

“Stewardship of Our Spiritual Gifts and Ministry”
I Corinthians 3:5-17, page 1114/1014

Introduction:

1. Reinhold Neibuhr is famous for the following prayer: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as the pathway to peace. Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it. Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His will; that I may be reasonable happy in this life, and supremely happy with Him forever in the next. Amen.”
2. In the living room of our house in Eaton Rapids was a plaque that stated: “Only one life; it soon will pass. Only what’s done for Christ will last!”
3. Jesus urges us to lay up treasures in heaven. *Matthew 6:19-21: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*
4. Today we will consider stewardship of our spiritual gifts and personal ministry.

I. We are all called to a specific personal ministry.

- A. In the New Testament, Jesus called His disciples to a specific ministry. *Mark 1:17-18: “Then Jesus said to them, ‘Come after Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’ And immediately they left their nets and followed Him.”*
- B. The apostle Paul in writing to the believers in the Corinth church states: *II Corinthians 6:3-4: “We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses....”*
- C. Jesus is still saying to all believers:
 1. “Come, follow me.”
 2. “I will make you fishers of men.”
- D. Jesus has a specific ministry for each of us here today:
 1. Regardless of our age.
 2. Regardless of our education.
 3. Regardless if you are male or female.
- E. Our ministry is fulfilled in the activities of daily living:
 1. Giving cup of cold water, *Matthew 10:42.*
 2. Encouraging each other, *Deuteronomy 3:28.*
 3. Praying for each other, *Luke 6:28.*
 4. Extending hospitality to others, *Acts 2:46.*
 5. Serving one another, *Galatians 6:20.*
- F. Do not wait for the BIG event to fulfill your ministry; look for daily opportunities to minister to those in need.
- G. God is calling us to change our world one life at a time!

II. We are equipped to fulfill our respective ministries.

- A. God will never ask us to do something we are not equipped to do!
- B. The Bible is very clear concerning our personal ministries and spiritual gifts that are promised to us:

1. The entire twelfth chapter of *I Corinthians* is devoted to this subject.
 2. The spiritual gifts are outlined in this chapter.
 3. The specific ministries are listed.
 4. This is not the only reference in the Bible concerning this subject, but most of the gifts are recorded here.
- C. Each person here has at least one of the spiritual gifts, and several of you have more than one spiritual gift.
- D. There are two imperative aspects concerning spiritual gifts:
1. We must identify our personal spiritual gifts.
 2. We must implement our spiritual gifts in our daily living.
- E. This is not brain surgery.
1. Spiritual gift of teaching: Chuck Dowding.
 2. Spiritual gift of knowledge: Professor Cox.
 3. Spiritual gift of encouragement: Jack Steenbergh.
 4. Spiritual gift of faith: John and Barb Geer.
 5. Spiritual gift of helps: Wally Reese.
- F. Your spiritual gifts used in your specific ministries are vital to God and other people.

III. We are rewarded for our faithfulness to our ministries.

- A. Jesus shows us how important it is for us to use our spiritual gifts in *Matthew 25:14-15*: *“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.”*
1. Five-talent person invested, made five talents.
 2. Two-talent person invested, made two talents.
 3. One-talent person dug hole, buried his talent; did not lose his talent, but did not use his talent.
 4. Note verse 19: *“After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.”*
- B. The result of this parable Jesus taught is very sobering:
1. Five-talent person was rewarded.
 2. Two-talent person was rewarded.
 3. One-talent person was in big trouble; he lost the one talent and was severely disciplined. *Matthew 25:28-30*: *“Therefore 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.”*

Conclusion:

1. Life is more than jobs, houses, possessions, friends, families, etc.
2. Life is being a wise manager of the blessings that God is sharing with us.
3. Life is reaching out to other people and making a difference in their lives.
4. I urge you to be an effective manager of your spiritual gifts and ministry to others.
5. Always remember: “Only one life; it soon will pass. Only what’s done for Christ will last!”