



Date: 10-29-2017      *"Placed to Prosper"*

Scripture: Psalm 24:1-2; Genesis 1:26-28; Gen 2:15; 1 Peter 4:10–11; Matthew 25:14-30

So far in our Engaging with God series we have looked at how we engage with God in love and relationship with Him and others primarily through the two greatest commandments that sum up the whole Law. Next we looked at how we engage with God and apply the Gospel to our families in marriage and parenting. This gave us a more *narrow* focus on love as it pertains to earthly relationships.

We will close our Engaging with God series over the next four (+1 for missions) weeks by zeroing in on how we engage God with the things He has given us. While we typically think of *money* when we hear the word *stewardship*, we will explore the Bible's big picture presentation of this topic as well which will lay the foundation for how we approach specific areas of stewardship.

### **Engage with the Text**

- [This section was not in the sermon, but may be particularly encouraging as you consider your work and worship]. Gen. 1:26-28 & 2:15 provide us with a basis for stewardship that is rooted in creation (and is pre-Fall).
  - How is "image bearing" connected to stewardship of creation?<sup>i</sup>
  - What are the stewardship implications of Adam & Eve's mandate to "work" and "keep" the garden (2:15)?<sup>ii</sup>
  - What does it mean to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over..." creation as it relates to stewardship (1:28)?
  
- Matt. 25:14-30 gives us a hopeful and sobering picture of various stewarding scenarios.
  - What does the Master and his actions in the parable teach us about stewardship?
  - What do the servant's actions and answers to the Master teach us about stewardship? (Think about it - Which servant do you most identify with?)
  
- 1 Peter 4:7-11<sup>1</sup> hones in on stewarding one's gifts in the local church.
  - What *motivation* does Peter give for Christians to use their gifts for the body of Christ (vs.7)?
  - How is God's grace exemplified in the gifts He has given (vs. 10)

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<sup>1</sup> See also 1 Cor. 12 and 14 for a good passage on the variety of gifts and importance they all play within the body of Christ.



### Applying the Text

- What does our stewardship of God's creation say about our view of (1) God and (2) creation? How do we change where it has gone wrong?
- Stewardship and balance:
  - How do we balance the stewardship of creation between worshiping it and abusing it? What is a biblical position on creation care?
  - How do we balance the stewardship of the possessions and talents/gifts God has given us between worshiping/hoarding/wasting and abusing or allowing ourselves to be abused in the use of our possessions and talents/gifts?
  - How do we balance the stewardship of our spiritual gifts within the Church between non-use and abuse? What considerations are in play (time, family, health, etc.)? What role does the leadership of the church play in helping believers exercise their gifts without abusing the gifted?
- What activities did Jesus engage in (with others and alone) to help Him steward His life that would help us?
- What implications does our stewardship have on our witness/evangelism?

**For this week:** What about stewardship has the Holy Spirit challenged you on? What area in your life do you need to pray for and seek counsel on how to better steward for God's glory?

Here is the link mentioned to the church's website which allows one to set-up online giving.

<http://mefchurch.org/electronic-giving.html>

Is God calling you to give more?



<sup>i</sup> Human life was created **in** (lit., “as,” meaning “in essence as”) **the image of God** (v. 27). This **image** was imparted only to humans (2:7). “Image” (*selem*) is used figuratively here, for **God** does not have a human form. Being in God’s image means that humans share, though imperfectly and finitely, in **God’s nature**, that is, in **His communicable attributes** (life, personality, truth, wisdom, love, holiness, justice), and so have the capacity for spiritual fellowship with Him.

God’s purpose in creating human life in His **image** was **functional**: man is to **rule** or have dominion (1:26, 28). **God’s dominion was presented by a “representative.”** (Egyptian kings later, in idolatry, did a similar kind of thing: they represented their rule or dominion by making representative statues of themselves.) However, because of sin all things are not under man’s dominion (Heb. 2:8). **But Jesus Christ will establish dominion over all the earth** (Heb. 2:5–8) at His second coming.

Allen P. Ross, “Genesis,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 29.

Romans 8:28–29 (ESV)

<sup>28</sup> And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> For those whom **he** foreknew he also **predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son**, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

## ii Work as Worship

In the garden God gives the man a purposeful existence that includes overseeing his environment. Work is a God-given assignment and not a cursed condition. It was sin that spoiled the pristine relationship between the man and his environment, making work a toilsome chore that became a requirement for mere existence (3:17–19, 23).

K. A. Mathews, [Genesis 1-11:26](#), vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 209.

*And put him into the garden*; literally, caused him to rest in it as an abode of happiness and peace.

H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., [Genesis](#), The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 46.

The point is made clear here that physical labor is not a consequence of sin. Work enters the picture before sin does, and if man had never sinned he still would be working. Eden certainly is not a paradise in which man passes his time in idyllic and uninterrupted bliss with absolutely no demands on his daily schedule.

Victor P. Hamilton, [The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 171.

It should be noted that even before the fall man was expected to work; paradise was not a life of leisured unemployment.

Gordon J. Wenham, [Genesis 1–15](#), vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 67.