

# Stewardship

When I was a boy in the mountain of eastern Tennessee, not far from the J.B. Chapman log memorial church, we lived in a somewhat primitive community. We carried water from the well to the house; we chopped our firewood and we had to have our corn ground into meal.

There were two grist mills in the neighborhood. One was west of us, down by the river, and was run by a water wheel; Mr. Yarmouth was the owner and operator of it. The mill building was rather large and stood out over the river. It was a lovely scene, the kind that inspires poets.


When the river level was high Mr. Yarmouth could grind meal for the farmers all day long without any operating expense. Then, too, the running of the mill was very quiet and serene with no noise of machinery interrupting the quiet of a river valley.

Mr. Johnson owned the other mill, some distance to the east of us. His mill was powered by a gasoline engine, and was housed in a simple and unpretentious small building. His double-piston engine often shattered the silent surroundings of the peaceful valley. Yet, Mr. Johnson got most of the corn-grinding business.

The reason was easily understood. Mr. Yarmouth could grind the corn only when the river was high, but people's needs occurred regularly. They ate three times a day, every day. Mr. Johnson could grind corn at any time, because the source of his

power was always at hand; the fuel tank of his engine was always full of gasoline.

Giving is like that. There are those Christians who give when their particular river of life is high; when they feel flush with the spirit of giving. They are good folks and speak of liberty, of not being bound to the law, etc. In times like these, however, the river doesn't run as high. However, the needs continue to arrive regularly. Come sunshine or rain, summer flowers and beautiful landscapes, or wintry blasts and barren trees, the needs keep coming. In such times we are forced to rely on the equivalent of Mr. Johnson's gasoline engine.

Regular and systematic giving may not be spectacular and exhilarating. It may be an unpretentious, down-to-earth, practical manner of supporting the Kingdom. But it gets the job done regularly, and on time. During these difficult times, let's be dependable givers like the gasoline-engine miller, and get the job done every time! 



*In the story of the widow's mite, the poor widow "put more in than all who contributed." She had a spirit of sacrificial giving. We have churches, just like in Jesus' synagogue days. We support the church, but in what spirit? Will our depth of spirit be able to meet the stresses facing churches in the future? The widow shows the way.*





### Nothing Happened Today

**O**ne definition states that a steward is a person who manages the affairs of a household or an estate for the owner. In the Christian sense, a steward is the manager of the affairs of God on earth. God has made each of us a steward and has given us abilities and talents that are unique for each of us to use in that work.

I asked someone the other day, "How are things going?" He replied, "All right, I guess. Nothing's happened today!" There are some days when it does seem that nothing happens. But are there really any such days?

God is always at work! When we look around us and really seek to see God at work, we will find that the sick are always being healed, people are always being saved, lives are being blessed. God is always at work in the life of his children. We may not always recognize what God is doing and many things may happen that we don't understand, but

God is always there! Has God been doing something in your life? Have you counted your blessings lately?

Don't ever say, "Nothing happened today," because something is always happening. Look around you this week ... See what is happening! If you will notice the changes that are occurring in your own life and in the lives of those around you, you will see that God is at work. As we receive the blessings of God from day to day and week to week, we should return a portion of what God has first given to us by making things happen using our time, talents and resources. ☩



## A Stewardship Prayer

*Dear God,*

*At baptism, we accepted the call to follow Jesus.*

*Be with us as we move along on our faith journey.*

*Send us your Holy Spirit, so that we might have wisdom for the journey.*

*Help us to develop and share our gifts as good stewards, so that we may use them in love and service in your Kingdom.*

*We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

### “Notable Quotes”

*“He who gives what he would as readily throw away, gives without generosity: for the essence of generosity is in self-sacrifice.”*

Sir Henry Taylor

*“If we love Christ and his church enough, we will not stay away from church for light reasons. If we love enough, we will not easily turn down a church committee assignment. If we love enough, we will not refuse to help in the church school or choir. If we love enough, we will not have too tight a hold on our pocketbooks. Love wants to pour itself out. Love never counts the costs. Love never fails.”*

William LaRoe Jr.

*“Our love follows our pocketbook. Some say, dedicate the heart and the money will follow; but our Lord put it the other way around. ‘Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.’ If your treasure is dedicated, your heart will be dedicated. If it is not, it simply won’t. It’s as simple as that.”*

G. Timothy Johnson



*When you let me put more than ten dollars in the Sunday collection, I'll let you get the \$200 Dick Tracy pajamas!*

*The gift of money ... while forever needed ... cannot tell the whole story. The most precious gift, always, is the message that you care. There are, in practical terms, only two ways of showing how much you care for a particular cause. One is the amount of work you do for it; the other is the amount of substance you give to it.*

# Steward of the Month

## Our Stained Glass Windows

Jerome, Penns Grove NJ

**W**e have a wonderful old church built in 1920, and like many of us in the congregation, age has taken its toll. There are 45 exquisitely beautiful stained glass windows and therein lies our problem. Many of them are in desperate need of repair. So our pastor asked for volunteers to raise money to repair them.

A team of 6 stepped forward and in just about 3 years they have raised over \$14,000, had 2 small windows repaired for \$2000 and contracted to restore a large, 14 ft. high window for \$13,120. The window was removed last week and restoration has begun.

The team, with the help of the congregation, sold “Joe Corbi” pizzas, cakes and cookie dough, Tupperware, and jewelry. They ran concession stands for a local Minor League Baseball Team, The Blue Rocks in Wilmington, DE. They received money from a church Chinese auction, cleaned streets for the Township, hosted “Tastefully Simple” parties and received donations every Sunday from church members in a little green, stained glass box in the narthex.

The total estimated cost to repair all of the windows was over \$120,000 and when we started we said, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.” We have taken that step ... just a small congregation, but BIG on STEWARDSHIP. 