

**Psalm 24:1** *The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world, and those who live in it.*

There is a desire to be generous within us especially when we understand that we have been given something that does not belong to us. Then we are free to give. When we become a Christian, we become conformed to His image - God is a giver.

**John 3:16** *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.*

**What hinders generosity?** It is not a lack of desire but a lack of stewardship. We need to understand what we hold in our hands and our lives. Stewardship is the management of the property of someone else. When we are a steward of something there is a responsibility. Understanding our position in this world is significant.

**Matthew 25:14** *For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. The ownership and the authority rests on the man going on a journey. Verse 15-18* *To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. he one who had received the five talents immediately went and did business with them, and earned five more talents. In the same way the one who had received the two talents earned two more. But he who received the one talent went away and dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money. Matthew 25:19-29* There will always be a settling of these accounts before the Lord.

**We are not the owners. Psalm 50:12** *If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is Mine, and everything it contains.* When the possessor of Heaven and Earth brought us into being and placed us in the world, He placed us as a steward of the things we have. Jesus connects faithfulness with increase when talking about what Heaven is like. Jesus wants us to steward what He gives us. Stewardship is better understood when we see we are not the owners of our possessions. **I Corinthians 4:7** *For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?* We sometimes boast of our efforts to obtain things but our loving Father is the one who blesses us.

**We are stewards of the Lord's resources.** Our problem began in the Garden as God wanted us to rule with one exception - one tree. The temptation to possess what Adam was not given became real. The enemy put the temptation into man that they could own and have authority instead of listening to God. The first temptation was about possession and ownership. Man did not own what they took.

**Are we a good steward?** We are all stewards because God owns it all but gives us the freedom to mess up. **Luke 12:16** *And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry."'" But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."* Condemnation did not come because he was wealthy or successful, but because he claimed ownership.

We tend to hang on to possessions because of fear and forget that God is faithful, good, loving, and trustworthy. God told Abraham that he would be blessed and that he would bless others.

**Genesis 12:1-3** Blessings are the experiencing of God's faithfulness and favor toward us. If you want blessings, then choose to give up ownership of your life to Jesus. If you want peace, give God your burden. God wants us to pass on that favor and be a blessing to others.

Read the story of the heart that gave big. **Mark 12:41-44** It is the heart behind the giving and not the quantity that God sees.

Today, we have the opportunity to be a blessing to others as we give of what we have to our ministry partners. Give without compulsion. Ask God what we are to do with His possessions and resources.

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What difference is there between the desire to be generous and the reality of your generosity?

What hinders our generosity?

What is the difference between stewardship and generosity?

What makes us good stewards?