

 **Spiritual Disciplines: Stewardship (General)**

Lesson 5: Wednesday, September 22, 2021

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**TEACHING NOTES**

**INTRO:**

What a joy it has been to see how God is at work in our growing church.

We are through our first month of Midweek and it is going great.

Thank you to the team who faithfully served in Kids Ministry in our first 4 week shift. I was so blessed to walk the halls and see you love and lead our children unto the Lord.

To all those of you who are new.. It is a real joy to have you digging in with us. I pray you are being intentional to lean in and get to know others and sharing so that you can be known.

Tonight I get to teach on our next Spiritual Discipline, Stewardship.

I will also be teaching on Stewardship next week as we have decided to reserve our stewardship of our money and possessions for an entire lesson.

Tonight I am excited because we get to look at God’s call on our life to practice good God honoring stewardship with our life and the days He entrust to us under the sun.

Even that very language, that God “entrust our days to us”, is stewardship language.

He doesn’t just give us our days and now they belong to us.

No, He entrust them to us to manage well for His glory as they ultimately belong to Him.

This understanding, perspective and pursuit is so critical in the Christian life if we are going to honor God in all we do.

It is critical that we do the spiritual discipline of stewardship.

Which brings be back to our original definition of what a spiritual discipline is.

***The spiritual disciplines are practices we find in Holy Scripture that honor God in our doing and promote spiritual growth in the gospel of Jesus Christ among believers. They are practices or habits that Christians prioritize because it aids us to cling more to Christ and grow in Christlikeness.***

**1 Timothy 4:7** …discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; (NASB)

**Disciplines are practices**. Spiritual disciplines are things you do.

You can do them as a Pharisee who is trying to make something of themself

or you can do them humbly, in a way that draws you into Christ all the more, all with the goal of making much of Christ and becoming more like Christ.

Church, let us not “do” these things for our own name, or in some unbiblical pursuit of work-based righteousness.

No, let us be motived rightly for the glory of God, in love for Christ…knowing that it is the power and will of God causes our doing...

**Philippians 2:12-13** Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed … work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. May it be so in each of us!! With that, let’s pray and dig in…**PRAY**

**The Holy Bible is clear:**

There is only one God. You and I are not Him.

Scripture tells us that God created everything that exists; therefore, everything that exists belongs to Him. The Bible is also clear to tell us that the ultimate reason why everything exists is for His eternal glory!

Speaking of Jesus, Paul says in **Colossians 1:15-16** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and **for him.**

Speaking of God’s rule over all things, Paul says in

**Romans 11:36** For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever!

***We exist for God’s glory!***

The WOTC says in **Q15. Why did God make us?**

God made us to glorify Him, so His glory would be known and praised.

The problem is, in our sinful nature we have chosen to love ourselves more than God, and we want our lives to go the way we want and not the way God commands.

So, in sin, we make our lives about *our* glory!

Because of our sin, our aim is to want to have things our way—according to what is right in our own eyes. What we fail to realize is doing it “our way” is our sin! We fail to accept that what we deserve for our sin—our betrayal, our idolatry—is death.

Even though we deserve death, even though our actions clearly make us enemies of God, in His infinite mercy, God promised that He would come to us to redeem His people. The great hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that God has fulfilled His promise to redeem His people.

**2 Corinthians 5:21** says, For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Praise God forever and ever, because He commissioned His blameless Son to the cross that we deserved so that we could be given the eternal satisfying life with God that only Jesus deserves. Because of what Jesus has done, we have new life in Christ! Not only are our sins paid for by Jesus’ death, but our lives’ motivations are restored to live for God above all else!

**The gospel is not God blessing us so we can glorify ourselves.**

The gospel is God blessing us so He can be glorified by our new lives in Christ!

Without this understanding, any talk we have today about stewardship will be a weight on your shoulders—a duty to perform, a rule to follow, a religious practice to keep up with.

Without Christ at work in us, we will not manage our lives for God’s glory, but for our own. ***Stewardship is all about the reality of and your response to the gospel in your life***.

I am excited.. look with me at the definition of Stewardship.

**Definition:**

**The spiritual discipline of stewardship** is our privileged opportunity to be faithful managers of God’s provisions and God’s purposes for God’s glory and the good of His creation!

**God has called His redeemed people to respond to the gospel and His ongoing provisions with faithful stewardship.**

What we have is all from Him and not ourselves.

**1 Chronicles 29:14** (NIV) “… Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.”

God has called us to steward all that belongs to Him in this time on earth that He has entrusted to us for His purposes. **What belongs to Him?** Everything we have is ultimately from Him.

My life is His! My family is His. My body is His. My Money is His. My time is His. May skills are His.

**Romans 1:6** says that the heart of Christianity is to belong to Jesus! We belong to Him for His glory!

Paul says in.. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

**What are we called to do with all this?**

**Hebrews 13:12-16** So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

So, let me ask you today, **how are you doing at stewardship?**

**Is your life your privileged reality of being a faithful manager of God’s provisions for God’s glory and not your own?**

One of the best ways to check yourself in this is to start at the beginning:

Is it your privilege to joyfully, regularly, and generously manage your schedule, your skills, and your body, your life for God’s glory?

**Is this your approach to life? Is this what shapes the why you live life the way you do?**

**1 Timothy 6:17** (NIV) Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

As redeemed children of God, our joy and our hope is not in our stuff, but in God! “… but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.”

If our hope is in God and our joy is in Christ and our clear understanding is that everything we have is His and is to be used for His glory and His purposes, then we will be good stewards of what He has entrusted to us in this short time for His eternal purposes.

In this we will not have an over grip on our life, our safety, our family, our job, our stuff, our momentary freedoms.

**Stewardship is about management.** We are not just talking about people who try to give what they can when they can. We are talking about a discipline by which we purposefully, intentionally, faithfully, generously manage all the provisions God gives them.

***God has called you and I, His redeemed people, to respond to the gospel and His ongoing provisions with faithful stewardship for His glory and not ours.***

So, I need to ask you today:

1. **Are you even in a position to manage God’s resources for His glory?**
You will not and you cannot do this without Christ as your Savior! Without Christ, stewardship for God’s glory is impossible. You will inevitably make it about you and not Him. It must start by Jesus’ power transforming your heart and motives.
2. **If you are saved, how are you doing?**

**Is your life your privileged reality of being a faithful manager of God’s provisions for God’s glory?**

The spiritual discipline of stewardship is our ***privileged opportunity*** to be faithful managers of God’s provisions and God’s purposes for God’s glory and the good of His creation!

Let’s break down the definition of stewardship

First, it is:

1. **Our Privilege!**

The heart of God’s steward starts with a heart of gratitude or unworthiness!

For those who say, “But I have worked hard to earn what I own and to master the skills I have, to secure the lifestyle that I most enjoy”… I commend you to the Scriptures:

**Deuteronomy 8:17-18** (NIV) You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth …

**1 Corinthians 4:7** For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

Realize, God has not just entrusted you with everything you own, but everything you are—your skills, and the number of days you will live. They are a gift from God. We are privileged to be entrusted with His provisions!

I love John the Baptist’s example of this for us.

He was a big deal in this day. Jesus said he was the most important man to ever live.

But when tempted to make it about himself, when given the opportunity to make it about himself John is sure to highlight that it is his utter privilege to live his life for the glory of Jesus alone.

In John chapter 1 John the Baptist essentially says speaking of Jesus,

 *This one I speak of, the one whom you do not know, is so important and big that, ‘even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.’* *Even though he is physically younger than I; even though I am his elder, I am not worthy to do the work of the lowest slave and untie his sandals*

John later says in **John 3:30** “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

It was John’s life joy to live not for his own fame, not for his own gain, not for His own preferences or objectives but for Jesus! It was His privilege.

The New Testament understanding of the believer's relationship to Christ is that He is the Master and Owner and we are His possession. He is the King, the Lord, and the Son of God. We are His subjects and His subordinates. In a word, we are His loved *slaves*.

What is so helpful is to see the apostle Paul who was at the top of his game according to man before God saved him, Paul, put no longer counted his fleshly accomplishments anything but was so utterly joyful to be Christ slave. It was His greatest privilege to serve God with his life!!!

This is why we see Paul open so many of this letters to the church by identifying himself as a slave of Christ.

Listen to Paul’s words in **Philippians 3:4-11** …If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

**Christian, do you count it all as loss compared to the surpassing greatness of known and serving Christ your Lord? Is it your priveledge to live your life managing all that God has entrusted to you for His glory and not yours?**

What I have found is many Christians don’t see it as their privilege to be good stewards because they don’t see their schedules, their skills, and their stuff as God’s, but instead believe it is theirs!

The spiritual discipline of stewardship is our privileged opportunity to be faithful managers of **God’s provisions** and God’s purposes for God’s glory and the good of His creation!

1. **God’s provisions**

**Do you see that all that you have and all that you can do belongs to God?**

**The very core point of stewardship is that you are managing something that belongs to another. It is NOT yours. It is God’s. We must have this is view every day!!**

**Listen to David as he represents the heart of stewardship well in his prayer in…**

**1 Chronicles 29:13-17** (NLT) "O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name. But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you have already given us! We are here for only a moment, visitors and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days on earth are like a shadow, gone so soon without a trace. "O Lord our God, even these materials that we have gathered to build a Temple to honor your holy name come from you! It all belongs to you! I know, my God, that you examine our hearts and rejoice when you find integrity there. You know I have done all this with good motives, and I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously.”

My heart for us is to be like the people David is speaking of in this passage. They understood everything they had was from God. They understood it was not theirs; it was God’s. Because they understood these things, they stewarded these resources for His glory and not their own.

**Do you see that all that you are and all that you have is God’s?**

And when we really begin to get this, we begin to understand the amazing undeniable privilege it is to be His, and it changes how we manage our time, our talent, and our treasures. It helps me begin to realize I am not building my kingdom; I am building His kingdom for His glory!

I want to be great manager!!! Not a great entrepreneur. It is not my life to build my way.

It is His life that I am to build His way!!!

We’ll come back to some practical applications of this in a bit.

Look with me at the next part of the definition of stewardship.

The spiritual discipline of stewardship is our privileged opportunity to be faithful managers of God’s provisions and ***God’s purposes*** for God’s glory and the good of His creation!

**3- God’s Purposes**

God is the one who rules over his creation as He wills for his purposes and glory.

This means that God purposes each of us with different lots in life, different realities that we face or have to go through that we are to steward well.

**In Daniel 4:35 we read..**  all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?”

**The point is…** God will work his creation as his perfectly wills for his eternal perfect purposes.

We have to be sure to trust in the economy of God, who is on the throne over all things and that he knows best how to steward our lives for maximum glory for himself and good for us.

The biblical truth is that God will use many moments or a lifetime of suffering for his perfect purposes.

Jesus says that the man’s lifelong suffering and aliments are so “the works of God might be displayed in him.”

**For some he purposes them to be rich and for some to be poor.**

**Proverbs 22:2** The rich and the poor meet together; the LORD is the Maker of them all.

God purposes some of you to testify the Gospel and the joy of the Lord in your wealth and others in your poverty. This is His purpose for you.

**For some he purposes for marriage and for some singleness.**

Speaking of marriage and singleness Paul says in..

**1 Corinthians 7:7** But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

God purposes some of you to testify the Gospel and the joy of the Lord in your marriage and others in your singleness. This is His purpose for you.

**For some he purpose to be healthy and strong and for some he purposes to be stricken with impairment and or physical suffering.**

**John 9:1-3** As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

God purposes some of you to testify the Gospel and the joy of the Lord in your physical strength and in others in your physical struggle and even sickness or impermeant. This is His purpose for you.

**For some he purposes them to have children and for others not.**

Scripture says that Children are a gift of God-

**Psalm 127:3** Behold, children are a gift of the LORD.. (NASB)

Scripture also show us that God purposes some to not have children-

**1 Samuel 1:5** But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb.

**For some he purposes to elect them to saving faith and for some he purposes to reveal his wrath and power though them unto their deserved judgment due sin.**

**Romans 9: 10-23**

And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—**in order that God's purpose of election might continue**, not because of works but because of him who calls— she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? **What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power**, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—

God purposes some of you to testify the Gospel and the joy of the Lord in your salvation from sin and in others he is gloried for His wrath and power over their judgement in sin.

**We who belong to Christ must see that our very existence is for the joy of making much of the name of Jesus and so if God ordains hardship or suffering in this life we can be sure he will use it for his good purposes and glory!** Really take that in tonight…

Listen to **Romans 8:28 with fresh ears with me.**

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose

**Do you know this? Do you believe it?**

So that means if and when hardship fall on your doorstep you trust in God.. you rejoice in God.. you endure that hardship for God’s glory and purposes. Whether it’s…

- chronic pain

- health of a baby

- hardship in finding or keeping a job

- living in singleness

- struggling through a hard marriage or raising a tough child

Listen to Peter instruct the saints…

**1 Peter 4:16** ..if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

This leads us to the final two parts of the definition of stewardship.

The spiritual discipline of stewardship is our privileged opportunity to be faithful managers of God’s provisions and God’s purposesfor **God’s glory and the good of His creation**!

**4- God’s glory and the good of His creation:**

We were created for *His* glory. We were bought with a high price for His glory. We have been entrusted with what we have for His glory! We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ; therefore, we can joyously, regularly, and generously live an open-handed life. When we understand that we are transient, that this world is not our home or our goal or our prize, and we don’t clutch the things of this world like this is all there is going to be, then we live at a level of fullness that the world will not understand. But in doing so, we get to escape the traps of the temporary.

**1 Peter 4:10-11** (NIV)Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things **God may be praised** through Jesus Christ.

God has created us and gifted us for a work He has set before us. So, are we using this life He has entrusted to us and the gifts He has entrusted to us to be stewarded for His glory and the good of His creation?

Think about the different areas of your life:

* your relationships
* your chores around the house
* your hobbies
* your job
* your marriage and kids
* your volunteering at church or serving in the community

Let’s consider God’s good word and how it helps us fight our flesh to make it about ourselves so that we manage His provisions his way.

**So, how are you doing?**

* How are you doing at managing the time God entrusts to you?

**Ephesians 5:16** Making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

**You have the same amount of time as anyone else:**

A 24 hour day is the same for you as it is for anybody else.

Even if the sun goes down earlier in your part of the world or it’s way colder where you live, you still live in a world where 24 hours makes a day!

Therefore: **You can’t make time**. **You can’t save time**.

**You have all the time that there is.**

**You have the same amount of time as anyone else does any given day.**

It is only our flesh and or habits of bad stewardship or misplaced commitments that cause us to feel we do not have enough time.

The person who says, they don’t have time for God-commanded things, is lying.

What they are meaning to say is that ***they have chosen other things to fill their time*** in such a way that they are committed to or busy with them instead. This is why, what we choose to say yes to, what we choose to fill our days with, the kind of job we choose, the kind of financial commitments we agree to, the extracurricular commitments we make, all have huge ramifications in how we live our lives.

What I want you to realize is that, God has given you today and has asked you to be a good steward of His provisions and priorities for his glory. Or as Paul has said in EPH 5:16, to make “the best use of the time” he has entrusted to us.

So, you have the same amount of time as the person next to you to do the things God has called and commissioned you to do. The Question is: **What are you doing with that time?**

**Good time management includes:**

* a right understanding and identification of the priorities God has given us. These are your governing values.
* Once you have identified what God has commanded & called you to, you use your God given priorities to set goals to accomplish those priorities.
* Once your goals are set, you must begin to plan and organize your days in a way that helps you meet your goals that satisfies the God given priorities of your life.

Here is the thing, So few people take time to really consider their life and time in this kind of disciplined and structured way.

The problem is, when we don’t do this, we just end up living life, navigating our days on the fly (and likely influenced by the world) and we just “get by.”

**But this is not good stewardship.**

Good stewardship of our days means we are intentional, invested, purposeful and prioritized according to what God has commanded us.

Now, realize with me really quick that it is not just the lazy person that is guilty of being a poor steward. But also the workaholic and over achiever, can be just as guilty of being a poor steward because while very busy they are busy for all the wrong priorities. Instead of pleasing God their pursuits are focused on for the bonus, the temporary accolades, the toys, the lifestyle.

**Ecclesiastes1:3** What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?

**Matthew 16:26** For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?

**We must be better stewards of our days! Do you take time each day before you go to bed to plan the coming day or week according to what is biblically important?**

**James 4:13-15** Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

We must remain mindful that even though we plan our days still belong to God. And so open handed and full of faith we must remain to be in the middle of God’s perfect will for our days.

* How are you doing at managing the skills God entrusts to you?

**Ephesians 2:10** (NIV) For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**What are Good works?**

Good works are things we do or say that honor God.

If the aim or activity of those works are not righteous and unto the glory of God then they are **NOT good works!**

The fact that we are created and then saved “FOR GOOD WORKS” is an important clarity for us to understand. Hear Paul emphasize the purpose of our days that God has ordained for us… Good works that Honor and make much of Him!

**What is it that you are doing with your skills, your abilities?**

**Are they good works that honor God?**

The job we work, the way we spend free time, the way we raise the kids, or manage the house is all opportunity to Honor God. To do things that honor God and not things that are sinful or meaningless.

**Colossians 3:23** Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,

Christian, When God looks back on the life you lived what will you have to show him?

**I am specifically speaking of your life after you were saved? What did you do with your days?**

**What did you do to serve others and be a light of the gospel?**

Because the video game scores you logged, or the amount of novels you read, or the car you rebuilt, or the seasons of tv you watched or the fill in the blank that keep you from biblical priorities...**was it really the Good Works God saved you to do?**

Now, let me make an important point here and that is, some feel that the job they do isn’t that important for the sake of the kingdom but as long as it is not unrighteous or sinful than the good stewardship of your job to work hard is how you honor the Lord.

 It is how you honor God’s call to provide for your family, men or to manage your home, ladies.

It might not be as flashy or globally impactful as another but you were faithful unto the Lord in doing it! Again…

**Colossians 3:23** Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,

* How are you doing at managing the Body God has entrusted to you?

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

### 1 Corinthians 3:16-17  Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

Christian, **how are you stewarding the Body God gave you?**

Are you giving it good rest, good diet, good exercise?

One of the all too common and acceptable sins of Christians is poor management of our body.

Beloved, This is an important area of life that God commands you to be a good steward of.

If I entrusted you with my car for a year and said enjoy it and be blessed by it but take good care of it and then you never cleaned it, you didn’t mind how your drove it so you hammered on the brakes and the abused the tires, you didn’t maintain it with good oil changes so the engine could run well, and you gave it back to me, would you have managed it well? NO.

But all too often this is how we treat our bodies. We fill them with junk food, and toxic chemicals. We don’t give them enough sleep or proper exercise. Church, our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit.

There is nothing light about this reality if you rightly understand who God is and what He is worthy of.

Each of us needs to take very seriously how we steward the life God has given us.

We cannot afford to be flippant or ignorant or shallow in this. We must take it seriously.

Let me use this as an opportunity to speak to a present and pressing issue regarding the stewardship of our bodies unto the Lord.

**Do you know that conviction to steward well one’s body unto the Lord is one of the main reasons why many have chosen not to put questionable vaccines in their bodies?**

Now, for some inoculation through vaccine may be a desired deterrent from the risks of serious disease, some modern-day vaccines may also proven to be very damaging to the body.

Some of you have seen the blessing of certain types of vaccines in your life and time.

Some of you have seen the damage and fall out it can make on the body God has called us to steward well.

There are many claiming that the current Covid-19 “vaccine” is helpful to mitigating the virus’s impact on the body. **But** there are others who recognize that claim isn’t ironclad, and even more, that the side-effects of the vaccines are not fully known yet as this particular vaccine has not seen the time and testing that others have.

Now, I don’t have time to get into all the considerations one must consider regarding vaccinations. Each should be diligent to seek good counsel and look to the word of God to consider if it is proper for a person to get Covid vaccines or various other vaccines.

But for the sake of THIS lesson, my point in bringing this up is that, in the vaccine consideration, there is an issue of your stewardship of your body that cannot be ignored whichever side of the issue you end up on.

Hear me carefully here church family: You have the God given right to say “no” to vaccines because:

1. God has **not** commanded you to be vaccinated, and
2. because **you** are the God-ordained steward of the body God has given you.

**Some might say, what about God’s command to honor authorities who are above us?**

The answer is yes, we should do this, even when it is hard, but we do **not** obey authoritiesif they go against God’s design. Never obey created authorities if their mandate or charge causes you to disobey or dishonor God.

Furthermore, understand that: The government, an employer, law-enforcement, church leaders, family members, friends, the culture around you, etc cannot require you to do something with your body that God has not required.

The point of the matter is “who has God given the stewardship to” *and* *what has God commanded for that steward.*

In this, know that this is **not** a matter of, ‘do with your body whatever is right in your own eyes.’

Where there is God-given liberty, yes you may and can decided for yourself.

But, *listen here church*, let us all know and be very mindful of what God has revealed in His word so that we do not call something an individual liberty to do whatever one wishes, when it is **not** such *according to God*. If God has spoken on the matter, directly or indirectly, in such a way that has implications for the consideration at hand, then we must honor what He has revealed in His word.

So, the authority for what you put in your body or do with your body has been delegated to you, to do according to the good design and authority of God. The authority of your body has not been given to other agencies, like the government or even a doctor.

**Your body is entrusted to you to manage for God’s glory.**

Do not get an emergency vaccine injected into your body simply because some other created entity or authority is telling you to. Instead, apply the Christian framework:

1) What does God say

2) and because you are the God-ordained steward of the body God has given you, what do you think is good and God honoring to do. (\*I would add that scripture says that in marriage our bodies also now belong to our spouses as you are now one and so God honoring unity, communication and honoring should be a part of this decision as well, between you and your spouse)

Now, some of you are feeling the pressure that comes with others overstepping their authority over your body and so you are wrestling with questions like…

**What if you will lose your job?**

**Aren’t we commanded by God to provide for our families?**

Brothers and sisters, hear me clearly, you are to honor the Lord in all things.

But your current job is not your end. You can get another job. You can’t get another body!

Don’t look at this issue in a vacuum but consider how you would act in another situation.

For example, if your boss is telling you to do illegal things for the sake of the company, you don’t continue in that job for the sake of needing to provide for your family, you call it into account and walk away if you need to and look for a job by which you can honor the Lord.

If someone is threatening to take your life if you do not deny Christ, do you deny Christ to keep your life. Your life is a good thing, Right? NO, you do not dishonor Christ to hold more valuable something that is temporary. You trust God.

Now, I will say, there is a lot of threat being made by government authorities and companies but in most cases it is just that. Threat. So please slow down and don’t over react because someone says it might be this way or that way. It might not ever come to fruition so be prudent but not overreacting in your flesh.

Christian, you have the God-given responsibility to manage what God has given you in the ways that Scripture says honors God, not based on what other entities or influences want you do to.

We belong to God and so we do what honors God. That is it.

Scripture is our sufficient source for what is true in a world full of deception and lies. Test all things against the word, and by it will the Lord light our path.

For example, never in Scripture does God say we should quarantine the healthy.

Rather, in Scripture we see that we are to quarantine those we know to be *sick and* who are contagious, for the sake of others.

Therefore, we do not stop living, and stop serving God and honoring His commands on us because the rest of society is or because we think we might get sick if we go about our lives doing what He has called us to. We don’t stop living faithfully. And, we don’t live in fear. We steward the lives God has given us for his purpose and glory!

Remember, our bodies are God’s temple, and the days of our lives are His to number.

We must trust Him and live as He has commanded, whether that means we have a long healthy life, or we become ill while doing what He commands—either of which would be according to His sovereign plan. As long as we were stewarding these things well, according to His word, we have lived properly for His glory.

Church, it is so important that we remember, it belongs to Him!! It’s not ours to do our way.

What I have said here about the current pressing issue on society regarding the vaccine is in no way the total of what there is to consider. But as a steward of the body and life God has given you, you must approach these things carefully and thoughtfully, according to the word of God in order to decide which way you will go.

Please see with me tonight that the way of the people of God is starkly different than the way of our society, and so called experts. We ultimately look to God and His word to direct our paths.

**Proverbs 3:5-8**

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Christian, what are you doing with what God has entrusted to you?

How are your stewarding the life he gives you every day you wake up?

It is so critical that we do business with this discipline. There are many layers for each of us to consider regarding all that good stewardship means in our life!!

We should not waste one moment of this **privileged life God has entrusted to us to be faithful managers of God’s provisions and God’s purposes for God’s glory!**

I am excited to see how we all grow in the area of stewardship.

Your right and accountable attention to your stewardship will truly change our lives and how we live for God.

I am excite to be back with you next week as we look at stewardship as it pertains to our stuff and specifically our finances. Praying for you as you go to your groups and follow your group leaders lead to rightly process and apply these things.