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## INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP

### Learning and Experiencing The Essentials of the Christian Life

#### Introduction

Purpose of the Manual  
Before You Start

#### Part I The Life In Christ

Chapter 1 Our Assurance Of Salvation  
Chapter 2 Our Identity In Christ  
Chapter 3 Our Life As A Disciple

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Reverence To God

#### Part III The Outer Disciplines Of A Disciple

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Chapter 8 Witnessing - Sharing God's Message  
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Obedience And Victory Over Temptation  
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The Great Commission

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Addendum:

My Heart Christ's Home

CHAPTER 9

STEWARDSHIP - MANAGING GOD'S RESOURCES

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Scripture Reading - Acts 8-14  
Read one chapter each day.
2. Prayer - Use the prayer list page to record your requests and answers.
3. Memorize - 1 Peter 4:10 and 1 Corinthians 4:2
4. Study and complete the material in the chapter.
5. Outline the pastor's Sunday sermon.

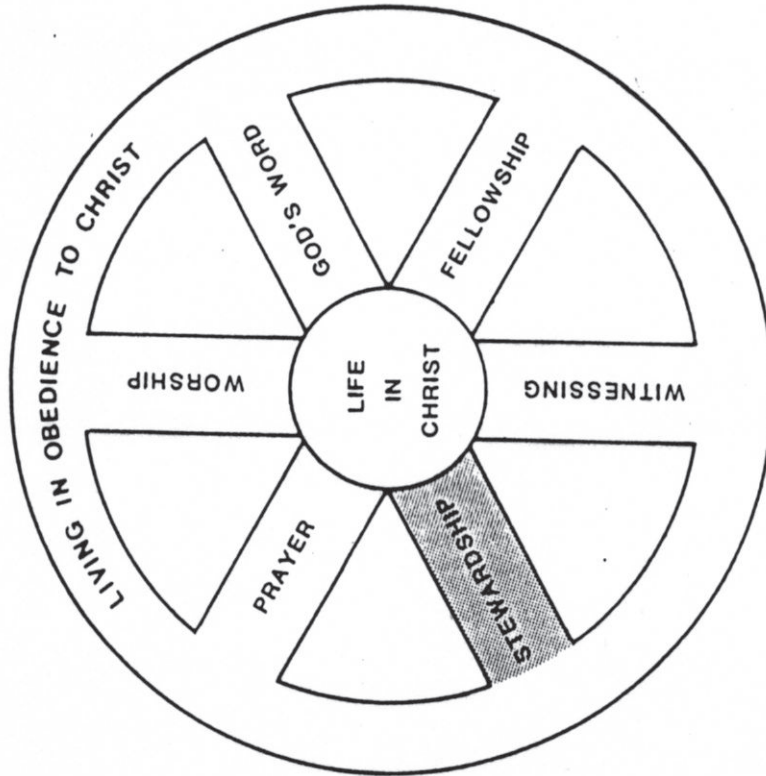
Outline your daily progress below:

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat



CHAPTER 9

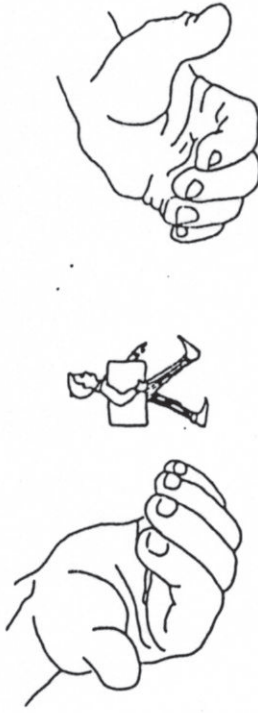
STEWARDSHIP - MANAGING GOD'S RESOURCES



A *steward* is one who takes care of something for someone else (usually in their absence). *Stewardship* is what one does with that which has been committed and entrusted to one's care. It is important first of all to recognize that everything belongs to God. (Deuteronomy 8:18; Psalm 24:1, 50:12). He chooses to entrust to us all that we have and are. "Everything comes from You, and we have given You only what comes from Your hand," (1 Chronicles 29:14b). In other words stewardship could be described as

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taking from one of God's hands and placing it into the other.



Jesus expressed this concept when He said, "... everything You have given me comes from You" and "All I have is Yours, and all You have is mine," (John 17:7b, 10). As disciples we are to be good stewards of all God has entrusted us with:

- title (consistent reputation)
- temple (physical body)
- time (each day)
- talents (abilities/gifts)
- treasure (material possessions)

As stewards, we have all received differing amounts of all five areas according to His plan. The principles of stewardship for us to learn, remember and apply are:

- All - Everything we have received is from God (James 1:17).
- Administer - We are to use what has been entrusted to us in a proper way (1 Corinthians 4:2)
- Accountable - We will all stand before God to give an account of our management of His provisions (2 Corinthians 5:10).

## Stewardship

These three principles are vividly illustrated in the classic stewardship parable (or story) Jesus told in Matthew 25:14-30. Read this parable several times.

In what verses are the principles demonstrated that all receive, all manage and all are held accountable?

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Notice that the result varies from "well done, good and faithful servant" (v.23) to "you wicked, lazy servant" (v.26). Why is there such a drastic contrast?

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What does verse 25 say about the attitude of the one talent servant?

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The difference in their stewardship was *the view they held of their master* (v.25). Stewardship is an outer discipline in life which is to be an overflow of our inner disciplines (Word, Prayer, Worship). When our hearts are right with God, our stewardship will be right as well.

### AREAS OF STEWARDSHIP

Now that we have defined stewardship, we need to examine the five areas of stewardship. Read the Scripture under each category and answer each question accordingly.

#### 1. TITLE.

Title describes our reputation, our name, and who we are. It is the measure of our credibility before others. How we manage it will either cause people to glorify

## Stewardship

God or scoff our hypocrisy. "He must also have a good reputation with outsiders so that he will not fall into disgrace and in to the devil's trap" (1 Timothy 3:7). The names listed in Hebrews 11, "Faith's Hall of Fame" are remembered for their special exhibition of faith. When our names are mentioned, how will we be remembered? Title speaks of our character, and God is more concerned with our character than with our service. We are to prove ourselves faithful in all things -- "whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much..." (Luke 16:10).

What do these verses say about how we are to live? Titus 2:6-8 and 1 Peter 2:12.

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List the qualities that enhance your reputation: (See Colossians 4:5 and James 3:13).

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*People show who they are and what they think of their God by what they do with that which has been given to them by their God.*

#### 2. TEMPLE.

Temple means our physical body. We are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalms 139). We each have been given a unique body where our soul and God's Spirit reside (1 Thessalonians 5:23). If we are a Christian, God calls our body His temple - (2 Corinthians 6:16; "we are the temple of the living



God"). The Bible speaks to us regarding the proper use of our temple in many areas including rest, food exercise and sex. "After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it..." (Ephesians 5:29).

A. REST

How does Exodus 20:8-11 relate to the stewardship of our body in the area of rest?

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Not only do our bodies need sleep to be rested, but they also need a change of pace. God gave us the design when He worked six days and rested on the seventh. Many of us make the mistake of thinking we are stronger than God and don't need to rest our body, and then we suffer the consequences when we violate God's temple.

B. FOOD

How does 1 Corinthians 10:31 illustrate proper stewardship?

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How does Philippians 3:18-19 illustrate a lack of stewardship?

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God promises to provide for our daily needs (Matthew 6:25-26,33) when we seek Him first; that is proper stewardship. If we would follow that principle, there would be fewer people with eating disorders.

C. EXERCISE

How can we demonstrate stewardship of our body according to the illustration in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27?

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God wants and deserves the best we can offer Him - the first fruits, not the leftovers. We can serve God more effectively if we are in good shape physically. But don't let fitness become an end-in-itself, rather, let it be a means to an end. "For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things holding promise for both the present life and the life to come" (1 Timothy 4:8).

D. SEX

According to 1 Corinthians 6:13b, 18-20 and Hebrews 13:4, how are we to be stewards of our sexual morals?

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God, the creator of sex, also set guidelines for its expression (Genesis 1:27-28, 31). When people violate God's standards, rather than fulfillment they find frustration. If the sex drive is not submitted to the Lord for His glory, then the flesh will find opportunity to use it for our downfall. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God which is your spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1).

3. TIME.

Time describes our daily allotment of 86,400 precious seconds. They cannot be saved or transferred to anyone else. We all have the same number - no more, no less. It is as if someone put \$86,400 in an account for us every day, but it must be spent that day or we lose it. How will your money (time) be spent? It helps to have a plan (refer to Personal Goals and Objective chart at the end of this chapter).

How do Ecclesiastes 3:1-3 and Ephesians 5:15-17 address the concept of being good stewards of our time?

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How are we to value time according to Psalm 90:3,4,10,12?

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*Time is the coin of your life. It is the only one you have, and only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let others spend it for you.*  
-- unknown

4. TALENT.

Talent is the natural abilities we have inherited (First-birth talent) and the spiritual gifts we receive after our salvation (Second-birth talent). Each ability and gift is important and given by God for a purpose. It has been said that what we are is our gift from

God, but what we do with what we have is our gift to God. Paul says it this way in Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men." God has given all of us certain abilities that we are to use in our everyday life - our homes, job, church, community - to glorify Him. God has also given us His church - the members of His body of believers - special gifts which we are to use to do the work of the ministry. Too often we are ignorant of them, ignore them or misuse them. As Paul encouraged Timothy to "rekindle" his gift (2 Timothy 1:6), may we be faithful stewards of the talents which God has entrusted to us. (Refer to "Which Gifts Do I Have?" chart at the end of this chapter).

Looking at 1 Peter 4:10,11, how are we to be good stewards of our talent?

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The word for "gift" is *charisma*. A similar word *chara* means "joy." *Charis*, also from the same root, is the word for grace or present which involves God giving us the desire and power to accomplish God's will. We do this when we appropriately use the gifts He has given us. This brings us joy. We can easily identify what our spiritual gifts are by this - what brings us joy (Romans 12:6-8). We will prove to be faithful stewards as we use the gift and worship the Giver. We become unfaithful stewards if we worship the gift and use the Giver.



1 Corinthians 16:2

A regular plan for giving is both scriptural and practical. Planning ensures against irregular or unwise giving, or neglect. In a day when so many demands are made upon our time, and so many giving opportunities are presented, planned giving helps us honor the Lord with our possessions.

The plan should include these steps:

- Thoughtfully decide what percentage of your income you will designate to the Lord's work -- a minimum below which you will not go (starting with 10% of your income is a good idea.) Our prayer should not be, "Lord, how much of my money am I going to give to you," but, "how much of Your money am I going to keep for myself."
- Set aside the Lord's portion first whenever you receive money. Put this aside to be used as He leads. Once set aside it is His and shouldn't be dipped into for personal needs -- even to borrow.
- Prayfully distribute the Lord's money as He directs. It is usually good to do this at a regular time.

*The critical thing about giving is that it be personal and that it be under God's guidance.*  
-- Brother Andrew

A steward is one who owns nothing yet is responsible for everything.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate yourself as a steward?

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2. Define stewardship:

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\_\_\_\_\_

3. With what has God entrusted you?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What do you believe people think of when they hear your name?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Of the areas important to the proper stewardship of our "temple," which cause you the most difficulty? Why?

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Stewardship

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6. What is your best investment of time? Your worst?

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7. List the first-birth and second-birth talents you believe you have (use the chart "Which Gifts Do I Have" to assist you):

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8. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1,4-31 and list those gifts that apply to you:

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9. What is your plan for giving?

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Stewardship

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10. In regard to the use of your "free" time, on what do your thoughts center? (See 2 Corinthians 10:5b).

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Ordering Your Private World, Gordon McDonald

Strategies for Living, Edward Dayton and Ted Engstrom

Money, Sex, and Power, Richard J. Foster

Tyranny of the Urgent, Charles E. Hummel