A LIFE THAT COUNTS
#1: The Stewardship of Life
October 14-16, 2006

11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of
God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond
tracing out! 34 "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who
has been his counselor?" 35 "Who has ever given to God, that God
should repay them?" 36 For from him and through him and to him
are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen. 12:1 Therefore, I
urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer
your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this
is true worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but
be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be
able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing
and perfect will.

Romans 11:33-12:2 TNIV

Introduction: Central to Christian orthodoxy is the doctrine of Stewardship, in layman's terms "the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care." (Webster's) All too often, though, we teach and learn this important theological concept only in the context of tithing to our church. In reality, the doctrine speaks to the whole of life: everything that we have and everything that we are belongs to God and God alone.

I. It is Impossible to Outgive God!
   A. The riches and knowledge of God are indescribable!
   B. God's judgments–His decisions–are unquestionable.
   C. The paths God chooses for our lives cannot be foreseen or fully known.
   D. No human knows the thoughts of God.
   E. No human can presume to counsel God.
   F. No person has anything to give to God, since He already possesses everything.
   G. God owes us absolutely nothing!
   H. And yet God has given us everything according to His pleasure.

II. Offering Living Sacrifices
   A. All that God asks of us is absolute commitment and devotion: everything that we have and all that we are.
   B. The only true worship is the offering of self.
   C. If we are conformed to this world, then we do not belong to God.
   D. We are conformed to this world (this is our base nature) unless we are transformed by the changing of our minds in Christ.
   E. Only the person changed by God's power can perceive the will of God for their life.
   F. God's will is absolutely perfect and therefore better than anything we can will for ourselves.

III. Living a Life that Counts
   A. The life that counts begins with the recognition that God has created us for one purpose only, the "true worship" that is "holy and pleasing to God."
   B. The life that counts is completely invested in the stewardship of all that God places in our charge.
   C. God has "given" to us so that we might know the joy of "giving" to Him.
   D. The life that counts is a living sacrifice!

Conclusion: Stewardship is much more than giving money, though it will necessarily involve that. Jesus taught that "where your treasure is, there shall you heart be also." The real test of Stewardship is singular: "where is your heart." Unless our hearts belong completely to God, we can never expect to know His will and be led in His paths.

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