***Our Time, Talents, and Treasures
RO175-01***

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We turn once more to Romans 14:1-12. Our subject is "The Spirit of Toleration." This is segment number nine.

**Every Knee Shall Bow to Jesus Christ**

In Romans 14:11, the Holy Spirit declares that all mankind from Adam onward will one day bow the knee in homage to the Lord Jesus Christ as their Judge. Paul says, "'For it is written, as I live,' says the Lord," which is the way God expresses Himself in terms of taking an oath upon Himself: "Every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

**The Ayatollah Khomeini**

There is a time coming when all of mankind will recognize Jesus Christ as the preeminent Person of the universe. All will acknowledge that He is indeed the Son of God, and the true and only Savior of mankind. Most people die without subjecting themselves to the God-Man Jesus Christ. Their eternal destiny, therefore, is both bleak and painful. But those who will not bow in subjection to Jesus Christ on earth will do so after death at the Great White Throne Judgment. The Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran bows the knee to Muhammad, but he does not bow the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ. Khomeini views himself as the true voice of God, when, in fact, he is the spokesman of Satan in the form of Allah. Muhammad himself taught a fanatical religion of brutality and blood, which is characteristic of Satan. Most Americans do not understand the principle upon which Islam operates, and therefore, they are tempted to view that this is just another sincere, genuine effort on the part of nice people to reach out and find God.

As you may be aware, the Ayatollah Khamenei is training thousands of young men and women as terrorists to kill the unbelievers: you. Even if those terrorists must commit suicide in the process, because they will then, as Muhammad taught, immediately enter paradise, because they will have fallen in a holy cause. This is the same brutal, bloody, beastly principle that the Japanese were taught during World War II, when their emperor was still viewed as a God. And the fanaticism in the South Pacific was due to the fact that these men actually believed that if they would die in the cause of serving the emperor, they would be assured of an eternity of blessing in paradise.

**The Teachings of Islam**

Khomeini's marching orders to his terrorist young men and women is very explicit in terms of what Islam believes and teaches. This is what Khomeini gives as the marching orders. He says, "Those who know nothing about Islam pretend that Islam counsels against war. Those who say this are witless. Islam says, 'Kill all the unbelievers, just as they would kill you.' Islam says, 'Kill them. Put them to the sword, and scatter their armies.' Islam says, 'Kill in the service of Allah.' Whatever good there exists is thanks to the sword and the shadow of the sword. People cannot be made obedient except by the sword. The sword is the key of paradise which can only be opened for holy warriors."

That is hardly the expression of grace that characterizes the true God. This indeed is a statement that could be made just as well by the Mafia. It is the same principle: "Do it to them before they do it to you."

**Muhammad**

We are all currently now listening in the public media about Khomeini's call for the murder of the author of Satanic Verses, Salman Rushdie. Salman Rushdie, in his book, has suggested that Muhammad was not a true prophet of God, nor is the Koran God's holy Scriptures, thus implying that Islam is just another false religion. He does this in a sort of a dream analogy, but he has indeed put his finger upon a great truth. Muhammad is not a prophet of the Living Creator God. He is a prophet of Satan. And the Koran is not God's holy book. It is Satan's deceptive book.

**Biblical Marriage**

If the Bible is indeed, the Word of God, and it is, then no religion is from God, which teaches, for example, the concept of polygamy, as both Islam and Mormonism do. At the very start of the human race, at the very dawn of human history, we have recorded for us the inevitable; the regular; and, the unwavering pattern of God on the matter of the relationship of men and women in terms of marriage. In Genesis 2:20-24, we read, "And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the foul of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam, there was not found a help fit for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And He took one of Adam's ribs, and closed up the flesh thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called 'woman,' because she was taken out of man.' Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh here."

Here the principle was laid down at the very beginning that God has one man for one woman: one right man for one right woman in terms of marriage. The plan of God from the very first was monogamous. It was never polygamous. It was monogamous from the first. And that has never been changed in the Bible.

In the New Testament, on one occasion, when the Pharisees were trying to trip up the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to discredit Him in the eyes of the people, they brought to him the question about divorce, which in a way, when improper, is serial polygamy. In Matthew 19:3, we have this recorded: "And the Pharisees also came unto Him (to Jesus), testing Him, and saying unto Him, 'Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?' And He answered and said unto them, 'Have you not read that He, who made them at the beginning, made the male and female, and said, 'For this cause, shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh?'" Jesus is referring to the passage in Genesis which I just read to you.

Verse 6 says: "'Wherefore, they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together let not man put asunder.' They said unto Him, 'Why did Moses then command to give a writ of divorcement, and to put her away?' He said unto them, 'Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to put away your wives. But from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you: whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery (that is, against the wife he has left), and whosoever marries her who is put away does commit adultery.'"

So, the Lord Jesus Christ in this passage reinforces the principle of one man and one woman. That is God's eternal order. It has never been changed. Polygamy is a violation of God's law, which actually began in human history when Lamech, who was a descendant of Cain took two wives. In Genesis 4:19, we have that historical event recorded: "And Lamech took unto him two wives. The name of one was Adah; and, the name of the other was "Zillah."

So, this was the beginning of a violation of God's order of monogamous marriage. Jesus says, "Yes, Moses did provide protection for women who were going to be thrown out by their husbands. The husbands were wrong in doing that. But in order to protect those women, Moses made a regulation about the bill of divorcement, if you insist you're going to break God's rule and God's order. But to have multiple wives in any series, or in any way, is contrary to the divine order of God's laws for human relationships.

**Polygamy**

So, all of polygamy, when it was practiced in the Old Testament by the leaders of Israel, as indeed it was, was a violation of God's order, and it was a great sin. It was never authorized, and was never condoned by God Himself. Polygamy is actually a doctrine of demons. And it shows, therefore (my point in saying all this) is that when Islam or Mormonism claim to be the most recent, up-to-date revelation from God, the lie is put to it by the very fact that both of them teach a vile practice like polygamy: one man with many wives.

This is always, however, you will find, justified not from Scripture, but it is justified by the fact that the prophet, either Muhammad or Joseph Smith (in the case of Mormonism), claim that they have received a special revelation from God which now requires men to have more than one wife. When Joseph Smith brought this revelation to the Mormons, he told them that God said to him that if he did not have many wives, God would strike him dead. And being an obedient man to God, he very promptly got himself about 30 wives or so – just enough to play it safe you know.

Well, if the Bible is true, and it is true, no one is accepted into heaven by God the Father who comes on the basis of a false religious system, and who has not trusted in Jesus Christ alone for his personal salvation. The Bible could not be more explicit on this subject than it is in John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes unto the Father but by Me.'" Now either Ayatollah Khamenei is wrong, or the Bible is wrong. They cannot both be right because they are at opposite poles and they contradict each other.

The Bible says, "Nobody gets into heaven without accepting Jesus Christ in terms of his vicarious sacrifice – dying in your place to pay the penalty of death. Once you've accepted that in your behalf, then you are eligible for eternal life in heaven. The Ayatollah says, "That's not true – that Jesus Christ is not God's final and great prophet, and that that is Muhammad, and Christ therefore rejects that."

But the Bible says, in contrast, that the last and final prophet to come from God was indeed the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, not the subsequent Muhammad. Hebrews 1:1-2: "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners, spoke in times past unto the Fathers by the prophets, has in these last days, spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He had appointed heir of all things; by Whom also He made the ages."

So, the Lord Jesus Christ is the final expression from God. Muhammad was not God's final prophet, and he was not the writer of the last of Scriptures in the form of the Koran. Islam's central basic doctrinal tenet is expressed in the phrase which a Muslim repeat several times a day: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet." Muhammad is exalted. Jesus Christ is put in the background as indeed one of the voices of God, but a very minor one.

Muhammad himself, therefore, did not trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, and he is now suffering (I can assure you) in Hades, awaiting his personal transfer into the lake of fire for all eternity. Muhammad was wrong, and Muhammad now knows how wrong he was. Muhammad is reliving the experience of the rich man in the Bible who discounted what the Bible said while he was alive. And when he died, he found that the Lazarus for whom he had contempt, because Lazarus was a Bible believer, and trusted in God for salvation – Lazarus ends up in paradise, whereas, the rich man was in torment. And now, Muhammad, I can assure you, like that rich man, wishes that he could warn his followers that he was indeed a false prophet, and that they should not listen to him.

However, God's response to Muhammad is the same as to the rich man that shares that agony with Muhammad. Luke 16:27-31 give us the response when Abraham gave God's response to the rich man's request: "Let me go back and tell my five brothers that this is true, and that the Bible should be believed, or they're going to end up where I am." The man said, "'I pray you, therefore, father Abraham, that you would send him (that is, Lazarus). Bring him back to life, and send him to my father's house. For I have five 5 brothers, that he may testify into them, unless they also come into this place of torment.' Abraham said unto him, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them. They have the Old Testament Scripture that tells you all about how to get to heaven.'" That's the testimony from God. That is the true record. If you do not accept God's Bible, you have nothing.

"And he said, "'No, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.' And he said unto him, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.'" The Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead. And all of Islam is the proof of this statement. Though one has risen from the dead under the most maximum stringent verifications, they of Islam will not believe Him, and will not trust in Him.

The Muslims are blinded to the truth. And like the rich man, they will repeat his agonizing experience. I expect that if Muhammad could speak to us today, and to his followers, he would tell them that Satan has indeed deceived him, and that the Bible is God's only true book of revelation to mankind, and that the Koran is a fraud from Satan. The only hope for Khomeini and his Muslims is to believe the Bible – the Bible as the only true revelation from God. It is the only option which is open to them, just as it was to the rich man's five brothers to escape the lake of fire.

Khomeini, in all likelihood, will someday, when he dies, join the rich man and Muhammad in the tournament of Hades. And one day, they will all stand at the Great White Throne, and all three will then bow the knee to Jesus Christ, and they will then acknowledge Him as Lord. You do not play fast and loose when you have a revelation from God which has been authenticated and verified as a true revelation such as is true of the Bible. It is important to know what it says. It is more important for you people as Christians to obey what it says. For, as the Lord says, "Your sin is going to be compounded, and your judgment will be greater, if you knew to do right, and did not do it. That is true of unbelievers, and of believers as well.

Khomeini and his followers believe that they are right about God's will. But someday they're going to learn who was really right. One day we're going to learn whether the Muslims are right, or whether the Christians are right. In the meantime, it is unnecessary to put out a contract on somebody's life who says, "The Bible is true, and Muhammad and the Koran are false." Khomeini is a bloody, brutal tyrant who is riding high because of the vast fortune of oil money that is at his disposable, so that he can create terrorist organizations all over the world under the guise of serving the living God, and propagating the truth of God to eternal life. Talk about Satan being smart! Talk about Satan being powerful! What a great example indeed we have there.

But it's not only people like the Muslims. We have been watching the burial of the Mikado of Japan. Emperor Hirohito has now been buried with great pomp and ceremony. His funeral was attended by the great and powerful leaders of the world who paid homage to one who, at one time, claimed to be a God. We saw even the president of the United States and his wife make the bowing act of respect and homage before that great dead personage. Hirohito is a Shintoist. He worshiped the spirits of his dead ancestors and of the nature spirits. What he was worshiping, in fact, was not the spirits of his ancestors or of nature spirits, but the spirits of demons. And what we have here was the emperor of Japan practicing Shintoism by praying to his dead ancestors. This is a satanic practice which is never taught in the Bible, although it is practiced, as you know, by the Roman Catholic Church to this day. The Roman Catholic Church teaches its people to pray to dead people: to the Virgin Mary; and, to the very saints that the church has ordained.

During World War II, we all remember (who were in that era) seeing Hirohito riding on his horse among his military cordons, all of whom bowed before him in great respect, because there on that horse sat a god. And they really believed it. That's why they died to the last man on every South Pacific island, because they really believed that he was their god. To die for him was to enter paradise. And these men went blindly to their deaths.

The children in that era were taught that if they looked upon their emperor without permission, they would go blind. Therefore, in the presence of the emperor, they averted their gaze. Hirohito did not trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. He, too, is now suffering in the agony in Hades with Muhammad. What would Hirohito like to tell the Japanese people, indeed, today? He too is screaming out, as is Muhammad, and as did the rich man, trying to communicate back to this world, to those that they esteemed, that they should not follow him into this terrible place. What a warning Hirohito would like to give. And what horror, indeed, he would have experienced had he been able to observe from Hades the elegant funeral that was given him to lay to rest one who will never know a moment's rest for all eternity. How ironic if he could have watched that pomp and ceremony, and the millions spent on interning him in death, who will never know peace again.

**Shintoism**

For all Shintoists, indeed, there is no hope but to trust in Jesus Christ and to bow the knee to Him. Someday, as the apostle Paul says, "They will all do that." But if they wait until after death, it will be too late to be saved. They will do it in subjection at the Great White Throne. God the Father honors those who now bow the knee to Jesus Christ, and who, because of it, are persecuted and ridiculed.

Here is a point of comfort that we should remember from the Word of God. We who are willing to bow our knee, and who are willing to stand respectfully for Jesus Christ, and to resist our society's disgraceful treatment of Him, are going to receive the rebuke and antagonism of the world. You should remember the promise of Matthew 5:10-11, that says, "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. For great is your reward in heaven. For so persecuted they the prophets who were before you."

The Christians who now pay homage to Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and who serves him, will, as a matter of fact, someday rule over the nations of the world along with Jesus Christ in His millennial kingdom. Those who have been truly faithful in serving Him are going to be rewarded with the highest kind of exaltation. Revelation 2:26-27 tell us this: "And he that overcomes and keeps my works until the end, to him will I give power over the nations. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron. As the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of My Father." We know that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to rule over the nations of this world with a rod of iron authority. But sometimes we forget that because we are associated with Him as His bride and His consort in reigning over this world, that we too are going to rule the nations of this world with a rod of iron.

Undoubtedly, I suspect that some of the reward that will be given to some high-quality, devoted, dedicated, divine-good production Christians is going to be great political, civil, ruling authority in the nations of this world. And you will be an absolute benevolent dictator when you rule over those nations. The life and the works of the Christians are going to be evaluated at the Judgment Seat of Christ by the Lord Jesus Christ. Service to God, which is performed while in temporal fellowship, and under the power and direction of the indwelling Holy Spirit, are divine good things, and they will receive reward. A Christian who lives under the power and the lust pattern of his old sin nature is going to suffer loss of eternal rewards.

In order to do well, when you come to your judgment at the Judgment Seat of Christ, a church-age believer has to know Bible doctrine, and live in conformity to it. He must maintain his temporal fellowship with God through confession to the Father of his personal evil. That is stressed so clearly in 1 John 1:5-10: "This, then, is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness (that is, in evil – in human-good production), we lie, and we do not the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, according to the light of doctrine, then we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin nature, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our individual acts of sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and His Word is not in us."

It is very clear indeed, then, that we Christians do sin. But confession to the Father maintains that temporal fellowship which enables the Holy Spirit to fill you in terms of controlling you. When the Holy Spirit fills you (controls you), then you are in temporal fellowship, and then what you do, under that guidance, God rewards, because you're not wasting your life.

It is so easy, and so glamorous, to trivialize your life on things that are so glamorous that it is pathetic. And the older I get, the more appalled I am at how Christians are running their lives down a rat hole. And it almost gets to the point where it's tiresome to sound off, and to warn them, because some of them are never going to listen. They are so caught up in this world system that they cannot move away from what they think is where it's at. The Word of God says, "It's not there, and you are squandering your life." Staying in temporal fellowship keeps us on target.

So, without the intake of doctrine into the mind on a daily basis, the Christian cannot maintain his stability and his temporal fellowship while he walks in the devil's world. 1 Corinthians 10:12 says, "Wherefore, let him that thinks he stands take heed; lest he fall." We have a lot of arrogant Christians who've been around in God's work so long that they think that they have a handle on it. Those are the people that almost never do.

The Christian servant's basic mission in life is to tell the world the gospel, and to teach Bible doctrine for daily living. Those who teach, however, and lead others in spiritual matters, you should be aware, are going to account to God for their performance. Many of you are engaged in a variety of teaching activities. Some of you teach your children, some of you teach other people's children. Some of you are leading adults in Bible studies of one kind and another. You should be well aware of the fact that Hebrews 13:17 says that you're going to give an account for what you have been taught, and for what you teach: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you." Here it is speaking about the teacher of the Word of God to be respected for what he teaches which is compatible to Scripture, and to be aware of the fact that he will give an account for how he did the job, and what he taught you.

I was recently given a booklet by our friend Jack Smith in Kentucky. He sent it to me, and made notations, because he was so appalled by this little booklet. It was written by somebody named Jimmy Swaggart. The title of it was The Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This book is filled with false doctrine from one end to the other, concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In it, Swaggart tells millions of his followers that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is something that takes place after you're saved; whereas, the Bible says that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the way you do get saved – by being placed into Christ. In it, he says that the baptism of the Holy Spirit must be sought by Christians in order to secure it; whereas, the Bible indicates that upon faith and trust in Christ as Savior, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is automatically experienced by the believer, who thereby is placed into Christ and secured for eternal life.

In this book, he tells Christians that the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the filling of the Holy Spirit are equated. This is one of the greatest mistakes the Charismatics make. This is an enormous confusion that Satan has led them into, and they make it all the time. Filling is something that happens many, many times in the life of a Christian, dependent upon those moments when he has stepped out of line of the Word of God and the will of God. And when he confesses and comes back in line, he is again filled. The Spirit of God takes charge.

In this book, Swaggart teaches his followers that baptism is evidenced by speaking in tongues, and that nobody, he says, has the baptism of the Holy Spirit who does not speak in tongues, by which he means gibberish. This is in spite of the fact that when the Bible speaks about the gift of tongues, it is speaking about the gift of natural known languages that people use, not gibberish. 1 Corinthians 13 makes it very clear that when that perfect thing (neuter tense – not that perfect person, but that perfect thing – the Bible) is completed, then tongues is going to cease. And the Greek word there, in contrast to the word used for "prophecy" and the word of "knowledge" ceasing, it says, "Those are going to phase out gradually, because we don't need any more revelation from God. It's now all written. When it uses the Greek word for "tongues," it just says that it's going to go like that. Do you know when it happened? When John put the dot at the end of Revelation. When he put the last period, the gift of tongues ceased, and it never happened again, because the Bible was now complete. Swaggart says that you have to look for that today.

He also teaches his people that baptism gives you power for Christian service. That's wrong. It is a filling of the Spirit that gives you power. He tells people in this booklet that tongue-speaking is for today, even though the Bible says that when the canon of Scripture is completed, then speaking in foreign languages to communicate God's revelation will no longer be needed.

Now the teaching of this booklet is based entirely on experience and emotions. It is not based upon Scripture. And it is sending millions of sincere, charismatic Christians chasing rabbits of false hopes that they will never realize. The whole booklet is a gross distortion of the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and it's leading sincere, but untaught, Christians into Satanic manipulation, and worst of all, into human good production, wasting their time; their talents; and, their treasures, so that they will not receive rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Every day, thousands of copies of that false booklet continue to lead Christians away from a true relationship to the Holy Spirit, and to their rewards that God is so eager to give them.

So, putting a false teaching on a vital doctrine into print will be very costly for the author at the Judgment Seat of Christ, I can assure you. You pastor-teachers; you Sunday school teachers; you training union leaders; you Berean youth club leaders; you Berean Christian Academy teachers; and, you parents – you better take care of what you teach as God's truth to your students. And equally important, you better take care, especially as parents, what you fail to teach your children of what is the Word of God.

You are going to give an account for your performance. So, if you are an unprepared and a poorly prepared teacher of the Word, you're going to do a bad job of instructing, and there will be no reward for that kind of service. Teaching the Word of God off the top of your head, or by winging it, is not worthy of reward in heaven, and none will be given. It is unworthy of a Christian teacher to teach in that manner: off the top of your head; or, winging it. The prepared teacher of the Bible has invested adequate time and preparation to bring edifying instruction and true understanding of spiritual things to his students. That kind of a teacher will receive rewards.

So, self-evaluation on a daily basis is important if we Christians are to be occupied with Christ instead of occupied with ourselves, wasting our lives in terms of the potential of eternal rewards. And it saddens me, I must confess, to see how many Christians, even floating in and out of our congregation, who are clearly wasting their lives in trivial things because their eyes are on themselves and not on the Lord.

1 Corinthians 11:31 says, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." Therefore, we Christians would do well to have a constant evaluation of ourselves, knowing how much is at stake. Yes, Christians are going to have tears in heaven. Yes, Jesus is going to have to wipe away those tears, because the tears are going to come rolling down your cheeks when you discover, as we shall learn a little later, what could have been. It's not only the loss of those trivial, trashy, human-good works, but it's the fact that the divine good works that God had ordained for you will be lost – yes, that God has specifically ordained. We'll talk about that next time – that you blew it. And all of that is going to be revealed at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and your eyes are going to moisten, and the tears are going to roll down your cheeks as you realize that you have suffered loss. That's dumb.

We need evaluation, for one thing, of our words. That's one place we lose it. Matthew 12:36-37 say, "For I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned." Remember that this is what the Bible calls "your fruits: "By their fruits, you shall know them. What that refers to, by that context, you will notice, is the teaching of that person; that is, what their words have taught – but that they will be judged.

**Worthless Language**

So, language which degrades and does not edify is worthless language. Don't use language like that. Language which dishonors God is unbecoming a child of God. Don't use language like that. You are, as a Christian, going to be held accountable for the very words you use.

**Our Possessions, our Talents, and our Days**

Another area of evaluation is the fact that all of us as Christians are going to be judged in terms of our possessions; in terms of our talents; and, in terms of the days of our lives, because they all belong to God. Our possessions; our talents; and, our lives belong to God.

Recently, a lady was telling me that her young adult son was concerned because he wasn't going to be able to go to church that morning, to bring his offering to the Lord that he had set aside. And he said, "Do you think that the Lord would understand that I couldn't make it to bring this offering?" And he was very specific about the percentage amount that he set aside. And he wanted to be sure, he said, that God gets his percentage. And I told her, "You must tell him that the Lord will indeed understand that, but that he needs to revise his thinking."

In the Old Testament, the Jew owned nine-tenths of what he had. God owned one-tenth. God owned one-tenth of all the Jews' material wealth. And the Jew owned all the rest. In the New Testament, the Christian owns nothing. All personal possession has been removed in the age of grace. All Christians are nothing but stewards. Every Christian is a banker. That might make you feel better. You are the Lord's banker. Therefore, some of you should try dressing better, and looking more impressive, because you are a banker. Bankers always look impressive. Also, you should keep your nose up high in the air, because bankers walk around with their noses up in the air. They are a better breed of human beings. You are the Lord's steward.

So, I told this lady that her son must understand that he has nothing. And when he brings his offering, all he's doing is saying, "Now, Lord, I think this Sunday I should give you this much. I know this need exists. I can meet it. Why should I keep it? I have the means to meet the need. I'm going to do it. And if you want me to survive, you better give me more, and you better give me the food and the logistical grace. But I'm not going to stand around here when I have funds at my disposal to meet a need in the Lord's work, waiting for somebody to do it. I'm the guy You've called to do it, because obviously I have it, so I do it. Plus, I like to grab those rewards.

So, we Christians are the stewards of the living God, and we are simply His caretakers. Luke 16:1-2 put it this way: "And He said unto His disciples, there was a certain rich man who had a steward. And the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him and said unto him, 'How is it that I hear this of you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you may no longer be steward.'"

In New Testament times, rich men had business managers. And they turned over everything to the business manager, and the business manager's job was to use the money to make more money. He was to care for his client's well-being. Here in the Bible illustration, this steward did not do the job. He squandered the money in various ways that were improper.

Luke 16:10-11: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much. He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If, therefore, you have not been faithful in the unrighteous money, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" What makes you think that God is going to give you the true riches of the Word of God, and of the impact that you can make on human society, if you have not practiced integrity with such a low level of demand as your money; your talents; and, the time of your life?

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, the requirement for these: our time; our treasures; and, our talents will be very simple. 1 Corinthians 4:2 says, "Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." God just wants you to play square. Get over the idea that you own anything. Get your mind locked into the realization that he owns it all. He's not going to give you a moment's more breath than what you need to carry out His business. When he sees that you are not carrying out his business, and there's no hope of you turning around and starting to do His business, then He'll take you out of this life and take you to heaven.

Caring for the deeds of God's work on earth is, in fact, the way to take care of your own personal needs. You will find, if you have not already found, that the more you take care of God's work, the more He will take care of your personal needs. Notice Philippians 4:14-19. Paul says to these Philippian Christians who sent an offering to him: "Notwithstanding, you have done well, that you did share with my affliction. Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed for Macedonia, no church shared with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you only. For even in Thessalonica, you sent once and again into my necessity, not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may bound to your account."

Paul says, "I needed the money. No church, when I was in Thessalonica helped me, but you helped me twice. You weren't even in the same city, or the same congregation, but you helped me twice. And I'm happy that you did, not because I want your money (not because I want financial support from you), but because I know that when you do that, you have stored treasures in heaven that you are going to rejoice in forever. And I want to see you go to heaven really well off.

**The Sacrifice of our Substance**

In verse 18, Paul says, "But I have all, and abound. I am full, having receipt of Epaphroditus (who was their agent in bringing the money) the things which were sent from you, an odor of the sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to God." We call this the sacrifice of our substance. It is one of the spiritual sacrifices. It is the giving of our money, which church-age believers perform as priests.

Verse 19 sums it up. Here is the point: "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches and glory by Christ Jesus." Why? My God is going to supply all of your needs, whatever they are. You will have the means of carrying on His work and sustaining body and soul together, because you have demonstrated that you are a steward that is responsible and trustworthy. God's judgment on our lives is going to cleanse us of the evil of our human good and our sins, and is going to reveal the true quality of our lives and our service as Christians. The doctrine of earning rewards for Christian service is very prominent in Scripture.

We close today with the reading of those Scriptures. They are Scriptures which you ought to meditate upon, and you will be glad for all eternity that you did. The first one is Matthew 6:19-21: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust corrupts, and where thieves break through and steal." The warning here is against putting your treasures in something that can decay. Moths will ruin a garment, and rust will cause decay of material things. And thieves can take it all the way.

So, if your treasures are that kind that can decay and be stolen, you don't really have much: "Instead, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Matthew 6:24-34: "No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. Therefore, I say unto you, be not anxious for your life; what you will eat; what you will drink; nor, yet for your body – what you shall put on. Is not the life more than food and the body more than raiment? Behold, the fouls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they? This is logistical grace – grace provisions so that you can do the job. Which of you, by being anxious, can add a cubit unto your stature? And why are you anxious for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field – how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothed the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you? O you of little faith. Therefore, be not anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or with what shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the unsaved gentiles seek. For your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Be, therefore, not anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is its own evil."

The second passage is in Matthew 16:24-27: "Then said Jesus unto His disciples, 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me;'" his cross being his particular mission in life: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." This passage talks about saving your life in terms of its potential for eternal reward, or wasting it.

"For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own life? Or what shall I give in exchange for his life?" These are serious questions indeed: "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels, and then He shall reward every man according to His works."

Luke 12:16-21: "And He spoke a parable into them, saying, 'The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do because I have no place to bestow my crops?' And he said, 'This will I do. I will pull down my barns, and I'll build greater, and there will I bestow all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have much good laid up for you for many years (lots of security). Take your ease: eat; drink; and, be merry God.' But God said unto him, 'You fool. This night your soul shall be required of you. (You're going to die.) Then whose shall these things be which you have provided?' So is he that lays up treasures for himself, and is not rich toward God."

1 Corinthians 3:5-8, which we shall look at in greater detail next time: "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believed? Even as the Lord gave to every man, I have planted; Apollos watered; but, God gave the increase."

So, then, as a result of this team effort in Christian service, neither is he that a plants anything; neither he that waters, but God that gives the increase. Our efforts of divine-good production are the product of the Spirit of God, not of ourselves, and not as a team: Now he that plants, and he that waters are one. And every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor" (according to the part he played on the team of that local church ministry.

We close with 2 John 8: "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." God has so much in heaven that He wants to give you for all eternity, you can hardly imagine it. John says, "Check yourself out; evaluate yourself; and, get your priorities in order, so that you will receive not just the reward, but a maximum full reward. Why would you do less?

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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