Stewardship of Time Pt. 1 sermon for 1-1-17

# **Introduction to the Concept of Stewardship**

The insidious, deeply-held deception that is probably the greatest disease of humanity is that our lives, times, and possessions belong to us.

An arrogance arises from this disease that leads us further away from our Creator. We become more and more independent of His guidance. We become more and more frightened that if we don’t do it, no one will—that if we fail, then all is lost.

The antidote to our anxiety, frustration, and isolation is stewardship.

## **3 Tenets of Stewardship**

1. **All we have at our disposal and all our blessings are assets of God on loan to us.**
2. **He expects us to care for these blessings and make profit for Him.**
3. **It’s not all about you and your stuff; it’s about God and His stuff!**

For the whole month of January we will be learning about living the life of a faithful steward of God’s things.

We will cover what it is to be a faithful steward of time, health, influence, our local church, money, and family.

# **Key Stewardship Principles**

**If you faithfully steward the little things you have now, you will be given more in the future.**

# **Matthew 25:21** (NKJV)

**21**His lord said to him, ‘Well *done,* good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

**How you are now with the little you must steward would only broaden in scope if you had a lot.**

# **Luke 16:10** (NKJV)

**10**He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what is* least is unjust also in much.

# **Stewardship of Time**

## **Personal Story**

It was 2005 in Canton, Ohio at Malone College in a quaint piano studio overlooking the courtyard between Founder’s Hall and Mitchell Hall I found myself encountering a dilemma. The Piano Pedagogy Class I was taking was supposed to be easy since this class was going to teach me how to teach beginners how to play piano. I had been playing piano for at least 13 years by this time and teaching children to play should have been easy, right?

Now the dilemma.

Mrs. Carnes, the class professor, was an extremely disciplined person who thrived on attention to detail. Amongst many other lectures and tasks, she demanded that we fill a large 3 ring binder with our work, progress, and evaluations of our students, lessons, and piano curriculum. And this binder had to be arranged in the exact way that she prescribed. I do not have the time to elaborate on why this seemingly insignificant task was so demanding on my time, but let’s just say that it included so many projects and tasks that required a much higher level of time management than I possessed at that time. Hence, my dilemma.

Mrs. Carnes was more than a professor to me; she was a mentor. As the music department chair, she saw that the adjunct piano professors weren’t making much progress teaching me. She also heard me playing for hours in the practice rooms songs of worship or compositions that I had created. I was an interesting musical case for my professors. A paradox of stunning proficiency and frustrating ignorance.

Nonetheless, Mrs. Carnes transferred me to her studio.

She chose me, a musical misfit, as one of her personal students.

She had a level of godliness, proficiency, respect, and professionalism that inspired me. She would pray with me during our lessons; she would celebrate with joy when I achieved a victory all while expecting the greatest effort that I had to give. I worked harder for her classes and lessons than any other that I took.

And they gave me the least amount of credit too.

I couldn’t escape the fact that this old lady had touched the part of me that was a scared little boy who believed he was a failure that deserved to be punished. But instead of punishing me, she reassured me. She initiated me. She brought me up out of that pit. She believed in me.

I was tempted to quit the piano pedagogy class, but this teacher was the one person who had succeeded in teaching me how to read notation. I knew that what she had done was significant. And I wanted to do for others what she had done for me. She had what I wanted and to get what she had, I had to learn how to steward my time.

I chose to buckle down and work hard to learn how to control my time. I learned how to keep a calendar and a prioritized task list that kept me on task and on time. I passed the class with flying colors and have made most my musical income teaching beginner piano students for the last ten years.

I wouldn’t have succeeded if I didn’t understand that my time with Mrs. Carnes was a season that God had ordained for me. If you want to steward your time, you must understand what season you are in.

## **Understanding Seasons**

# **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8** (NKJV)

To everything *there is* a season,
A time for every purpose under heaven:

**2**A time to be born,
    And a time to die;
A time to plant,
    And a time to pluck *what is* planted;
**3**A time to kill,
    And a time to heal;
A time to break down,
    And a time to build up;
**4**A time to weep,
    And a time to laugh;
A time to mourn,
    And a time to dance;
**5**A time to cast away stones,
    And a time to gather stones;
A time to embrace,
    And a time to refrain from embracing;
**6**A time to gain,
    And a time to lose;
A time to keep,
    And a time to throw away;
**7**A time to tear,
    And a time to sew;
A time to keep silence,
    And a time to speak;
**8**A time to love,
    And a time to hate;
A time of war,
    And a time of peace.

**We must steward the time given to us because our Father in Heaven deals with time prudently.**

“To everything there is a season.”

To everything, there is a boundary, a phase, a purpose, an agenda, a goal that God has established.

Understanding the season that you’re in does not mean that you will have answers to all of life’s troubling questions. The “Why did they do this?” or the “How come it happened this way?” kind of questions.

**Understanding the season requires trust in the Lord that He has ordained a purpose for your seasons and an end to your current season.**

That trust brings peace and patience.

Once you have chosen to trust and only after you have chosen to trust, you are primed to understand the objective of your season; and once you know the objective of your season, you can steward your time in that season appropriately.

**Seasons are appointed times meant to execute God’s order or will.**

This order—God’s will—is what the Bible calls righteousness.

When you co-operate with God’s order for your time, you fulfill righteousness, when you react inappropriately for your season, then you step out of the will of God which results in a formation of disorder, confusion, and sin. (vs. 4-5)

##  **Submitting to His Order vs. Initiating His Order**

Much of what I will touch on in this final section of today’s sermon will be expounded in next week’s Pt. 2 sermon.

But this much I want to say today…

**There are Unforeseen seasons that come into our lives because God has appointed them for us; they come and go without our consent.**

**However, there are Initiated seasons in our lives that I believe the Lord allows us to initiate if we by faith know the will of God and proactively put wheels into motion through our good confession, investment, and action.**

## Unforeseen Seasons

Unforeseen seasons can come because

1. We have a Lack of Wisdom and God wants to teach us.
	1. Lack of Counsel
	2. Lack of Knowledge
	3. Lack of Planning
	4. Seeds Sown Unaware
2. God’s Divine plan offers us an opportunity to bring Him glory.

The most important thing to know about these seasons is that they only accomplish the perfect will of God when we choose to trust the God has a purpose and an end for the season.

**Abiding trust in the Lord is a healthy acceptance of things we cannot change.**

This acceptance is a choice to turn from anxiety and cast all your care upon the Lord believing that He cares for you. You choose to stop the internal fighting of bitterness, wrath, and dismay.

This acceptance leads to an ability to know and fulfill the will of God.

**Any acceptance that does not lead to the fulfillment of the will of God is apathy; and apathy leads to death.**

## Initiated Seasons

These seasons only come to people who lead the way because they understand their place in Christ and their responsibility to others.

**Initiated seasons are very productive and exciting but will never come unless initiated by you.**

You must take responsibility for the direction of your kingdom and work the righteousness of God.

**The time to initiate a new season is now in your current season, because it takes time for the seasons to change.**

Initiating a new season is all about sowing the seeds of a harvest that you want to reap in the future.

I want to teach you an acronym I learned from an organization called LIFE. **P.D.C.A.**

Want a peaceful family?

Initiate that with peaceful actions and words.

Plan. Do. Check. Adjust.

Want to minister?

Initiate that with study, learning, and apprenticeship.

Plan. Do. Check. Adjust.

Want financial success?

Initiate that with getting good counsel, making prudent decisions, and working hard.

Plan. Do. Check. Adjust.

Want better health?

Initiate that by evaluating your current state, learning how to get healthier, and partnering with people who will help.

Plan. Do. Check. Adjust.

The list goes on and on.

God has put the power of life in death in your tongue which leads to actions which leads to life change which leads to a new season.

Time of Ministry