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Chapter I

Introduction: Why Study Biblical Stewardship?

What I Have Learned

Contrary to what many think, the lack of money is not the greatest obstacle to revival. This is routinely thought, especially in a poverty-stricken environment. However, money or the lack of it has never stopped God from pouring out His Spirit or sending revival.

The early church did not stop preaching and teaching because money was scarce. "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee" (Acts 3:6). They were considered lower class and as ignorant and uneducated men. "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled" (Acts 4:13). The lack of money did not hinder the progress of the New Testament church.

A close look at the New Testament reveals it never mentioned money as an obstacle to church growth. Church history records great revivals. They had little money but depended on the One who owns all silver and gold. He who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think (Ephesians 3:20) is certainly able to overcome any shortage of money.

Money becomes a hindrance to progress when people fail to obey God's Word, practice His principles, and follow His plan. This happens when they cease to operate by faith and begin to trust in their own abilities rather than God's. Disobedience blocks the way of God's blessings.

No amount of money can compensate for willful disobedience. If we will be faithful, obedient, and seek first the Kingdom of God, then God will provide for our every need. (See Matthew 6:33.)

God's Word has timeless principles that govern our existence. Such principles are applicable in any culture, at any time, and for any place. Methods change but principles remain the same. Obedience to these principles determines our happiness, health, wealth, relationship with God, and eternity. While these principles should shine as bright lights in a dark night, many lay buried beneath centuries of sin and disobedience. Misinformed teachers have also contributed to this dilemma by propagating false doctrines. Often self-willed people who determined to live life their way have overlooked these principles and suffered the consequences.

What is the solution to the dilemma? The place to start is in the Word of God. First, rediscover the principles and then put them into practice. God is merciful. Our approach to the Word must be with an open and sincere heart, willingness to obey, and a desire to please God.

The purpose of this study is to rediscover the timeless principles of stewardship found in the Word of God and make practical application to life today. God blessed those in past generations who lived by these principles. This serves as a challenge to the present generation to do the same.

In his book *Money, Possessions and Eternity*, Randy Alcorn says, "Stewardship is not a subcategory of the Christian life. Stewardship is the Christian life. After all, what is stewardship except that God has entrusted to us life, time, talents, money, possessions, family, and His grace?"

God said to Cain, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door" (Genesis 4:7). So it is with God and us. If we will "do well" and obey God's Word, we will be accepted. If not, we will be living with sin.

What Have You Learned?

1. Distinguish between principles and methods. _____

2. State the purpose of studying biblical stewardship. _____

3. Discuss the benefit of obedience to God's principles and the consequences of disobedience. _____

4. Define *stewardship*. _____
