



**TRANSFORMATIONAL
STEWARDSHIP**

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THE ONE QUESTION THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

If you like when someone “cuts to the chase,” giving you the bottom line without all the details, then you will be glad that we are going to boil down this massive subject of whole-life stewardship to one simple, yet incredibly profound, life-changing question.

First, let me remind you of this foundational truth concerning stewardship: *God owns everything that exists, including you and me.* God confirms His ownership of everything in Job 41:11 (NASB) where He forcefully questions Job, ‘*Who has given to Me that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine.*’ We must keep this truth ever 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. We could certainly prepare a list of assets that we are managing for Him, but it is all His.

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 we can ask and answer just once and then move on. It is a question we must ask daily, sometimes even hourly. It is simple to ask, yet quite difficult to answer. Is your curiosity piqued? The question is this: God, what do You want me to do with all that You have entrusted to me?

We are more than willing to acknowledge that God owns everything, but in spite of this fact, we still continue making decisions like it is all ours. The ultimate objective of a steward of God’s property is to do what He (the Owner) wants us (his stewards) to do with it. 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 all that we possess? At first blush, it can certainly feel that way.

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, our example, 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 His words: ‘*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 includes all His actions: ‘*I do nothing on My own initiative.*’ In other words, everything that Jesus said and 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 that of His Father. 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, NIV). God was in charge of every aspect of Jesus' life.

One question inevitably emerges from Jesus' statements. If Jesus willingly yielded all of His words, actions, and even His very life to the will of the Father, dare we be so arrogant or rebellious as 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 (NASB), *'I can do nothing on My own initiative...because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me'*? Not only does Jesus model this for us, He also gives us very direct instruction on how to handle our Father's property.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray in His model prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, *'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 possessions we watch over down here. In so doing, believers will allow God's kingdom to come and His will to be done in their little part of earth, *as it is in heaven*.

Can you imagine what would happen on earth if God's people were to make 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 they really are? 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 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 for Your stuff that I manage today? Not *my* will, but *Thy* will be done today."

There is no better way for us to someday hear, *'Well done, good and faithful servant'* 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 things 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 servants*, 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 tangible way, allow God's kingdom to come and God's will to be done *on earth as it is in heaven*.

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E. G. “Jay” Link has a unique combination of being an ordained minister with a Master Divinity degree in Biblical Theology and a professional Stewardship planning coach who for over 40 years has been working with very affluent Christian families to enable them to optimize their Kingdom impact with all that the Lord has entrusted to them to manage. After retiring from his personal practice, he then served for five years as Director of Taylor University’s Stewardship Planning Ministry, which he launched for them. Most recently, Jay founded Transformational Stewardship to serve Christian ministries, colleges, and churches to better minister to their highest capacity families. He has written six books, hundreds of articles and has provided an extensive training curriculum for hundreds of professional financial and legal advisors in how to provide stewardship planning services for their clients.