

TRAINING STEWARDSHIP IN OUR CHILDREN

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*Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects,
bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.*
Colossians 1:10

INTRODUCTION:

An understanding of the Bible's teaching about stewardship can help both the parents and their children to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord" (Colossians 1:10).

QUESTIONS:

- A. What does the Bible have to say to me about the stewardship of **my** role as a mother?
- B. What can we as parents teach our children from the Bible about their stewardship of **time, work, and talents**?

THE STEWARDSHIP OF TIME

- I. **TIME – a gift from God** to parents and to their children.
 - A. The Bible repeatedly refers to the brevity of our lives compared to eternity (Psalm 103:14-15).
 - B. Man's time on earth is described as "fleeting" (Ecclesiastes 9:9); "a vapor" (James 4:14); "a breath" (Job 7:7, Psalm 35:4); a "passing shadow" (Psalm 102:11, 144:4); grass and a flower that is no more (Psalm 103:14-15).
 - C. Short—but not worthless! **"In Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me..."** (Psalm 139:16).
Our lives are short, but our time is valuable to God!

II. **TIME** – parents need prayer to wisely use what they have been given.

- A. Lord, make me to **know my end** And what is the **extent of my days**; Let me know how **transient I am**. (Psalm 39:4).
- B. So teach us to **number** our days, that we may **present to You a heart of wisdom** (Psalm 90:12).
- C. **Be careful how you walk**, not as unwise people but as wise, **making the most of your time**, because the days are evil...do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*. (Ephesians 5:15-17).
- D. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. (**Colossians 4:5**).

III. **TIME – a treasured window of opportunity for parents** to steward their children’s understanding of living for God’s glory.

- A. The parenting season is short. Parents have directives from God’s Word to be obeyed. “[Make] the most of your time...**understand what the will of the Lord is**” (Ephesians 5:16-17).
- B. Parents can be tempted to abandon “the will of the Lord” and involve themselves in what seems at the time to be “good things.” “Good things are the worst enemy of the best.” God is our Creator and Sovereign. God’s parenting commands are the “best” (Ephesians 6:4).
- C. Parents should **prioritize** several areas of stewardship:
 - 1. **Maintain** your own spiritual walk – know God and His Word and allow Him to control every interaction with your family (Colossians 1:10).
 - 2. **Evangelize** your children – give children a biblical understanding of their sin and condemnation before a holy God, their need of repentance and faith, their hope of salvation through the gospel, the brevity of their life, and the eternal rewards and joy of obeying and serving their Savior until they hear His “well done.”
 - 3. **Maintain a “pilgrim mentality.”** Parents must constantly remind themselves and their children that

the time that God has given them can either be used to bring glory *or* reproach to their Maker.

“Don’t waste your life.” “Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

“Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, “I have no delight in them” (Ecclesiastes 12:1). **“Seek ye first** (lit *continually seek*) **the kingdom of God,** and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33 KJV; Mark 10:29-30f; and Luke 18:29f).

4. **Keep your eyes on the goal, parents!** Become a better steward of your time by more effectively teaching and training the children to value and steward their time.

- IV. **TIME – a vital necessity** for parents is to **align their family’s choices with God’s purposes** for the home by implementing God’s gift of **work** into the stewardship training of their children.

THE STEWARDSHIP OF WORK

- I. **WORK –** God’s good gift to **all mankind** at creation (Genesis 2:15).
 - A. God commands **parents to work** to provide for their children and to have the means to give to others (2 Thessalonians 3:7-15; 1 Timothy 5:8; Ephesians 6:7-8).
 - B. God has ordained that parents **teach their children diligence** in their work (Proverbs 10:5; 13:4; 21:25-26; 31:10).
 - C. God has ordained that parents teach their children to do their work **as to the Lord** (Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:23).
- II. **WORK –** The family unit (established by God) provides the perfect setting for teaching children to work while under

submission to authority. Children can be taught in the family unit to:

- A. **Complete** their work with excellence, integrity, and promptness.
- B. **Persevere** to the end when challenged by their own fleshly resistance.
- C. Work with a **righteous attitude** – “obedient to parents in all things for this is well-pleasing to the Lord” (Colossians 3:20); working heartily as unto the Lord” (Ephesians 6:7).

III. **WORK** – Parents teach children God’s commands in faith while relying on God’s strength and wisdom and praying earnestly for their children.

- A. God gives **satisfaction** to those who labor diligently for the purpose of meeting their daily needs, sharing with others in need, and giving to the Lord’s work.
- B. Training children to have a **biblical work ethic** can **equip them** to be good stewards of their gifts and God’s calling on their lives (Galatians 6:4).

Matthew Henry: “An inference drawn from Ecclesiastes 3:22. *Let every man **prove** his own work and **approve** himself to God in it.*”

THE STEWARDSHIP OF TALENTS

I. **TALENTS** – Parents have the opportunity and responsibility to be good stewards of the talents that God chooses to give to their children. Children’s talents can be identified and strengthened for God’s glory through instruction and use (Colossians 3:20-23).

II. **TALENTS** – Parents must teach children biblical truths regarding their God-given abilities.

- A. **Talents** – and the ability to use them – are **given** to individuals **by their Creator** (Matthew 25:15).
- B. Talents are to be used to **glorify the Giver**. **No one has reason to boast** (1 Corinthians 4:7; 2 Corinthians 10:17-18).

- C. God gives the talents and gives the **ability to use them** to glorify Himself and edify the saints.
 - D. God **highly values the talents** He gives us, and we should as well. All of us are given much and are instructed to use them. To whom much is given much shall be required (Luke 12:48).
 - E. God promises to **reward** those who use their gifts and abilities according to His Word and for **His** glory. Heavenly treasures are far greater than any earthly recompense that an earthly employer can give for the use of those gifts. When God’s children – both parents and their children – meet their Savior face to face, they will hear “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21-23; 2 Timothy 4:7 and Matthew 6:33; 19:29; Luke 18:29f).
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PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING CHILDREN “The Stewardship of Time, Work, and Talents”

I. Teaching the stewardship of TIME.

Encourage routine and order in your family through instruction, example, and well communicated plans. A dependable schedule contributes to stability and security in the home.

- A. Children gain a sense of time, predictability, and priorities if they experience a consistent routine in the family – rising times, bedtimes, hygiene and dressing time, nap time, mealtimes, work/ play times, work schedules of parent, devotional times, quiet times, church times.
- B. Children learn to highly value their discretionary time and play time each day if it is used as a reward for completion of their assigned work – school assignments, household chores, music practice, and other assigned tasks. The long-term goal for each child: to learn to wisely plan their **own** days to be as efficient and productive as possible.
- C. All members of the family can be more productive when there is a communicated schedule that allows each of them

to work efficiently and productively and then come together at agreed-upon times. Teach children teamwork – to value the time of others by being prompt when a gathering-time has been established. When the family waits five minutes for them to come to a meal or family devotions, they have wasted 25 minutes of valuable time that has been given by God to the family. A person who excuses their regular tardiness through life will continue to communicate that they consider their time more valuable than other's time.

- D. Young children can begin to learn the value of time when parents clearly communicate each day's tasks and goals. (This can be communicated aurally or with a written list for each child.) Children settle into work when they understand the planned order as well as any change that is anticipated in the usual routine. Age-appropriate tasks that are assigned can be given a designated time and commended when complete. (Timers, stop-watches, check lists, visual star charts, or other concrete indicators of accomplishments can be greatly motivational for younger children.) Children love to document their daily progress and compete against their previous records.
- E. Accept God-ordained interruptions of the planned schedule and use them as teaching opportunities. Examples: Illness, spiritual, or character needs that must be addressed. We use "unplanned events" to communicate to our children that God's providence dictates what we don't always foresee. Changes are always for our good and God's glory.

II. Teaching the stewardship of WORK.

A mother who is a good steward of her role:

- A. Determines the needs of the household and then delegates age-appropriate jobs to the family members with easy-to-follow lists and instructions.
- B. Comes alongside the children to teach them good work skills and then regularly inspects their completed work. ("You can't expect what you don't inspect.")

- C. Encourages a biblical work perspective and then provides encouragement with commendations as the children experience the satisfaction of a job well done.
- D. Provides easy ways for children to keep record of their completed work and provides motivational incentives to improve their quality and efficiency. (Sometimes called “the carrot.” 😊)
- E. Identifies patterns of character flaws and wrong attitudes in children’s responses to assigned work. They may include lack of diligence, dependability, and promptness. Mom works with Dad and together they regularly correct and biblically mentor the child until there is improvement in the child’s performance.
- F. Works beside the very young to break large jobs down into smaller age-appropriate tasks. Jobs can be done in a designated amount of time with a routine that may include cheerful songs or recitations. (Picking up toys after play time and sorting laundry are generally some of the first opportunities for young children to learn work and perseverance skills.)
- G. Gradually expands the age-appropriate workloads for each child until they experience the satisfaction of efficient, completed work. Encourages children to initiate jobs and projects in the home.
- H. Provides the children with suggestions for using their work skills to benefit others in their natural family, their church family, and even other believers around the world.

III. Teaching the stewardship of God-given TALENTS.

- A. Children must be regularly reminded that they are “fearfully and wonderfully made” and that God has endowed them with abilities and gifts that are in His sovereign will and purposes (Psalm 139:14). Children must be taught that their greatest joy will be realized when they give back to God the talents He has graciously given to them.
- B. Parents can observe their children as they work and interact with others – in and outside of the home. These occasions

often reveal children's unique personalities, gifts, and interests and allow parents to ascertain the ways that God has equipped their children to serve Him.

- C. Distinctive gifts and interests can be commended and then strengthened with specific training and experiences. Parents can pray that God will lead them to godly, skilled individuals that can provide the necessary skill-training and mentoring needed to refine the gifts of their children. Allowing your teen or young adult to learn work skills while observing their mentor's godly walk can be one means of stewarding his gifts for the advancement of the Lord's work. Parents must regularly watch for any spirit of pride or self-sufficiency in a young person. Parents must often remind their children that all abilities are gifts from God and are to be used for His glory. *"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?"* 1 Corinthians 4:7.
- D. Parents can have regular discussions with their children to help them identify their unique strengths and gifts. Young people can utilize their gifts in work and ministry under parental supervision and continue to ask God for His leading as they enter their lifetime occupation as adults.

David Brainard died at age 29 after giving the last three years of his life to evangelize the American Indians. What he wrote in his diary is the prayer of every parent for themselves and for their children as they strive to train them in the stewardship of their time, work, and talents. *"Oh, how precious is time! And how guilty it makes me feel when I think I have neglected to fill up each part of it with duty to the utmost of my ability and capacity. I long to be a flame of fire continually glowing in the divine service and building up of Christ's kingdom to my last and dying breath. I long to spend and be spent for God. Oh that I may never loiter in my heavenly journey."* (David Brainard)

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