

Irresponsible Stewardship.

"Moreover it is required in stewards that man be found faithful. " 1 Cor. 4:2 .

When we speak of stewardship we more or less associate the word with money or material possessions. What a man possesseth so is he. In our old Testament reading we have the story of God's promise or covenant to Abraham. He did not promise Abraham great possessions. He already had those. It was ~~his~~ his stewardship of other values that God singled him out to be the founder of a great race of people. "For I know him that he will command his children, and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

Then , as now God was impressing upon Abraham the fact that the world belonged to God, ~~and~~ not to the idolotrous world of people among whom Abraham lived. His covenant with Abraham was a covenant that envisioned stewardship of the most faithful order. It was also revealing to Abraham that the God he could not see but believed to be present was a God who needed man to carry out his plan for the world he had created. That in effect God would always be God and that man would always be the steward of God. We read later on in the Old Testament where God renewed his covenant with his people but always to their advantage and always the continuing discipline of stewardship on their part even though many times they had shown themselves unfaithful to that stewardship.

Not too long ago a man said to me, " I've learned to look after number one first, thats the only way a fellow can get somewhere in this world. If you don't look after yourself , no one else will." That was his way of expressing his idea of stewardship and getting somewhere in the world. It is to be wondered that when his time comes to be laid aside, perhaps ill or hospitalized, for a long term, just how he will manage to look after number one first. It will more than likely be the ministering stewardship of others that will ease his pain and make him comfortable. Our obligations one to another begin when we are born and as we grow and develope we find that those obligations go beyond ourselves and reach up to God.

Abraham in our Old Testament reading put God first. He realized that it was not the idols that his neighbors made for themselves with their own hands that provided all the things they enjoyed. In the words of St Paul "All this is yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." Abraham realized that in some mysterious way all things belonged to this God he could not see. A god he but dimly visioned, a promise he could only dimly comprehend, a stewardship he was determined to explore, a truth he could not explain to his neighbors, or perhaps even to his family, but God said of Abraham, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement."

In our stewardship perhaps we overlook the children among us. God recognized in Abraham. the supreme stewardship "That he controlled and commanded his children." A good commander has to control, Has to give guidance.....

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Irresponsible Stewardship

Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful" 1 cor. 4:2.

When we speak of stewardship we more or less associate the word with money or worldly possessions. What a man possesses so is he. In our old Testament reading we have the story of God's promise or covenant with Abraham. Not that Abram would have great possessions he already had those, it was through his stewardship of material possessions for the good of others that God singled him out to be the progenitor of a great race of people. "And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I know him that he will command his children, and his household after him and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him?"

In relating stewardship to our present day and in using the term stewardship in a religious address we cannot escape the fact that whether we believe it or not this

is God's world and the work that
goes on in his world ^{is} conducted by men,
his stewards, whether man thinks in
that terminology or not. ~~It~~, men and
women, are the tools God uses to
help develop his universe. Jesus came
calling God, Father, telling all who would
believe "Ye have seen me, ye have seen the Father"

Irresponsible Stewardship.

The attitude of looking after one's self.

Quote "Long ago I learned to look after number one first."

Our responsibility to others:

Quote: So and so is always cutting a narrow corner, making a fast dollar, why shouldn't I.

Our responsibility to God:

Quote "What has God got to do with it anyway? He doesn't care two hoots about me."

These three headings are not intended to be in order. In a few minutes we may decide to rearrange them.

"Long ago I learned to look after number one first!" Of course he did and his neighbors soon responded in like manner, by taking care that the selfish one didn't get a chance to get the best of them. So they too looked after number one first. Gradually the ring widened till so many were so busy looking after number one that many less proficient at the art fell by the wayside. In an

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attitude of "more care about us they
cease to even care about themselves. Law
and any form of order become repugnant
to them because under forms of law
they have found that the more aggressive
one first individuals had managed
very well for themselves. And any form
of order became anathema. Of what use
is order when everything appears out
of order.

Why should I be responsible to anyone else. This is a free country, I can do as I like so long as I don't break the law too badly. I may annoy others but it is their look out. They can fend for themselves the same as I - me? I learned to do it so can they or else get out. Anyway they don't have to copy me, this is still a free country they can do as they please too.

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Who says I have any responsibility to God. Sure, I call on him when the going gets too tough for me to handle or the world bears down too heavily on me. This business of "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve," is for the birds. Sounds like slavery to me.

These are some of the attitudes we all meet with as we pass along the road of life. It is a busy road and full of divisions. We haven't time to even try and solve all the problems, some of us are too busy trying to get to the moon and others too busy buying at it.

In our business the word stewardship is often forgotten. Abraham, in our old testament reading, put his God first because we are told in the 18th Chapter of Genesis where God speaks of Abraham "for I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement."

In our stewardship perhaps we overlook the children ^{the families} among us. God recognized in Abraham the supreme stewardship. That he commanded and controlled his children. A good

commander has to control, has to give guidance as well, has to have vision and know how to sway people to follow. Jesus had all these attributes and all that he asked was that his disciples follow him. Nor did he overlook the children "suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not. For such is the kingdom of Heaven."

Age changes faster than education

In our frantic self examination over our education of our children we are running hither and thither to find some new forms of speeding up education to "keep up with the times" "to qualify young people to live in our modern age" condemned. Perhaps in other words to qualify the child to enter the world of business with the necessary impressive initials after his name that will enable him to demand a very high salary so that neither his parents, his teachers or the curriculum committee will lose face in their particular establishment. The man who said suffer little children to come unto me is never mentioned in most of our curriculums. He is left to the 30 min teaching period of Sunday school. His stewardship of love is left entirely out as being something in our day and age entirely related to sex and not to the individual as a person and a potential power for good or evil among his fellows.

Stories

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Someone has surely read of the little three year old girl adopted from a tribe of people who at the time of adoption were living in the Stone Age of 5000 years ago. Their foster parents a Frenchman and his wife took the wee girl back to France with them and raised her as their own, lavishing all the care and love, especially love, upon her as if she were really their own flesh and blood. This child, from a most primitive background, grew to be a talented young woman. Graduating in science she startled a gathering of scientists in New York by the depth of her knowledge and her vision and perception of her work. Not only that, she won their admiration by her lack of ostentatiousness, her courtesy and charm extended to all she met. The gap of 5000 years had been bridged in a child's lifetime. She attributed it all to the wonderful love & care her foster parents had bestowed upon her.

From this story comes the question? Are we misusing our stewardship, are we being irresponsible in our stewardship in underestimating the capabilities of our children. Again the question? Is the drive to maintain and keep face among our peers outweighing the responsibility to the young people growing up among us?

At times one wonders if the hippies aren't on to something our generation has missed.

1 No one seems to be able to exactly define what they are after or if any of their actions mean anything more than defiance of laws that appear senseless to their generation. Or in defiance of a system that says you must work to live on one hand and then denies employment on the other.

How can we divide the hippies from adults.. and adults is only a term denoting age in years. Too often wisdom and judgement are lacking in both age groups. We are the family of man, in all the world and with all the world we are part of Gods creation. He endowed us with reasoning powers and freedom to choose for ourselves. If we attempt to hem others in to a narrow circle of vision, if we shirk our responsible stewardship to God to others and to ourselves then we have no one but ourselves to blame. Without vision a people perish. As stewards of our lives here on earth we are instruments to help or hinder Gods truth. We may but dimly

8/ vision what that truth is but we take
a one step, and another, and another and
suddenly the vision becomes reality and
the truth of Gods power through man
blazes across the world. Christ gave us
the vision and left us with the admonition
go ye into all the world and preach the gospel
the good news. Again as stewards he gave
us this promise "Behold I am with you always,
to the end of the age". "Whether Paul or Apollos
or Cephas, or the world, or life or death, or things
present, or things to come, all are yours; and
ye are Christ's and Christ is God's."
