

A LIFE THAT COUNTS
#6: The Stewardship of Stuff
November 18-20, 2006

⁶Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹As it is written: “They have scattered abroad their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.” ¹⁰Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. ¹²This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. ¹³Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, people will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. ¹⁴And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

2 Corinthians 9:6-15 TNIV

Introduction: As we continue to study the Christian doctrine of Stewardship—“the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care” (Webster’s)—let’s consider the stewardship of “stuff.” We generally couple the term with a possessive pronoun, as in “my stuff” or “your stuff.” In reality, the very term implies that everything we have and everything we are belongs to God.

- I. The Nature of Stuff
 - A. All stuff is created by God according to His purposes.
 - B. God fashioned humanity out of “stuff.”

Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. *Genesis 2:7 TNIV*
 - C. All created matter is God’s “stuff.”

- D. Our culture is stuffed with stuff.
- II. Sowing and Reaping Stuff
 - A. Stewardship involves the responsible management of God’s stuff.
 - B. The believer who hoards stuff and fails to invest it in the Kingdom of God (sowing) does not realize a Kingdom return (reaping). (v.6)
 - C. Neither God nor God’s people can compel anyone to part with his/her stuff. (v.7)
 - D. The believer who gives only out of guilt or obligation is not blessed in the giving. (v.7)
 - E. Giving is a heart matter, because joyful giving touches the heart of God. (v.7)
- III. The Blessing of Giving Stuff
 - A. God blesses His children abundantly so that . . .
 - 1. They may have all that they need, and
 - 2. They may have enough to give (tithe). (v.8)
 - B. When we invest temporal stuff in Kingdom enterprise, the return on our investment is eternal. (v.9)
 - C. God’s plan involves making His people the brokers of His stuff in order that they might know joy. (v.10)
 - D. God supplies our need (bread) and then provides abundance to be given away (seed) in order to enlarge the Kingdom harvest. (v.10)
 - E. The result is blessing and thanksgiving. (v.11-12)
- IV. The Witness of Giving Stuff
 - A. We prove our faith when we give stuff away. (v.13)
 - B. Others are only led to praise God when they observe the detachment of God’s people from their stuff. (v.13)
 - C. Serving as a Kingdom broker—giving God’s stuff away—is an indescribable gift.

Conclusion: God’s foundation is the Church of Jesus Christ. He invests His stuff in us so that we may know the joy of giving it away and His world might be stuffed with His glory. That we are called to be His brokers is an indescribable gift, since ours is the privilege of sowing the seed that produces the eternal Kingdom harvest. It’s all God’s stuff, but we are God’s brokers!