses thanksgiving and joy. David and the people had only given back what had come from God’s hand. The fundamental question David asked is “But who am I, [David asked this question two other times—once of Saul, 1 Sam. 18:18, and once of the Lord, 2 Sam. 7:18; 1 Chron. 17:16] and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this?” David understood that he and the people could give generously because everything they had came from God.

Translated more literally, the latter part of verse 14 would read “and (what is) from Your hand we have given You.” Again, we are the children; God is the Father. God gives us everything we have. Understanding this truth, we realize that we can’t take pride in

being self-made men or women. When we experience God's prosperity, we cannot take credit for our accomplishments. Without God, we have nothing.

Before the eternal God, David declared that he and his people were like all other human beings, foreigners and temporary residents. The patriarchs were often described with these terms, since the land really belonged to the Lord. Their position in the promised land likens to our position on earth today. These terms describe who we are: We are foreigners and temporary residents just passing through. As David revealed, we are without hope, which carries a dual meaning—without God there is no hope in this life or the next. Not even David's wealth and the security it brought him deliver him from death. Life is the ultimate gift from God. We eventually give it back to God.

Since all things come from God and life is short, the wisest thing we can do is give back to God what He gives to us. When we give away our resources by investing in those things that will last for eternity, we make a legacy in much the same way David left a remarkable legacy by planning and providing for the temple. We can't take our money and our possessions with us when we die, but we can give them away while we're still living so that after we are gone, our gifts will still be advancing God's kingdom.

1 Chronicles 29:17-20

David planned for the temple (1 Chron. 28). David provided for the construction (29:1-9). David praised God (vv. 10-16). Then, David petitioned God (vv. 17-20). Notice, how often the word heart is employed in this section. David knew God tests or examines the heart and is pleased with what is right and an upright heart, meaning one filled or controlled by integrity and sincerity. David asked that God would keep this desire or willingness to give in the thoughts of the hearts of the people and confirm their hearts toward Him. Then David beseeched God, "Give my son Solomon a whole heart" or perfect heart, in order that he would be faithful in following God's commandments, completing the daunting task of building the temple, and leading the nation of Israel. David knew that giving was not about money. It was (and is) never about money. It was (and is) always about the heart and faith and relationship with God. The outer reality of proper giving always follows the inner workings of the heart. Did you notice that David connected the keeping of God's commands, ... decrees, and ... statutes (covenant language) with building the temple? David knew that a temple without heart-felt obedience was empty. David requested that his people might always maintain the present generosity, gratitude, and joy of their hearts, and that God might always confirm their hearts toward Him.

Consequently, David led the way by willingly, freely and without pressure, offering his fortune to the construction of the temple. This resulted in the people ... giving joyfully and willingly to God.

The same two signs—joyfulness and willingness—are found in our giving when our hearts are right. Our attitudes toward money and use of material possessions always reveal the true nature of our hearts. When our hearts are in sync with God we give freely and are not pressured, enticed, manipulated, or intimidated. And, we give without reservation to God's work and His kingdom cause, the true response of a loyal follower and wholehearted devotion.

Everything we have is on loan from God. He gives it to us for a little while and says, "Take care of it," until either He wants it back or we die. If we are not careful, the longer we hold on to things, the greater the danger that we might begin to think that things are ours so we grasp them tightly, afraid of losing them. But sooner or later God pries our possessions and our money out of our hands. In the end He takes back that which belongs to Him in the first place, which is everything. When we acknowledge God's rightful ownership of everything, we willingly loosen the grip on material things and use them in ways that please and honor God.

As David concluded his prayer, he invited the whole assembly of people to "Praise the Lord your God." The congregation did just that as they bowed down and paid homage to the Lord and the king and presented their sacrificial gifts. Praise is the best way to not only begin our prayers but to end our prayers.

¹ (Merriam-Webster 2016)