

North American Division Ministries Convention
Stewardship Ministries

"GENEROSITY RESET"

Presenter:

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STEWARDSHIP

Definition

"The job of supervising or taking care of something, such as an organization or property." — *Oxford Dictionary*

"An ethic that embodies the responsible planning and management of resources. The concepts of Stewardship can be applied to the environment and nature, economics, health, property, information, theology, cultural resources, etc."
— *Wikipedia*

Put simply, the word "Stewardship" means to manage someone else's property. Psalm 24:1 says, "*The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in.*"

STEWARDSHIP

1. Stewardship is our responsibility to manage God's property.

For the Christian, we manage the property of our Lord. Our things are His things. All that we have is His, including our very bodies and spiritual gifts. We are mere lessees of the property, money, relationships, talents, time, and even our lives.

Think of yourself as the manager of a trust. God Himself has entrusted you with time, money, material things, and great opportunities. Your objective is to maximize the investment of all that has been put into your hands. Manage everything to the best of your abilities for His glory.

"Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2).

STEWARDSHIP

2. Stewardship impacts our eternal destiny.

In a few years, everything you have will either be thrown away or belong to someone else. Your house, your car, your clothing, your most prized possessions are all temporary. You'll spend a few years on earth, but eternity in heaven. The way we manage God's entrusted resources will impact where we spend eternity.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

STEWARDSHIP

3. Stewardship means we have not consumed it all on ourselves, but have preserved some for others.

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:8).



STEWARDSHIP



Based on the definition(s) and understanding of Stewardship, Stewardship honors God with all of the relationships and resources in our lives.

Stewardship is not just about money, but it is exercising the gifts God gives and not letting them waste away.

STEWARDSHIP

Money Is Only a Tool!

A lot of how we view Stewardship has to do with how we view money. Is money evil? Is money good?

Money is a tool that be used for good or bad purposes.

STEWARDSHIP

Illustration — Bricks

Bricks can be used to build a beautiful building, or they can be used to break windows in an attempt to steal valuable items in a building. Like bricks, money can be used for good or evil.

Money is a tool. It's not inherently good or evil. It's what we do with money that matters.



STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship principles have been with us for years. Stewardship is not a new concept.

- Time
- Talents
- Treasury
- Body Temple

We live, however, in a changing world. Perspectives on, and the practice of Stewardship, are not the same. Hence, it is time for a reset.

A WORLD OF CHANGE

We live in an ever-changing society, and COVID-19 has accelerated this change. Given this, we must:

- Change the way we look at things including our view of Stewardship.
- Change the way we minister.
- Change the way we evangelize.
- Change the way we execute our mission.

We're living in a "new normal," and must reset.

A WORLD OF CHANGE

- Change is inevitable. Change is constant.
- *Benjamin Disraeli*
- When you're finished changing, you're finished.
- *Benjamin Franklin*
- If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we aren't really living. - *Gail Sheehy*

A WORLD OF CHANGE

- Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future. - *John F. Kennedy*
- There is nothing wrong with change, if it is in the right direction. - *Winston Churchill*
- He who rejects change is the architect of decay. The only human institution which rejects progress is the cemetery.
- *Harold Wilson*

A WORLD OF CHANGE



A WORLD OF CHANGE



JCPenney

A WORLD OF CHANGE

**Just like society is changing,
“giving” to churches in the United
States, Canada, Bermuda, and
Guam (the NAD) is changing.**

A WORLD OF CHANGE

The Method of Giving to the Church Has Changed.

- In Person
- By Mail
- Online Giving
- Drop Off Box
- Cash App
- Zelle



A WORLD OF CHANGE

1. The Perspective of Giving to the Church Has Changed.

There was a time when giving to the work of the church was more frequently modeled in the home and regularly taught in Sabbath School, discipleship programs, evangelistic campaigns, and from the pulpit.

In 1980, the church received over 60% of all charitable giving, but since this time, giving to the church has experienced a rapid decline, hitting a new low of just 29% in 2020. (*Pew Research Center*)

A WORLD OF CHANGE

1. The Perspective of Giving to the Church Has Changed. - continued

- Many people don't see it as a Biblical mandate.
- They don't give out of obedience and love, but give out of feelings.
- The church is not seen as God's appointed agency on earth.
- Perceived corruption, mismanagement, lack of vision, lack of advancement, etc. have impacted giving to the church.
- As opposed to systematic benevolence to the church, many give to special, charitable projects and causes.

A WORLD OF CHANGE

2. The Changing Understanding on the Role of the Church

In past years, the church was central to the life of the Christian. The church member worshipped there, had family there, had friends there, fellowshiped there, etc. Worship, education, fellowship, recreation, and service all took place at the church. Multiple days during the week were spent at the church. The role and function of the church was paramount to the life of the believer.

A WORLD OF CHANGE

2. The Changing Understanding on the Role of the Church – continued

Societal Changes:

- Technological
- Geographical (Rural, Urban, etc.)
- Economic (Affluence, Wage Earners, etc.)

A WORLD OF CHANGE

2. The Changing Understanding on the Role of the Church – continued

Social Changes

- Secularization
- Postmodernism
- Decentralization

All of the aforementioned, coupled with the COVID-19 Pandemic, have changed the understanding of the role of the church, particularly among younger people.

A WORLD OF CHANGE

3. The Rise of Non-profits as a Philanthropic Option for Christians

There are more than 1.5 million nonprofits that exist today, and this number grows each year. Even during the COVID-19 Pandemic, there were over 35,000 new 501(c)3 organizations formed in 2020 alone.

This means that every year, there are more people and causes competing for the attention and wallets of church members. Moreover, the percent of the United States' income and National Gross Domestic Product that is given to charity has not increased, but has remained at about 2% for the past 40 years.

A WORLD OF CHANGE

**"A crisis is the vortex
of possibilities."**

A WORLD OF CHANGE

"Means will be devised to reach hearts. Some of the methods used in this work will be different from the methods used in the work in the past; but let no one, because of this, block the way by criticism."

— *Ellen G. White, Evangelism, p. 105*

BUILD A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY

In order to “reset” Stewardship for both now and in the future, a culture of generosity will have to be built by the church.

Creating a culture of generosity will require a new way of thinking and operating. Churches of all shapes and sizes will have to make changes. The best and most exciting days of local church ministry are ahead of us, but the future will look very different from the past.

In this new culture, being generous is not something church members must do, it must be who we are. Generosity must become a part of the culture of every local church.

GENEROSITY RESET

1. Education

The message of Stewardship and generosity is fundamental to the success of our churches. This message has to be intentionally shared.

We can no longer assume that church members know what Stewardship means and their spiritual responsibility associated with the management of God's property, which is everything.

It must be stressed that God was generous to us with the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. In return, we must be generous to His cause and calling on our lives through loving obedience in the returning of our Stewardship - time, talents, treasury, and body temple.

GENEROSITY RESET

1. Education



- Sabbath School
- Church School
- Divine Worship Experience
- Stewardship Seminars and Workshops
- Evangelistic Campaigns
- Bible Study
- Other

GENEROSITY RESET

1. Education

- Proverbs 3:9 — “Honor the Lord with the first fruits of all thine increase.”
- Matthew 25:21 — “You have been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.”
- Psalm 24:1 — “The earth is the Lord’s.”
- Matthew 6:33 — “Seek ye first the kingdom of God.”

GENEROSITY RESET

1. Education

- John 3:16 — “For God so loved the world that He gave.”
- Luke 16:11 — “If you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?”
- 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 — “He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. The Lord loves a cheerful giver.”

GENEROSITY RESET

1. Education

- Colossians 3:23-24 — “Whatever you do, do it heartily unto the Lord.”

GENEROSITY RESET

2. Engage Young People

A Biblical understanding of Stewardship and generosity may have never been instilled in young people at an early age.

According to the Christian Stewardship Network, in churches:

- Baby Boomers (1946-1964) account for nearly **42%** of the giving population (**30%** of the overall population).
- Generation X (1965-1980) account for **19%** of the giving population (**26.6%** of the overall population).
- Generation Y (also known as Millennials, 1981-1996) account for **7%** of the giving population (**30.4%** of the over population).

GENEROSITY RESET

2. Engage Young People

60% of Millennials (Generation Y) do give to non-profits, but only 7% of Millennials consistently give to the church.

If this trend doesn't change, and the Lord delays His coming, what will churches look like in 20 years?



GENEROSITY RESET

"Churches in the United States have entered a new season of ministry. Gone are the days when church attendance was a societal norm. For most of our American history, cultural and technological change was gradual, sufficiently paced for churches to lag only five to 10 years. Now churches are lagging 20 and 30 years as the speed of change increases dramatically. To many people, the church seems irrelevant. Several thousand churches close each year. The pace will accelerate unless our congregations make some dramatic changes."

- Thom S. Rainer, January 16, 2018

GENEROSITY RESET

Between 6,000 and 10,000 churches in the United States are dying each year, which means that around 100 to 200 churches will close per week.

- Thom S. Rainer of Lifeway Research

GENEROSITY RESET

2. Engage Young People



- **Make Stewardship a frequent topic of discussion and study in youth meetings, Sabbath School classes, small groups, etc.**
- **Educate in church schools (on all levels) on why we are called to be good stewards and generous with our money.**
- **Share the values of giving on your church website.**
- **Send emails with Stewardship messages to your church members, particularly youth.**
- **Post Stewardship messages on your Facebook and Twitter pages, and Instagram accounts.**

GENEROSITY RESET

“If you’re trying to target the 18 - 49 year old demographic, you should know that **80%** of them watch YouTube every month. YouTube is a great free platform to add your Stewardship videos. This same demographic’s TV watching has dropped by **4%**, but YouTube usage increased by **74%.**”

GENEROSITY RESET

- Over one billion hours of YouTube videos are watched daily.
- Over 500 million people watch Facebook videos daily.



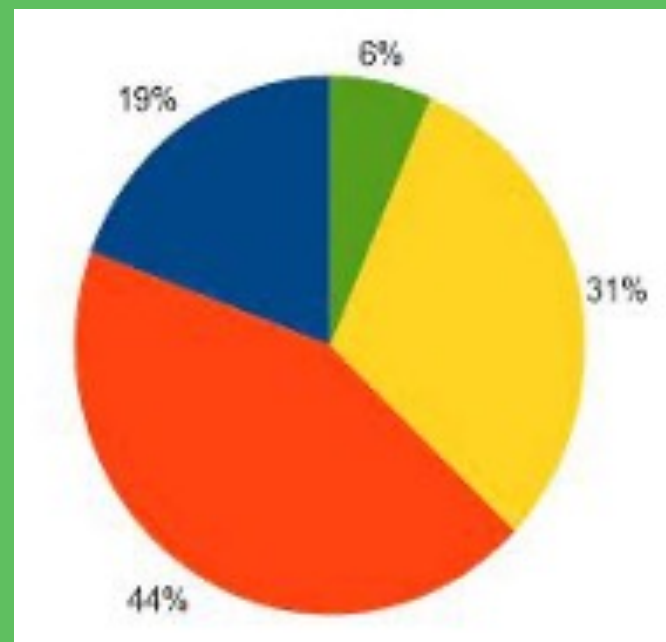
GENEROSITY RESET

3. Relevance

- Preach practical, interesting, and relevant sermons on the “why” behind Biblical Stewardship.
- Many individuals (particularly young adults) struggle with the current church culture and system. Budgets must be set and established that are not bureaucratic in nature and/or just perpetuating practices that are irrelevant and antiquated.
- Administrative overhead has to be streamlined. There is a growing mistrust that the church is unable to use its giving for worthwhile purposes.

GENEROSITY RESET

4. Transparency



- Be transparent on where the money given to the church and conference goes and how it helps fund certain activities including evangelism and outreach, mission programs, and discipleship opportunities.
- Stress to individuals (particularly youth) that "Jesus doesn't need their money. He wants what their money represents. He wants their heart. He wants their heart to long for the things of God and be hungry for them."

GENEROSITY RESET

5. Church Leaders Must Model Generosity

- Leaders must not just “talk the talk,” but also “walk the walk.”
- Generosity must be reflected and apparent in leaders’ personal Stewardship.
- Generosity must also be reflected and apparent in leaders’ corporate decisions regarding the use of God’s resources in the pursuit of the Gospel Commission.
- When their church has a major project, leaders must get involved in a major way. When you give to the Lord’s work, go above and beyond the call of duty.
- The familiar cliché is appropriate, “People don’t care how much know until they know how much you care.”

STEWARDSHIP

**"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink,
or whatsoever ye do, do all to the
glory of God."**

- 1 Corinthians 10:31



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