

## **STEWARDSHIP/ MANAGEMENT**

### **2 Corinthians 8-9**

#### **THE PASTOR'S PERSONAL STEWARDSHIP—A SUMMARY**

**The first article of the creed could read, "maker and owner of heaven and earth"**

**A steward is a manager.** Of what? Of everything God has entrusted to his/ her oversight.

**Stewardship giving's first principle:** give yourself to the Lord 2 Corinthians 8:5, 9

#### **STEWARDSHIP GIVING IS—**

- A part of our sanctified life wherein we strive to excel 2 Corinthians 8:7, 10-11
- First fruits giving 1 Corinthians 16:2
- "No risk" giving-- as you sow you reap 2 Corinthians 9:6, 11, 13-14
- Proportionate giving; "according to their means" 2 Corinthians 8:3, 12
- Free will giving 2 Corinthians 8:3, 9:7
- Honorable 2 Corinthians 8:21
- A result of reaping God's harvest 2 Corinthians 9:8-10
- Fun and exudes much joy 2 Corinthians 9:7
- Glorifying, honoring and giving witness to our gracious God 2 Corinthians 8:19; 9:11-15

#### **THE PASTOR AS STEWARDSHIP GIVING LEADER—A SUMMARY**

#### **STEWARDSHIP GIVING—**

- Both local and at large, is a pastor's personal privilege. 2 Corinthians 8:4
- Is giving with an eye to the opportunity to help the church at large. 2 Corinthians 8:1-4
- Is reinforced by the pastor as "readiness created by the Gospel." 2 Corinthians 9:3, 5; 2 Corinthians 8:24
- Is Gospel motivated and modeled by the pastor. 2 Corinthians 8:6, 16-24
- Which is free willed and joyous is taught by the pastor, just as King David set forth good principles for leaders to follow in 1 Chronicles 29.
- Necessitates church leaders who are responsible to God to distribute the gifts of the saints. 2 Corinthians 8:19-20
- Is modeled by the congregation through pastoral leadership. Pastors lead their congregations to follow scriptural principles of giving readiness as the congregation participates in the church at large. 2 Corinthians 8:11

## STEWARDSHIP/ MANAGEMENT 2 Corinthians 8-9

### THE PASTOR'S PERSONAL STEWARDSHIP—AN EXPANSION

**THE FIRST ARTICLE OF THE CREED COULD READ, "MAKER AND OWNER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH."**

**A steward is a manager.** Of what? Of everything God has entrusted to his oversight. As a manager, I must determine how much I use in my care for myself and my loved ones and how much I use to do Kingdom work.

Stewardship giving's first principle: give yourself to the Lord.

**2 Corinthians 8:5, 9** *5 And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*

What does this mean? One is to be active in worship, Bible study. Making oneself available to the Lord's will and direction—every day. Unfortunately too many pastors do not see this as the means to move their members into God pleasing lives of sanctification and vocation. A goal of every Sunday communion, every member involved in some sort of Bible study, every member involved in ministry sets the foundation for all other Christian endeavors.

### STEWARDSHIP GIVING IS A PART OF OUR SANCTIFIED LIFE WHEREIN WE STRIVE TO EXCEL

**2 Corinthians 8:7,10-11** *7 But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. 10 And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. 11 Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means.*

All is based on Christ's grace for us [2 Corinthians 8:9]. Now we are freed from the law. We don't *have* to give or tithe. We are Gospel powered. Faith is an attitude as well as a conviction. Because I am convinced that God and I constitute a majority, I dare to walk fearlessly and joyfully in the minefield of daily life.

We are empowered to give far beyond the tithe. In fact, we can turn it around. Some of us are so blessed that we can live on 10 percent of our blessings and give 90 percent to the Lord.

### STEWARDSHIP GIVING IS FIRST FRUITS GIVING

**1 Corinthians 16:2** *2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.*

The necessity of first fruits giving: the first fruits are the seed for the next crop. Every farmer saves the best fruits for seed and eats the poor.

## **STEWARDSHIP GIVING IS "NO RISK" GIVING — AS YOU SOW, YOU REAP**

**2 Corinthians 9:6, 11, 13-14** *6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. 13 Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. 14 At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality,*

What are you sowing? Time, Money, Talents, Love, Forgiveness. Sowing includes using honorably those spiritual gifts God has given you. Every farmer sows with the expectation of a harvest. The Gospel opens one's eyes as to what to look for. God guarantees the harvest. Sowing is a no risk affair.

Enriched in every way. Rather than just a return on your money like interest in a bank, God sees to it that your life, your relationships, your quality of life, your joy in living is enriched. And those who benefit from your money or good works will raise thanks to God. (2 Corinthians 9:12-14)

No risk. Stewardship is fair. It does not leave you broke with no one to care. Don't fret if at the present time you have to take care of another. When you are in need, you will be taken care of. God says so.

## **STEWARDSHIP GIVING IS PROPORTIONATE GIVING; "ACCORDING TO THEIR MEANS"**

**2 Corinthians 8:3, 12** *3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.*

Each is to decide how to sow. Prescriptions and extractions – by questionable means — are not allowed

**2 Corinthians 9:8** *8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

God's portion of my feeble salary may seem small dollar wise. But fear not. He will multiply it many times over. God supplies the increase.

## **STEWARDSHIP GIVING IS FREE WILL GIVING.**

**2 Corinthians 8:3. 9:7** *3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

The term "free will" as used here is different than how we use it for "free will offering" for the Lenten dinner or some other door collection. Free will here is a conscious, sanctified, decision-making process that is responding to God's goodness. For modern readers the preferential emphasis is on "readiness". Read the passages out of ESV or RSV. Readiness is a description of a Gospel motivated heart that sees "an opportunity" to give and serve. Gospel stewardship giving is realizing opportunity. Ready Christians awake each day looking for someone to forgive, to share with, to walk with. Ready Christians are eager to find an opportunity to use the tools of salvation God has given them. A pastor would be amazed at how ready the flock is to do this, while he may see no opportunity in his parish.

## **STEWARDSHIP GIVING IS HONORABLE**

**2 Corinthians 8:21** *21 For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.*

Dispels the myth that one should not talk about money or giving in church.

## **STEWARDSHIP GIVING IS A RESULT OF REAPING GOD'S HARVEST**

**2 Corinthians 9:8-10** *8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 9 As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." 10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.*

Each harvest results in another sowing and then another harvest and then another sowing and on and on. It continues so until the final harvest.

“All sufficiency in all things so you abound.” Consider that what you are able to give is sufficient for God’s purpose. He gives the increase.

Probably to the sinful heart, righteousness is the least desirable reward of the harvest of your sowing. Yet it is the most pleasurable of all. To be right with God and to walk in God’s right ways brings overwhelming peace and joy. The trust of faith is reinforced as God rewards your sowing by faith alone with bounties beyond measure. What confidence and courage of ministry this righteousness affords!

## **STEWARDSHIP GIVING IS FUN AND EXUDES MUCH JOY**

**2 Corinthians 9:7** *7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

The fun is in seeing it work. One gets the giggles. It’s hilarious (the Greek word here). It is a primary joy of the ministry.

## **STEWARDSHIP GIVING GLORIFIES, HONORS AND GIVES WITNESS TO OUR GRACIOUS GOD**

**2 Corinthians 8:19, 9:11-15** *19 What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. 11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. 12 This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. 13 Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. 14 And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. 15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.*

## THE PASTOR AS STEWARDSHIP GIVING LEADER—EXPANSION

### STEWARDSHIP GIVING LOCAL AND AT LARGE IS A PASTOR'S PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

**2 Corinthians 8:4** *4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.*

Pastors called by God through a congregation are still called by Him to be pastors of the church at large, the communion of saints. A careful study of the above principles should bring the realization that one's stewardship is to "The Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints," and not just to the local parish.

### STEWARDSHIP GIVING IS GIVING WITH AN EYE TO THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP THE CHURCH AT LARGE.

**2 Corinthians 8:1-4** *1 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.*

To expect such a response from Christians is not just a stretch of the imagination. Christians know the urgency of preaching the Gospel beyond their own parish. Every church I have ever been to wanted somehow to be a part of evangelizing the world. LCMS people are excited about global mission. Pastors have a responsibility to help their flock see their role in the global Communion of Saints

A pastor does his parish no godly service by not giving them the opportunity to participate in Synod and district special missions and over and above in-gatherings.

Many who do not connect the parish to the mission of Synod really decimate their own parish. Isolationism is always spiritual suicide.

### STEWARDSHIP GIVING IS RE-ENFORCED BY THE PASTOR AS READINESS CREATED BY THE GOSPEL.

**2 Corinthians 9:3, 5; 8:24** *3 But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. 5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given. 24 Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.*

A challenge to total life commitment to the Lord, in all that I say and do, is to His glory, but appears to be ignored by some of our pastors for fear that they will fall into the Evangelical and Pentecostal camps. That won't happen if they keep their people in the Word. People need to be challenged from pulpit and organizational structure alike to think biblically. A sanctified life is not optional.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Hebrews 10:24** *... let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.*

**Readiness, eagerness** is the attitude of being Gospel motivated. Eagerness for the goal is established even before the inventory of what it will cost is measured. Once we are convinced that God has given us the

privilege (the opportunity) of doing His divine works, we find that He also supplies the means to get the job done—to get people ready

**Readiness** is that attitude of "I want to help, to be a part of this project of Jesus'" Paul says a person so behaves of one's own "free will," not as an "exaction." **9:5.** Unfortunately, the modern day use of the term "free will offering" is an exaction. Very few people dare skip putting something in the free will offering box. They feel guilty and wonder what others will think if they skip it.

(Personal note—My parish offering envelope packet always contained six or seven designated gift envelopes. My parish had no door collections or free will offerings at the dinners, etc. If someone was inclined to subsidize the Lenten dinners, they did so with a designated gift envelope offered to God with the Sunday offering. Reducing the temple taxes – fund raisers, door offerings, free will offerings – resulted in outstanding surpluses in money, time and talents.)

The sanctified life grows as faith grows. Faith/ trust is an attitude of daring to act on God's promises.

However, how will I dare if I am not aware of the promise or the challenge?

Pastors need to have the flock in constant readiness. Such a congregation is always looking for new challenges and opportunities to help with the Lord's harvest.

## **GOSPEL MOTIVATED STEWARDSHIP GIVING IS MODELED BY THE PASTOR**

**2 Corinthians 8:6, 16-24** *6 So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 16 I thank God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you. 17 For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative. 18 And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. 19 What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. 20 We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. 21 For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men. 22 In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you. 23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ. 24 Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.*

Do your people know what you give, why and how? If not, why not? Dare you say for the welfare of the kingdom "be imitators of me?" You are a role model. People believe you know how to do it correctly and in a God pleasing manner. Your parish knows what you make for a salary; knows what it takes for you to live. One's giving need not be cloaked in secrecy. I have no qualms about asking others to witness to the joy they have in giving.

## **PASTOR TEACHES THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF FREE WILLED AND JOYOUS STEWARDSHIP GIVING. KING DAVID SET FORTH GOOD PRINCIPLES FOR LEADERS TO FOLLOW**

### **1 Chronicles 29 Gifts for Building the Temple**

*1 Then King David said to the whole assembly: "My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God. 2 With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God—gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble—all of these in large quantities. 3 Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I*

have provided for this holy temple: 4 three thousand talents of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents of refined silver, for the overlaying of the walls of the buildings, 5 for the gold work and the silver work, and for all the work to be done by the craftsmen. Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the LORD ?"

6 Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly. 7 They gave toward the work on the temple of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze and a hundred thousand talents of iron. 8 Any who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the temple of the LORD in the custody of Jehiel the Gershonite. 9 The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly. David's Prayer – 10 David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, "Praise be to you, O LORD, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. 11 Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. 12 Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. 13 Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name. 14 "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. 15 We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. 16 O LORD our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you. 17 I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. 18 O LORD, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep this desire in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you. 19 And give my son Solomon the wholehearted devotion to keep your commands, requirements and decrees and to do everything to build the palatial structure for which I have provided."

20 Then David said to the whole assembly, "Praise the LORD your God." So they all praised the LORD, the God of their fathers; they bowed low and fell prostrate before the LORD and the king. Solomon Acknowledged as King 21 The next day they made sacrifices to the LORD and presented burnt offerings to him: a thousand bulls, a thousand rams and a thousand male lambs, together with their drink offerings, and other sacrifices in abundance for all Israel. 22 They ate and drank with great joy in the presence of the LORD that day. Then they acknowledged Solomon son of David as king a second time, anointing him before the LORD to be ruler and Zadok to be priest. 23 So Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king in place of his father David. He prospered and all Israel obeyed him. 24 All the officers and mighty men, as well as all of King David's sons, pledged their submission to King Solomon. 25 The LORD highly exalted Solomon in the sight of all Israel and bestowed on him royal splendor such as no king over Israel ever had before.

26 David son of Jesse was king over all Israel. 27 He ruled over Israel forty years—seven in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. 28 He died at a good old age, having enjoyed long life, wealth and honor. His son Solomon succeeded him as king. 29 As for the events of King David's reign, from beginning to end, they are written in the records of Samuel the seer, the records of Nathan the prophet and the records of Gad the seer, 30 together with the details of his reign and power, and the circumstances that surrounded him and Israel and the kingdoms of all the other lands.

Stewardship does not come naturally. Everyone acts like it's nobody's business what another gives. You need leaders who are willing to testify, and witness to the joys of giving. That needs to be cultivated by the pastor.

## **STEWARDSHIP GIVING NECESSITATES CHURCH LEADERS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE TO GOD TO DISTRIBUTE THE GIFTS OF THE SAINTS**

**2 Corinthians 8:19-20** 19 What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. 20 We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift.

Church leaders who handle the offerings of the saints are duty bound to distribute it. It is amazing how many parishes challenge their members to tithe, but then fail to also tithe or give proportionately to district and Synod and the Gospel work being done away from their locale.

**PASTORS LEAD THEIR CONGREGATIONS TO FOLLOW SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES OF GIVING READINESS AS THE CONGREGATION PARTICIPATES WITH THE CHURCH AT LARGE**

**2 Corinthians 8:11** *11Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means.*

Readiness describes a Gospel motivated heart that sees "an opportunity" to give and serve and jumps at the opportunity.