

Stewardship Lesson 5: Deeds, Words, Thoughts, Behavior, Integrity

Theme Verse for Series: Matthew 22:36-39

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jesus replied: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.

Stewardship principles: Love God, love your neighbor, spread the Gospel.

Introductory thoughts:

- As established, stewardship is the careful and responsible management of something that has been entrusted to you. In finance or in business, a steward manages property. Investing it carefully to allow it to grow.
- God calls us to be stewards. In the last lesson we considered what it meant to be stewards of the talents and abilities that God has entrusted us with.
- God has also given us free will, the freedom to choose our actions and words. Even though God knows that we will fall short, he has still entrusted us with the freedom to choose our actions and words.
- Why would God do such a thing? Why would he entrust us with something he knows we will mess up and misuse?

There are the obvious ways that we can be bad stewards of our deeds; stealing, violence, murder, drunkenness, etc. These are all things **not to do**. What about when we think about our actions and what we **should do**?

NKJV James 2:14-26 - Faith Without Works Is Dead (Being a good steward of our deeds/behavior)

14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Faith and works go hand and hand. You can't have one without the other. James is pretty clear on this matter. *So if scripture is so clear, what gets in the way or why do we not always do what we need to do?*

- We don't know what is best
- We have other responsibilities
- Time

From Mere Christianity

"We may be content to remain what we call "ordinary people": but He is determined to carry out a quite different plan. To shrink back from that plan is not humility; it is laziness and cowardice. To submit to it is not conceit or megalomania; it is obedience. Here is another way of putting the two sides of the truth. On the one hand we must never imagine that our own unaided efforts can be relied on to carry us even through the next twenty-four hours as "decent" people. If He does not support us, not one of us is safe from some gross sin. On the other hand, no possible degree of holiness or heroism which has ever been recorded of the greatest saints is beyond what He is determined to produce in every one of us in the end. The job will not be completed in this life: but He means to get us as far as possible before death."

Proverbs 17:27-28 - Importance of choosing words carefully

What happens once a word is spoken? As such, what responsibility do we have to choose our words (and our tone) carefully?

The Lord Tests Hearts

Proverbs 17

*v4-5 An evildoer gives heed to **false lips**;
A liar listens eagerly to a **spiteful tongue**.*

*He who **mocks** the poor **reproaches** his Maker;
He who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.*

*v7 Excellent **speech** is not becoming to a fool,
Much less **lying lips** to a prince.*

*v9-11 He who covers a transgression seeks love,
But he who **repeats** a matter separates friends.*

***Rebuke** is more effective for a wise man
Than a hundred blows on a fool.*

*An evil man seeks only rebellion;
Therefore a cruel **messenger** will be sent against him.*

*v14 The beginning of strife is like releasing water;
Therefore, stop contention before a quarrel starts.*

v19-21 He who loves transgression loves strife,
And he who **exalts** his gate seeks destruction.

He who has a deceitful heart finds no good,
And he who has a **perverse tongue** falls into evil.

He who **begets a scoffer** does so to his sorrow,
And the father of a fool has no joy.

v27-28 He who has knowledge **saves his words**,
And a man of understanding is of a calm spirit.

Even a fool is counted wise when he **holds his peace**;
When he **shuts his lips**, he is considered perceptive.

**Clearly, we must be good stewards of the words that come out of our mouths. Scripture is clear that our words can be harmful to ourselves and others.

-Integrity Proverbs 11:3

The integrity of the upright guides them,
but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

-Thoughts Romans 12:2

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.

Discussion

Do we have control of our thoughts?

What does God think about what we think about?

Why is this important since our thoughts don't have to be shared with others?