

Whoever finds his life will
lose it, and whoever loses
his life for my sake will
find it.
Mt 10:39

Share the teaching
Guard the sharing

Male Call

June 8, 2007

Stewardship—The Paradox of Christian Stewardship¹—Part IV

6:00 – 6:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Coffee & Donuts 2) Opening Prayer
6:05 – 6:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Previous challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Take 5: [1] 5 min reading the Bible, 5 min in meditation, 5 min in prayer; 2) praying with your family]? b) Graphing your money and time usage? 2) Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) All belongs to God (Gen 1) b) We are stewards of ALL that God has created: material things and ourselves. c) Possessions are mentioned three times more than love in the Bible. Stewardship is God's way of raising people; we should beg to participate (2Cor 8:1-5) d) Everything must be secondary to seeking Jesus (Phil 3:7-11) e) You will find you cannot do stewardship on your own. God must do the work in us. f) We give because God gives; we are made in his image g) Declare God as our Lord and trust that he will provide (Mt 6:33) 3) Live an extraordinary life (Matthew 5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Beatitudes (Mt 5:1-12; see last page) b) Salt and Light (Mt 5:13-16) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Note—Jesus doesn't say we are <i>to be</i> salt and light, he says we <i>are</i> ii) We <i>are</i> salt (indispensable to life) iii) We <i>are</i> light (impossible to hide a light in the darkness) c) Righteous (Mt 5:17-20) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) We are to obey the law, but our righteousness is in Christ (exceeding the scribes and Pharisees) who has perfectly fulfilled the law d) Toward others (Mt 5:21-32) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) There is to be no barrier—anger, lust—between us and God e) Truthful (Mt 5:33-37) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) No need for an oath

¹ *The Cost of Stewardship*, Bonhoeffer, ch 6-17.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f) Overcome evil with good (Mt 5:38-42) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) We do not justify evil acts; by our suffering we expose evil for what it is ii) Jesus took the full force of evil on the cross and exhausted it iii) This is the only way to meet and overcome evil iv) We participate with Jesus on the cross g) Love our enemies because God loves us (Mt 5:43-48) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Note—in Mt 5:39, Jesus refers to the person as evil, not just the actions ii) Jn 3:16, Rom 5:8 <p>4) Live a hidden life (Matthew 6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Hidden giving (Mt 6:1-4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) No fanfare; actions of left hand hidden from right hand b) Hidden prayer (Mt 6:5-8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Pray in secret c) Hidden devotion (Mt 6:16-18) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Fast in secret d) Carefree life (Mt 6:19-34) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Do not store up treasures ii) Do not be anxious <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Possessions stored up to alleviate anxiety often become its source <p>5) Paradox: Be Seen (Mt 5) & Hide (Mt 6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Doing only former (being seen) can easily lead to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Self-righteousness, and the manifestation of our reward is from the world not from God ii) Fanaticism iii) Working in our own strength b) Doing only the latter (hiding) can easily lead to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Look outwardly as world-conforming ii) Withdrawal into asceticism and risk uselessness to the Kingdom c) Proper balance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Both are necessary to maintain balance ii) Cause us to act “extraordinarily” but “reflect” on our motives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Acts can be visible but not for the sake of visibility <p>6) From whom are we to hide our acts?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) OURSELVES b) <i>We must be unaware of our own righteousness, and see it only in so far as we look unto Jesus²</i> c) We live “extraordinary” lives not because of anything we do, but because of Christ who lives in us d) Boast only in Christ: Rom 15:17; 1Cor 3:21-23, 4:7; 2Cor 10:17, 11:30; James 4:16
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² Bonhoeffer, p158.

6:25 – 7:00	<p>Interaction and prayer</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) With respect to stewardship, it seems the modern church has tilted toward “hide.” Would a move toward the proper balance between “be seen” and “hide” change the way in which we exhibit our stewardship? 2) Paul often says, “Imitate me” and “Boast only in Christ.” How should a mature Christian publicly demonstrate his/her stewardship so that less mature Christians can learn to imitate? 3) See Psalm 139:23-24. What are barriers preventing you from becoming a good steward?
7:00	Closing Prayer

Further reading:

- The *Bible*
- Willmer, Wesley K., *God & Your Stuff*
- Cushman, Ralph Spaulding, *The Message of Stewardship*
- Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*
- Piper, John, *don't waste your life*
- Hughes, R. Kent. *Disciplines of a Godly Man*
- Murray, Andrew. *With Christ in the School of Prayer*
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*

The Beatitudes

NIV—Mt 5:3-12	<i>Harper's Bible Dictionary</i>
³ Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	Those who are not only economically deprived but who also stand before God with no illusions of self-righteousness or self-sufficiency.
⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.	Those who grieve over sin and evil in the world.
⁵ Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.	Those who are lowly and powerless, whose only hope is God.
⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.	Those who yearn for the final salvation that only God can effect.
⁷ Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.	Those who eschew judgment and forgive.
⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.	Those who are undivided in their allegiance to God.
⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.	Those who work for the wholeness and well-being that God wills for a broken world.
¹⁰⁻¹¹ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.	Those who incur tribulation because, as disciples of Jesus, they serve God.
¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.	What is promised these various persons is essentially the same benefit, the end-time salvation that attends God's kingly Rule (cf. Matt. 5:3, 10)