LIFE UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT
LESSON #3 OUTLINE
Stewardship 102: We Manage the Ranch

“Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.” I Corinthians 4:1-2

Man has been appointed as manager, or caretaker, of all that God owns. Stewards are guardians who watch over, give oversight to, and care for the resources the Lord has entrusted to them.

Have you ever see a business that opens with a bang but closes quickly? Maybe a restaurant with poor service, or a repair shop that never seems to get your repairs made on time or for the amount quoted? The reason most of these businesses fail…POOR MANAGEMENT! I am sure that the owners wanted to succeed, but the management team failed miserably. They were untrustworthy and unfaithful in their assignment. If they had succeeded, the customers would have returned and word would have spread throughout the community and the business would have flourished! Many times when a business fails, new owners will come in and take over. They will go to a lot of effort and expense to try and overcome the previous owner’s reputation for poor service and management. We’ve all seen it…the big sign out front that says “UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT”

CHRISTIANS ARE UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT!

When a person comes to Christ and is born again they become a new creature.

“If any man be is Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.” I Corinthians 5:17

Life isn’t the same after we are saved. Praise God! A miraculous change has come about – everything about us becomes new! No longer dominated by Satan and self, we surrender by faith, the rights of our life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We choose to live for God, not for ourselves. We come under new management – God’s management! We belong to Him.

“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” I Corinthians 6:19-20

Along with our new relationship and new life in Christ, comes the new role we have and the purpose for our Christian life, as shown in our opening scripture in I Corinthians 4:1-2. We are servants of Christ first, and stewards second. A steward is a manager, a person entrusted with managing something that belongs to someone else. Christian stewards manage the Gospel work of the God’s Kingdom on this earth. We learned last week that God owns everything. He owns the cattle. Someone has to manage the ranch where those cattle are. That’s us. His stewards manage His beef!!
1. Describe in your own words what you believe a manager is.

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2. Have you ever been in the position of manager over something? What did you manage and how did you manage it?

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3. What are the joys of managing? The pressures? The rewards?

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4. What do you see as the minimum requirements needed for a person to be a successful manager?

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5. What do you believe you, as a Christian, are called to manage?

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Survival, Success, or Significance?

There are three major ways to look at life. People generally fall into one of these categories:

1. **Survival** – Self centered, their “agenda” is all that matters. Their goal in life is simply to survive, hold on, hang in there, hope it works out. They are “just get by” people. Committed to minimum living. Takes and not giver. Survivors have no concept of service or stewardship. They see life as hard, without reward and something you just have to survive. They have no dreams of success and no thoughts of significance.

2. **Success** – Committed to bring successful, making it in life. They want to be on top. Winning is everything. Their vision is a little larger than a survivor, they live in a larger world that does include others. But mostly others who can help them succeed in accomplishing their goals and fulfilling their dreams. The allure of success and becoming successful is what drives these people to get ahead. They loath the survivor’s “get by” attitude. They want to get ahead, climb new mountains, conquer challenges. Success, at any cost, is the goal of success oriented people.
3. **Significance** – Few people attain this level of living. Significance-minded people soar above the crowd. They are frustrated by survivors and envied by the successful. They are big thinkers who live for time and eternity. They care about eternal things, values and issues that really matter. God’s Kingdom and His agenda are important to them. They live to be blessed so they can be a blessing to others. They strive to make a name for God in this life. They want to leave a legacy, lasting impression and influence on mankind for God’s eternal Kingdom.

**Question:** What is your way of looking at life? What changes do you need to make to become a person of significance?

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Stewards are Significant People!

God’s managers stay focused on the glory of God. They are extraordinarily generous givers of time, talent and treasure. Their lifestyle inspires other people to do better. They influence others to trust the Lord to meet their needs. Stewards assist others, by word and deed, in accomplishing God’s great plan for prosperity and success in their lives. They make significant differences in the lives of others because Jesus has made a significant difference in their life. They joyfully and faithfully share what they have found: an abundant and prosperous life in Christ.

Stewards are Faithful People

*I Corinthians 4:1-2* …”it is required…” Mandatory, not optional. No take it or leave it here. Stewards must be faithful – trustworthy. They must be found worthy of trust, observed by God and others, day in and day out, doing what God commanded them to do.

What do you think are some of the character qualities of a faithful steward?

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Five Features of a Faithful Steward

Look at the parable Jesus told in *Luke 19:11-26*. There are five characteristics that distinguish the “good slave” from the “bad slave” who failed to prosper his master:

1. **The Good Slave** recognized and respected his master. Do you respect God as your Lord and Master?
2. The Good Slave did business for his master. Are you conducting your Master’s business?

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3. The Good Slave forgot about himself. Do you do God’s business for yourself, or for him?

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4. The Good Slave was blessed by his master. Do you expect God to bless you for being a faithful manager?

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5. The Good Slave received even more reward. Can you think of a time when God overwhelmingly blessed you because of your faithful stewardship? How did it feel to receive more than expected?

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Opportunities for stewardship will come. Participation is a choice. Faithful stewardship doesn’t come naturally. It demands work and effort. We will eventually give account for our management. Faithful stewardship will be rewarded handsomely.

**Stewardship is Partnership**

The stewardship process is a partnership, a divine/human arrangement. He does His part, and we do our part – God and man working together to accomplish God’s will on earth.

In closing read the parable of the seed found in *Mark 4:26-29*.

Seed, soil, harvest. This is a parable about a process where a small seed turns into a huge harvest. How? Through a partnership. God does His part, man does his part.

Man’s Part: Sow the Seed (vs. 26-27)

God’s Part: Grow the Seed! (vs. 28)

Man’s Part: Mow the Seed (vs. 29)
We sow the seed, God grows the seed. We can’t grow the seed. God won’t sow the seed. WE know we will mow the seed if we sow the seed because God will grow the seed!

**Management Inventory**

Lifestyle stewardship is the faithful management of all God’s resources on a daily basis. Managers who are faithful and prosperous recognize and respect the partnership of the stewardship process. God does His part, we do our part. We can’t do His part. He won’t do our part. Take a look at your part through the following inventory exercise:

1. Get alone with God and open your eyes to the many gifts in your life.
2. Make a list of all He has given you.
3. Give thanks for each item on the list.
4. Honestly answer the hard question: “How am I managing God’s gifts?”
5. How would you describe your management style?
6. What kind of manager would your best friends say you are?
7. How can you be more faithful as a steward of God’s resources?
8. Make an action plan for improving your management style immediately!

*Remember: He owns the cattle; we manage the Ranch!*