

# **Biblical Stewardship Principles--Early Childhood Version**

**Christian Stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the children of God and God's family, the church, in taking care of all the things God gives us, including life itself, in the way that God wants us to. We take care of and use all things for what God wants us to do.**

## **I. God's Stewards and Everything They Have Belong to God**

**What does this mean:**

**God made us. He formed our bodies before we were born. After we were born, God made us part of His family. He did this when we were baptized in His name, the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This means we belong to God and everything we have belongs to God.**

**What does God's Word say about this?**

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Isaiah 43:1 [God says,] "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have [called] you by name; you are Mine."

2 Corinthians 5:16-17 If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (Paraphrased: God made us new when He made us His children in Baptism. The sinful person is gone; the new person who loves and obeys God has come.)

Ephesians 2:8-10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Paraphrased: God, in His great love, saved us all by Himself. We did not do anything to save ourselves. It is God's gift to us. God made us so that we could do good things for Him. He even got these good things ready for us to do before we were born.)

**How is this done?**

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we**

- \* Know it is God who made us stewards by creating us and then making us His own children through Baptism;
- \* Treat Christian stewards (all God's children) with respect because they belong to God; and
- \* Tell God's children (stewards) that they are God's new creation each day.
- \* Always name God as the One who has given us the gifts of time, money, and talents to use for Him (talents are gifts God gives each of us like singing, leading, listening, being friends, helping, telling about Jesus);
- \* Always talk about stewardship to include everything--life, money, time, and talents--to use for the Lord; and never limit it to just money or any other single area of life (talents or time).

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will not:**

- \* Tell God's people when they give of their time, talent, and treasures that giving is a way to get something--especially heaven--from God.

## **II. God's Stewards Manage Everything God Gives Them; They Do Not Own Anything**

**What does this mean?**

**God has given life to His stewards (people who take care of things for God). He has given them everything they need to live and enjoy life. He has given them the ability to take care of (manage) these things for Him with responsibility and joy.**

**What does God's Word say about this?**

Genesis 2:15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (This was the work God had planned for Adam to do.)

Psalms 24:1 The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

1 Chronicles 29:14 "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given You only what comes from Your hand."  
(David and God's people told God they knew everything they had was His. They were just giving back to God what already belonged to Him.)

2 Corinthians 8:5 (Paraphrased:) Poor people from Macedonia gave themselves to God and then gave money to help others. They were glad to do so because they knew it was what God wanted them to do.

Luke 12:48b (Paraphrased:) If you have been given a lot, God will demand a lot from you; if God has trusted you with much more, He will ask you for much more.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 (Paraphrased:) Tell those who are rich now not to be proud and boast about their money or to hope in it, because they may not have it always. Tell them instead to hope in God, who gives us everything we need to enjoy. Tell those who are rich to do good, and do good things, to give to others and be willing to share. Help them know the most important treasure is the good news of Jesus Christ, who gives us a new life in Him both now and in heaven.

**How is this done?**

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help,**

**we will:**

- \* Take care of our life and everything God gives us so we can use them for what God wants us to do with them;
- \* Know that God will help us take care of and use what He gives us;
- \* Want to live and give cheerfully for God when we work, when we play, when we worship; we always want to give our best from all we have;
- \* Always remember that God is the Owner and that He has given us things to take care of for Him; and
- \* Receive and use God's gifts with thanksgiving.

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will not:**

- \* Talk as if we own what God has given us;
- \* Forget that God is the Owner because we start to believe that the things we have or the work we do or the people in our lives are more important than God; or
- \* Fail to remember that if God has given us great big blessings, He also gives us great big responsibility. He wants us to take care of what He gives us and use those things for His plans and purposes.

### III. God's Stewards Are Holy Before God, Yet They Still Sin

What does this mean?

**God's people (His stewards) are joyful because God has made them saints. Saints are people who are holy in God's eyes because Jesus took their sins to the cross when He died. God's Holy Spirit helps God's stewards to live the way God wants them to, to do good and help others. At the same time God's stewards know that they do bad things and they must fight against sin and the evil sin brings each day.**

What does God's Word say about this?

Ephesians 4:22-24 (Paraphrased:) You were taught to stop doing the things you did before you knew Jesus, to let Jesus make you new, to be right and holy before God.

Romans 7:21-25 (Paraphrased:) There is a law (rule) at work in my life: I want to do good, but evil is right there with me. Way inside of me, I find joy in God's law. But sin and evil are also inside of me, trying to make me sin and do evil. It's like being a prisoner. It makes me very miserable. Who will rescue me from all this? Thanks be to God-- Jesus Christ has rescued me. He is my Lord. I am a slave to God's law because He made me His own; but the sinner in me is also a slave to the law of sin.

1 John 3:1-2 How great is the love the Father has lavished [poured] on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know [God]. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and [God has not let us know yet what we will be]. But we know that when [Jesus] appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

1 Peter 2:9-10 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may [tell about and sing] the praises of [God] who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received [God's great love], but now you have received [God's great love].

How is this done?

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will:**

\* Know that great good or great evil can happen because of how we take care of and use what God has given us;

\* Look carefully at everything we say. We want God's Law to be just God's Law: it tells us how to live; it tells us what God knows is right or wrong; it tells us when we sin; it helps us not to sin; but it cannot save us and get us to heaven;

God's Good News is the Gospel: it tells about the great love Jesus has for us-- that He died on the cross to forgive all the bad things we do; it tells us that because God loves us and sent Jesus, we will go to heaven. It tells us that God's Holy Spirit helps us live as God's loved children and we can't do it on our own. We also have to know that God's people are holy in God's eyes at the same time they still sin against God and need His love and forgiveness; and

\* Look for ways to grow in our faith: listen to Bible stories and about how God wants us to live; attend church and Sunday school, pray, talk about God with and to others; in these ways, God will help us grow in knowing about Him and grow in our love for Him.

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will not:**

\* Listen to anything that gets us mixed up or confused about how much God loves us and how He wants us to use and take care of what He has given us;

\* Think that all Christians know God and know about Him as much as everyone else does; or

\* Talk in any way to others that makes them do or say something God doesn't want them to do or say; but help them know they can always act in love for God and for others.

## **IV. We Each Live As an Only Child But Always Together in the Middle of God's Big Family**

**What does this mean?**

**God gives each person special gifts and blessings to use for Him; each person's gifts and blessings are different from everyone else's. But God helps us live together with other Christians. He helps us use our gifts and blessings for each other and for the whole world. We do this out of love for God.**

**What does God's Word say about this?**

Romans 12:4-5      (Paraphrased:) God made our bodies with eyes, ears, hands, feet, mouths, and noses. Each part of the body does something special. All parts of the body belong together and work together. God made each member of His family with special gifts. He gives each of them special jobs to do. The people in God's family belong to each other and need each other. They work together for God.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13      (Paraphrased:) We have one body, even though there are lots of parts to it. And though there are lots of parts, it is still only one body. It is the same way with Jesus. All Christians--people who believe in Jesus--were baptized by one Spirit. That means we are all one family, all one in Jesus.

1 Peter 4:10      Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, [in many ways helping people know God's great love].

2 Corinthians 8:13-14      (Paraphrased:) God wants us to know that when someone is in trouble, we should help; if someone does not have food or clothes or money, and we do, we should give to help; sometime we may need help in the same way and God will want others to help us.

Galatians 6:10      (Paraphrased:) When we see a need or are able to, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

**How is this done?**

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirits help, we will:**

\* Know that God has made each one of us special and has given each of us special gifts and blessings; God gives us the privilege of using those gifts and

blessings to honor and praise Him and bless others;

\* Know that each person's gifts and blessings are different from everyone else's; and that God helps us use those gifts and blessings in a way that only we can do; and yet

\* Know that we are all members of God's family and that we are to use our gifts and work together with others in God's family for His kingdom;

\* Help each other to know what gifts and blessings we have; help each other care for and use the gifts God has given to us;

\* Rejoice in the gifts God has given to others for the good of the Kingdom; and

\* Remember that God showers blessings upon those who manage them wisely and well for the common good.

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will not:**

\* Say or think or act as if our gift is more important than another person's gift; we cannot ignore or put down the gifts God has given to others; or

\* Think that we do not need each other and each other's gifts as we work together in God's Kingdom.

## **V. God's Stewards Are *in* the World, But Not of the World**

**What does this mean?**

**God's people live in the world. But people in the world live and act as if they do not know God and His love for them. God's Holy Spirit changes us, as God's people, by the power of the Good News of Jesus. God's power changes us to live lives that make God happy and show people in the world that God loves us.**

**What does God's Word say about this?**

Romans 12:2(Paraphrased:) Do not live in the same way people who do not know Jesus live; the Holy Spirit has changed us to live as Jesus lived. Living as God wants us to will not get us into heaven, but it makes God happy. It also shows other people that God lives in us and that we have given ourselves to Him.

John 17:15-18 (Paraphrased:) [Jesus prayed:] "Dear Father, do not take My friends out of the world, but protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Make them holy by the truth of Your Word. Help them live to please You. As You sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world."

Genesis 12:1-3 12:1 [God said] to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (God meant that Jesus would someday be born into Abram's family and through Jesus' death on the cross, all people would be blessed.)

John 16:33 [Jesus told His friends:] "I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (Jesus is stronger than the world, the devil, and even death.)

**How is this done?**

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will:**

\* Know that the Good News of Jesus changes us. We live in the world, but do not live like people in the world. We live to please God. But we want people in the world to know how much God loves us--that He sent Jesus, His only Son, to die

on the cross for our sins. We ask God to protect us from the temptations of the world;

\* Know that whatever we say and do will tell other people how much God loves us and how much we love God;

\* Encourage each other to live as God wants us to; to talk and act in ways that show God's love; to know that when we hurt each other or don't show God's love, God, in Jesus, forgives us and helps us the next time; and

\* Pray that God will make each person strong to live as God wants us to. In that way, others will see God's love for us and for them.

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will not:**

\* Show love and act in love to only people at church or in our Sunday school or day school classes;

\* Forget to ask God to help us use our gifts to tell others how much God loves them;

\* Forget that we live *in* but we do not live like people *of* the world.

## VI. God's Stewards Are Loved and Loving

### What does this mean?

**God's stewards know that God loves them. Because God loves us and sent Jesus for us, we take care of and use the gifts God gives. This gives us power to love others with acts of Christ-like love.**

### What does God's Word say about this?

1 John 4:19 We love because [God] first loved us.

1 John 3: 16-18 (Paraphrased:) This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ died for us. And we should have so much love for each other that we should be willing to die for someone else. If we have food or clothes and see someone who needs those things and we don't help, then we must ask if God's love is really in us. Dear children, let us not love with words or in talking, but with actions and in truth.

John 13:34-35 [Jesus said,] "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this [all people] will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another."

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (Paraphrased:) Jesus loves us so much that He died on the cross for us. That means that our sinful nature (that part of us that wants to sin and does sin) died on the cross too. Now we can live for Jesus, and not just to please ourselves.

Galatians 5:6b The only thing that counts is faith [showing] itself through love. (This means God lives in our hearts and helps us love other people. Then others will know how much God is love.)

### How is this done?

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will:**

\* Know that whatever we do, when we do it in faith in Jesus, we are taking care of and using the gifts God has given us;

\* Take care of each other and show love to each other as members of God's family as we make choices to show Christ-like love in many ways; and

\* Look for ways to show God's love in us; to show and tell God's Good News about Jesus to others; live a life of love that shows God lives in us.

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will not:**

\* Live for ourselves, but in love for God, live for Him and for each other;

\* Ignore or make fun of anyone's gift of love in word or deed; we will know that each person shows God's love in the way he or she best knows how;

\* Forget to pray for one another and to love each other as Christ loves us.

## **VII. God's Stewards Do Good for Others as the Lord Does Good for Them**

**What does this mean?**

**God's stewards know that Jesus loves them. They know that Jesus helps them do good things for others, that Jesus helps them serve one another in love no matter where they are or what they are doing.**

**What does God's Word say about this?**

Philippians 2:5-8 (Paraphrased:) Act like Jesus, think like Jesus, speak like Jesus. Jesus is God and He still became a Baby in Bethlehem. He grew up to serve people, to do good, to help them, to give them food, to heal them, and finally, to even die on the cross for them.

Matthew 20:26b-28 (Paraphrased:) If you want to be great, you must serve one another; if you want to be first, you must work for nothing for others. Jesus came to serve others, not to have others serve Him. He even gave His life to death on the cross for many people.

John 13:3-5; 14-15, 17 (Paraphrased:) Jesus knew that God the Father had given Him power over everything. Jesus knew that He came from God and was going back to God. [Jesus wanted to show His friends what it meant to serve others,] so He got up from the meal, took off His outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around His waist. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him. [Jesus said to His disciples,] "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ... Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

Galatians 5:13      Serve one another in love.

**How is this done?**

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will:**

\* Know that when we serve people at home, at school and church, in our

neighborhoods, we are living as God's children and being Christian stewards;

\* Know that Jesus came to serve others; He lets us serve too and gives us the gifts and blessings we need to do just that; and

\* Be a servant to all other people no matter who they are.

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will not:**

\* Stop serving others just to do what we want;

\* Stop loving each other and telling each other to be God's servants in all that we do;

\* Stop telling each other to do acts of kindness and love, and use the abilities, gifts, money, and time God has given us.

## VIII. God's Stewards Live Knowing that We Live on Earth Now and Will Live Someday Forever in Heaven

What does this mean?

**We are God's stewards (we take care of and use what God gives us for His plans and purposes). We live and know that God is planning a place in heaven for us. But we also know that we live here on earth and that God rules over us.**

What does God's Word say about this?

Matthew 6:19-21 (Paraphrased:) Jesus said, "Do not save all kinds of toys and treasures on earth. Those things get broken. They rust or someone steals them. Instead, set your heart on heaven. In heaven, there are no moths. Rust cannot destroy treasures in heaven. Thieves cannot break in and steal treasures in heaven. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

1 Timothy 6:17-19 (Paraphrased:) Tell those who are rich now not to be proud and boast about their money or to hope in it, because they may not have it always. Tell them instead to hope in God, who gives us everything we need to enjoy. Tell those who are rich to do good things, to give to others and be willing to share. Help them know that the most important treasure is the good news of Jesus Christ, who gives us a new life in Him both now and in heaven.

Philippians 3:12-14; 20 (Paraphrased:) Paul writes: "God has not given me everything yet. I do not know Jesus as I really want to; I have not been made perfect and won't be until I get to heaven. I have not gotten to heaven yet. But I keep working at what Jesus wants me to do. I know that Jesus has already done everything for me. I have not taken hold of it yet. But I forget what is past--my sins and my troubles. I keep working toward what is ahead. I force myself to go on toward the goal to win the prize that God has for me in heaven. God keeps calling me toward heaven in Jesus. But our real home is heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Peter 3:11-12a (Paraphrased:) Since everything on this earth will be destroyed, what kind of people should you be? You should live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the last day when God will

take us to heaven.

Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their [work], for their deeds will follow [with] them."

**How is this done?**

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will:**

- \* Know that everything we decide to do or not do can have importance for when we live with God forever in heaven;
- \* Plan what we do and say, thinking about God's plans and purpose for us. God has plans for us here on earth and when we go to heaven to live with Him forever; and
- \* Rejoice because what we do now as God's children for God can make a difference in heaven.

**As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will not:**

- \* Live only here on earth and forget that we need to tell others about heaven; or
- \* Live only for heaven and forget about telling other people that Jesus' love for them here on earth can help them now .