

# BEING A GOOD STEWARD

ANDY SNOKE

The definition of a steward is a person who manages another's property or financial affairs; one who administers anything as the agent of another or others. In other words, someone who manages someone else's goods or property.

If I were to give you 100 dollars and ask you to manage it for me, the \$100 would not be yours, it would always be mine. You would simply be the manager or the steward.

If the Lord were to give you riches, or properties, or wealth, or just enough daily bread for the day, it is not yours, it is the Lord's and you are the steward of what God has entrusted to you.

Paul in writing to Titus reminded the church that its leaders were to be good "stewards" of God's charge over their lives:

*"For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined"* (Titus 1:7-8, ESV).

## Jesus Shared An Interesting Story In Luke

*"And He said to them, 'Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.'" Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God"* (Luke 12:15-21, NKJV).

Let's unpack this short parable for the golden nuggets of truth presented at its core. The rich fool had sin in his life, but what was it? He did not gain his wealth in an immoral or illegal manner. Certainly, he was a diligent worker, not lazy in the least. His sin was that he was pursuing wealth for the sake of his ease, security, and longevity, with no thought toward the kingdom of God. The

universe of his mind was centered around only himself, his comfort, ease, accomplishments, and wealth, and not that of the greater kingdom of God.

The rich fool uses 11 personal pronouns, the dreaded “I” six times and “my” five times, to speak of “his” possessions, (i.e. my crops, my barns, my grain, my goods, my soul). He does not acknowledge that these things belong to God in the first place.

If only the rich fool had realized that all that he had was the Lord’s to begin with, including his work ethic and his investment strategy. His health, the very breath in his lungs belonged to the Lord. The rich fool was only a steward, an unwise steward of what was allotted him temporarily. How life could have been drastically different for the rich fool if he had followed the advice of James 4:13-16, *“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit’; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.’ But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil”* (NKJV).

I mentioned earlier the sin of the rich fool was in using 11 personal pronouns, accrediting his glory and success to himself instead of giving glory to God. He used the words “I” and “my” for his own glory. The Word of God tells us about another being who had sinned with the use of his personal pronouns that got him, and all of us, in trouble!

### The Fall of Lucifer

*“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the round, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven,*

*I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation. On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’*

*Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit”* (Isaiah 14:12-15, NKJV).

Lucifer had problems using the personal pronoun “I.” He loved to give credit to himself. The created angelic being stole all glory from the One that created him. Satan enjoyed exalting himself, taking false credit to himself, and basking in self-exalted arrogance.

In our society today, it is no secret that men and women are in love with themselves. *“I, I, I, I will exalt my throne,” Lucifer said.* The Word of God has warned us that men would be lovers of themselves.

### Perilous Times and Perilous Men

*“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God”* (2 Timothy 3:1-4, NKJV).

To accommodate our self-love, camera phones have been redesigned to have front-facing lenses to take selfies, and pictures of ourselves. If you walk any popular beach in the world, you will trip over young people infatuated and lost in the glamor of their next great Instagram selfie for their little universe of admirers to love. *“I will exalt my throne”* Lucifer said. Are we saying the same today?

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had problems with the personal pronoun use of “I” when he failed to acknowledge ownership of Babylon to God and gave glory and credit to himself. He was stricken in the likeness of a beast for seven years as his punishment for his arrogance. Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten that he was not so much a king, but simply a steward of a kingdom that God had placed into his hands. The Lord raises kings, and the Lord removes kings.

*“The king spoke, saying, ‘Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?’ While the word was still in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from heaven: ‘King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses”* (Daniel 4:30-32, NKJV).

I find it ironic that today when filling out medical forms, in our lost society, we are now asked to check from multiple boxes (more than two) what our gender is and what pronouns to use when addressing us in person. People are now sued, in some cases, because of the use of the wrong pronouns. I am reminded that Satan, the enemy of our soul, also had problems with personal pronouns. The rich fool may have lost his soul because of his love of his pronouns. Let us readily acknowledge who we are and who God is. Let us acknowledge God as our Creator and provider of all that we have and enjoy. Let us be his humble stewards and servants.

The Parable of the Talents is a classic example of our lives being stewards of what God has entrusted to us. Pause for a moment and realize that everything that we have is from the Lord and it has been loaned to us for a short time while travelling the earth. The Lord has entrusted to us breath, time, and opportunity for the sake of the kingdom of God. In the final analysis, our lives do not belong to us, they are the Lord’s and ultimately there will be a reckoning of what we did with our time and talents. No man or woman lives or dies to themselves.

In the following parable, the term “talents,” according to several commentators, appears to mean not money but “abilities, talents, opportunities, gifts.” In other words, this parable is a picture of the Lord as He made His way to heaven distributing to you and me different measures of spiritual and natural talents for us to use for His kingdom as stewards. But He plans on returning to see how we have used those “talents.” Have we multiplied them, or squandered them? We will need to answer for our stewardship.

You will find in Matthew 25:20-23 that two of the men received the same reward, which indicates that what the Lord is looking for is simply faithfulness in relationship to the amount of the gift or ability that he gives. To him that is given much, much is required (Luke 12:48). The third is condemned for his sloth and indifference (Matthew 25:24-26).

### The Parable of the Talents

*“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.*

*“So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’*

*“Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’*

*“But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.*

*For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”*

(Matthew 25:14-30, NKJV). See also Luke 19:11-27.

We can see from these scriptures that there appears to be a price to be paid for spiritual apathy, for spiritual laziness. In this last great move of the Spirit, we have been blessed to be prayed and prophesied over for the impartation of our spiritual gifts and ministries. What a great blessing this is to see and understand more clearly the specific calling that God has bestowed on a believer’s life.

*“Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.”*  
(1 Timothy 4:14-15 (NKJV))

Yet, as blessed as this experience is, it would be far better to not know what the believer’s gifts and callings are if the believer is not going to walk in them and practice them. It would be like the unprofitable servant placing his master’s talent in a hole in the ground.

Let us pray and ask the Lord to help us be faithful stewards.

Here are some attributes that can be found in good stewards. I have borrowed some of these thoughts from others:

- Those who recognize that God owns everything.
- Those who practice the spiritual gifts that have been prayed over them.
- Those who faithfully manage resources according to biblical principles.
- Those who intentionally multiply resources and use them for God’s glory.
- Those who give cheerfully, save consistently, invest wisely, and avoid debt.
- Those who work as unto the Lord.
- Those who tithe regularly.
- Those who pray consistently, and frequently for guidance and wisdom.
- Those who pattern their daily life, family life, married life, and personal life after the pattern of the scriptures.
- Those who are not wasteful in the limited resources that God has given them.
- Those who look for opportunities to share with others the love and Word of God as ambassadors.
- Those who are mindful of ways to help the less fortunate. †

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Headquarters:  
802 Airport Road  
North Battleford, SK S9A 2Z3 Canada

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 934  
North Battleford, SK S9A 2Z3 Canada

Telephone:  
(306) 445-2733

Email:  
[info@globalmissionsinc.org](mailto:info@globalmissionsinc.org)

Online:  
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