

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

The Steward's Focus: "The One Question That Changes Everything"

In this lesson you will discover a life-changing question that once you begin to apply it to your daily life radical, long-term, spiritual transformation will begin to happen in your life.

If you like it when someone “cuts to the chase” giving you the bottom line of what they want to say without first including all the details, you will like it that we are going to boil down this quite massive subject of life stewardship to one simple, yet incredibly profound and life-changing question.

But before you hear the question, let’s be reminded of the foundational truth that underlies this concept of stewardship – that being *God owns everything that exists, including you and me.* God confirms His ownership of everything in Job 41:11 where He is forcefully questioning Job, “*Who has given to Me that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine.*”

We must keep this truth every present in our minds! Ponder this truth when you sit down to prepare your personal, balance sheet of all you own. Your list of assets should be very short. In fact, the page should be blank because we own nothing, period. It is *all* His. We could certainly prepare a list of assets that we are managing for Him, but none of them belong to us.

Only by accepting this foundational truth of God’s ownership of everything can we be properly prepared to ask the *one question that changes everything.* Unfortunately, it is not a question that can be asked once, answered once and then we move on. It is a question we must ask daily, sometimes even hourly. So, is your curiosity adequately piqued as to what this profound and simple life-changing question is?

Here it is – quite simple to ask, quite difficult to answer. “God, what do You want me to do with all that You have entrusted to me?” We are all more than willing to acknowledge that God owns everything, but in spite of this fact, we still continue making all the decisions regarding what we will do with what we have like it is all ours. The ultimate objective of a steward of God’s property is to do with it what He (the Owner) wants us (his stewards) to do with it. Now, brace yourself for this sobering truth – what we want to do with our stuff is entirely irrelevant.

Does this idea seem pretty restrictive – that we don’t get to make any decisions about what will be done with all that we possess? At first blush, it can certainly feel that way. But let’s put this “you mean I’m not in charge” issue into a broader context.

Who is our role model in how to live? Jesus, the one we are all attempting to imitate had no qualms about completely yielding His will to the will of His Father while He was temporarily

dwelling on this planet. He repeatedly informed His listeners *Who* was in charge of His life. In John 12:49 He notes the source of all that He says, “*For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak.*” In John 8:28 He adds all His actions to this, “*...I do nothing on My own initiative.*” In other words, everything that Jesus said and everything that He did was directed by the Father. He was not saying or doing anything apart from His Father’s directions.

What about when this God-man and His Father disagreed on a plan of action – for example when Jesus had second thoughts about His pending trip to the cross? Jesus willingly yielded His own will to His Father’s. He prayed, “*My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will*” (Matthew 26:39). God was in charge of every aspect of Jesus’ life.

There is an unavoidable question that inevitably emerges from all these statements from Jesus. If Jesus willingly yielded all of His words, His actions and even His very life to the will of the Father, dare we be so arrogant or rebellious to make unilateral decisions about our lives and possessions without first consulting with the Father? In other words, are we personally emulating Jesus’ submission statement in John 5:30, “*I can do nothing on My own initiative...because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me*”?

As the game show host always says, “But wait, there’s more!” Jesus not only models this for us, He also gives us very direct instruction on how we ought to be handling our Father’s property.

As Jesus taught His disciples to pray in His model prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, He told them to pray, “*Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*” (Matthew 6:10). We have no problem with God’s will being done in heaven; the problem is down here on earth, isn’t it? The solution to this heaven on earth challenge is for us to willingly allow God’s will to rule in how we manage our personal lives and what we do with the temporary possessions we watch over down here. In so doing, each believer will allow God’s Kingdom to come and His will to be done in his or her little part of earth “as it is in heaven.”

Can you imagine what would happen on earth if God’s people were to make all their time fully available for His use? – If they devoted all their talents and whatever was needed of their material resources to carry out God’s purposes? – If they cared for their bodies like the sacred temple that it really is? – If they saw their employment and careers as an extension of God’s calling on their lives and a fulfillment of their God-given purpose? – If all their energies were clearly focused on knowing and following their Owner’s agenda and being the most obedient and effective managers possible of what He has entrusted to them?

Can you imagine how your personal life would change if each morning as you rose from your bed, you were to genuinely and humbly pray, “Okay, Lord, *all* that I am and *all* that I have

are at your disposal today. What are your plans for me and Your stuff that I manage today? Not my will, but *Thy will* be done today.”

There is really no better way for us to someday hear, “*Well done, good and faithful slave*” from our Father than for us to be continually asking Him this one question that changes everything, “God, what do You want me to do with what You have entrusted to me?” And as He reveals His plans for us and for the stuff He has put under our care and management, we need to obediently carry out those plans as faithfully and as well as we can. We need to be *good and faithful slaves* regardless of how much or how little we have been entrusted with or how much or how little we ultimately accomplish for Him.

Can you now see why this one “simple” question, “God, what do You want me to do with what You have entrusted to me,” really does change everything. When we faithfully discern and follow His directives, we will, in a very real and a very tangible way, allow *God’s Kingdom to come and God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven*.

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS

1. What is your initial reaction to the message of this lesson?
2. How do you feel about the idea that as a steward, you don't get to make any decisions –God gets to make them all?
3. What areas of your life right now do you think might be most difficult for you to totally surrender to the will of our Father? Why?
4. Share a story about when you did completely and totally surrender to the Lord's will and what the outcome was.
5. What most amazes you about Jesus' absolute surrender to His father – even to every single word He spoke?
6. How hard do you think it was for Jesus to surrender His will to the Father's will, especially when He wanted a different plan than the one God had for Him – to die on Calvary? (Matthew 26:39)
7. Share a time when you found yourself disagreeing with God about what He wanted you to do and what you wanted to do about a certain situation. How was your conflict resolved?
8. How would your life be different if you only spoke words and did things that the Father wanted you to speak and do?
9. As a way of personal assessment, share at least one specific change that you believe you need to make in your life that can help ensure that you will someday hear these blessed words, "Well done, good and faithful slave." (It's OK to be honest – we are all a work in progress.)
10. What is going to change in your life because of what you have learned in this lesson?