

THE DOCTRINE OF STEWARDSHIP

Doctrine, principles and applications that have been isolated from the writings of Chauncey Riddle, and other General Authorities and Gospel writers.

Robert Fitt, editor

Doctrine: "For it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures.

D&C 104: 13, 56-57, 86

"In the Church a stewardship is a sacred spiritual or temporal trust for which there is accountability. Because all things belong to the Lord, we are stewards over our bodies, minds, families, and properties." (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, Pg.366)

Principle: The Holy Spirit is available to everyone within the limits of the stewardships for which they are responsible. This special dispensation of the Holy Spirit is called a mantle. It is means by which the word of Christ may be imparted to those for whom the leader is responsible. Through his mantle, each steward serves as a conduit through which the Lord may work.

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed [is] that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods." (Luke 12:42)

Application: *Commit to fulfill the stewardship faithfully; seek the daily ministrations of the Holy Spirit; Use the mantle righteously as directed by the Spirit; Do nothing that will clog the conduit between yourself and the Lord.*

Principle: The role of a steward is to wisely and faithfully care for all things that have been placed in his care in due season. Such a steward will, one day, share in the ownership of all that God has.

"And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath." (Luke 24:45-47)

Application: *Be wise and diligent and you faithfully carry out your responsibilities as a steward over those things which the Lord has placed in your care..*

Principle: Pure love must be in the heart of every man who is a true steward of God.

"One cannot be a steward of Christ without, first being a servant of Christ. I mean that in the pure sense that a servant must be responsive to Christ in the Spirit. Then, one of the gifts that the Spirit will give him will be the gift of love—the pure

love of Christ. Once a steward is armed with this love, and with the Holy Spirit, all stewardship relationships will be worked out and perfected by that pure, self-sacrificing, long-suffering love—the pure charity—that Paul talks about (1 Corinthians 13:4; also see Moroni 7:45). (C. Chauncey Riddle)

"The pure love of Christ—charity—is a gift from Christ. Some people think you can develop it, but you can't. It is a gift that comes to one who has given himself to live by the Spirit. Some people have a natural inclination to be kind and loving, but their love is not pure until they become servants of Christ and receive that pure gift." (C. Chauncey Riddle)

Application: *So live that you are worthy to receive the gift of pure love that Jesus willingly bestows upon righteous individuals who allow themselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit.*

Principle: Our bodies are not our own. They belong to God and are given us as a stewardship.

We do not own the bodies that we inhabit. God owns them; but He loaned them to us for a time, with the understanding that we will use them in the ways that He, as the owner, wishes us to use them.

"These bodies are given to you by the same Being that gave to me my body, and they are committed to you as a stewardship by that God who placed us here; and you have got to give an account of your stewardship, and the course you take. If you permit that tabernacle to become polluted, and if your spirit suffers your body to be contaminated with sin and corruption, you will have to make an atonement for it before you can get your redemption worked out. Gentlemen, mark it, for it is even so." (JD, Vol.1, Pg.34, Heber C. Kimball)

Application: *Do not allow your body and spirit to become contaminated by the urgent calls to pleasure by the adversary. H*

So live that you may proclaim to the Lord, at your passing, that you have kept your body clean and pure. Purity of, heart and body are essential.

Principle: We do not own our minds. They are given us as a stewardship from God.

It is useful to know that the mind of man is like the mind of God, except that, by comparison, man's mind is very infantile. It is expected to grow, however, and so we are commanded to use our minds to think God's thoughts, as best we can. Man is given very specific instruction as to how the mind should be used. God has told us:

- What we should allow into our minds,
- What we should believe,
- The basis upon which our decisions should be made.

Application: *The mind of man is the hinge upon which his body turns. Keep your mind pure and clean—free from the lurid temptations of the world—and God will bless you to keep your body and spirit undefiled as well.*

Principle: We can act as righteous stewards only under the direction of the Lord through the Holy Spirit. If we try to operate within our stewardships using our own wisdom, we serve the adversary instead.

Application: *The Lord continually warns us against trusting in the arm of flesh without the guidance of the Spirit; for Satan is expert in deceit and will ‘carefully’ lead such a one down to hell . Be sure to live worthy of the Holy Spirit and counsel with the Lord in all your doings.*

Principle: A man may be called upon, at any moment, to account to the Lord for the stewardship that has been appointed to him.

"It is wisdom in me...That every man may give an account unto me of the stewardship which is appointed unto him. For it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures. (DC 104:11-13)

"Every man will have to render an account of his stewardship, and every one of us will be held responsible for his own works, whether good or evil. ...God will not suffer the righteous to be deprived of the blessings they justly merit; they will gain their exaltation. No eye hath seen, no ear heard, neither can the heart of man conceive of the glory and exaltation that is laid up in store for the faithful. (JD, Vol.24, Pg.79, Joseph F. Smith, February 2d, 1883)

One of the measures against which we can prove ourselves is this: "Am I ready at any moment to account to the Lord for my Stewardship?" (2 Nephi 2:27-29)

Application: *Marion Lee was heard to say that he once worried as to whether he would be worthy at the ‘second coming’; but as he grew older he began to worry more about being worthy at his ‘first going’. Be ready, O man, for you never know the day nor hour when life will end and your stewardship will come under scrutiny.*

Principle: When a person is baptized he yields himself to become a steward for Christ.

Through the ordinance of baptism, a steward acknowledges these things:

- That the Lord is the owner and governor of everything that he possesses; and he consents to become a steward of these things in the Lord's behalf.
- That he will take upon himself the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and promises, as a steward, that from that time forward he will not do his own will, but will do the will of Christ; and will keep all the commandments that are given to him.

- That he will not neglect his stewardship, but will remember the Master always, so that he may receive continual instruction from the Lord and be both faithful and wise in the execution of the charge that has been given him.

"No stewardship can be fully filled without divine direction. This involves study of the scriptures, the words of living prophets, and calling upon the Lord for intelligence beyond your own. It also involves knowing people and being sincerely concerned about their interests and needs." (Ezra Taft Benson, Salt Lake City, Utah, October 1961.)

Application: *We are too often baptized without understanding the doctrines and principles that are so important to our spiritual success. We should help our children and others who are preparing for this vital ordinance to understand both the supernal blessings that will be made available to them, and the obligations that they assume when they come forth from the water. They should also be assured that the Holy Spirit is available to help them overcome every obstacle and temptation if they will allow Him to be their guide. Be careful to teach children within the limits of their understanding and desire to learn; helping them, all the while, to feel the love of God as they prepare.*

Principle: Our gifts and talents are given us as a stewardship from God.

The righteous use of gifts and talents is to lift, strengthen and bless others:

Because Our bodies, minds, and talents are given us as a stewardship from God He expects us to use them as He would do. However, we have been given our agency, and we may defy the owner if we wish, and use our bodies, minds, and talents sinfully. But if we choose to do so, we must face the consequences in the day of God's judgement.

"Our gifts and talents were given us to be put at the disposal of our fellowman, not to be put at our disposal in the manner of Nimrod. "This is my work and my glory" to see to it that others get a full share of the glory and the work--to bring about eternal life and exaltation (Moses 1:39). (Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, Vol.9, Ch.13, Pg.397)

Application: *Be free with your gifts and talents, share them readily, for they were given you with the expectation that you would use them to bless the lives of others. Many of us mistakenly feel that we have been given no talents simply because we cannot draw or dance or sing; while the talents given to men and women everywhere are more numerous than we can count. Some have the obvious gifts that make people happy and secure in their presence, others have gifts of comfort and compassion, still others are gifted with skill in mechanics or mathematics. All these can be used to bless the lives of others, and are often more meaningful, personal, and available than the more obvious gifts and talents. The Lord expects us to enlarge and expand the gifts and talents that He has given us---whatever they may be, and He will yet hold us accountable for their use.*

Principle: Our money and other property is given us as a stewardship from God.

Money, as with all other property or worldly goods, is to be used to bless others and to establish Zion.

Because we have our agency, we may ignore the wishes of God, who ultimately owns it all, and use our money and property selfishly, if we wish; but we are required to leave all our possessions on the earth when we leave there, and God will hold us accountable for their use while we were on the earth.

Application: *In a corrupt society money is seen as the source of four things that are used to define success in the world around us—wealth, power, popularity, and the lusts of the flesh. Though they please the world, they do not please God, and we will be held accountable for our use of money and this world's goods at the last day, for these same four things were condemned by the Prophet Nephi in these words.*

“all those who are built up to get power over the flesh, and those who are built up to become popular in the eyes of the world, and those who seek the lusts of the flesh and the things of the world, and to do all manner of iniquity; yea, in fine, all those who belong to the kingdom of the devil are they who need fear, and tremble, and quake; they are those who must be brought low in the dust; they are those who must be consumed as stubble” ... (italics mine) (1 Nephi 22:23)

Principle: Each person is responsible for his own stewardship only, and for no other.

- *"Stewardship is a framework of responsibility wherein the fulfillment of your duties must be accomplished. Put another way (and this from an agriculturist), it is that each cow stays in its own pasture. When one leaves the realm of his own responsibility (stewardship), he not only frustrates his personal growth, but he becomes guilty of ignoring the priorities of his own responsibility."*
(Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p. 380)
- *"Supposing we think of our stewardship as a plot of ground. We are not responsible for what goes on anywhere in the world except within the limits of that plot which the Lord has designated as our stewardship. Now if we are faithful in that stewardship, the Lord might give us a supervisory stewardship ...over some of our neighbors and their plots too. And then it would be our great opportunity to...help them to be good stewards in their own area. So we never have to worry about anything except exactly that which the Lord has designated as a boundary of our responsibility."*
(C. Chauncey Riddle)

Application: *There are times when we look about us and see some things happening that are not working well; and it is human nature to try to correct them; but we must resist the tendency to reach into the stewardship of another and attempt to fix something that is outside our own stewardship; for it hampers our relationships, it tangles the lines of authority.*

Principle: A steward is entitled to receive revelation only within the bounds of his own stewardship.

If a steward believes he is receiving inspiration when he interferes with the stewardship of another, he may rest assured that the inspiration is coming from the wrong source.

“If a person goes to the Lord and inquires whether a leader who presides over him has made a righteous decision, or not, the Lord will not answer; for the answer lies within the stewardship of another. However, if a presiding officer makes a decision that affects us directly, we are at liberty to ask the Lord how He would have us *respond* to the request of our leader. Because this latest request lies within our own stewardship, the Lord will answer us.

"The temptation to interfere in other stewardships usually comes at the times when we are frustrated by our inability to get revelation for our own. If we can't discover what to do about our own problems, it is because we lack the Spirit of the Lord. Right? And if we lack the Spirit of the Lord for our own stewardship, will the Lord ever give us revelation for our neighbor's stewardship? Obviously not. Now, if we think we know how to solve our neighbor's problems and we can't solve our own...it is obvious that Satan is trying to influence us. He delights to do that. Thus he leads us to go about fouling up the lines of stewardship and changing the markers so that people won't know where they belong and will more easily get out of bounds. Knowing the destructive nature of interfering with the stewardships of others, Satan actively tries to get people to neglect their own stewardship, while they run around trying to solve problems in other stewardships instead. (C. Chauncey Riddle)

Application: When we interfere with the stewardships of others by giving unasked-for criticism or advice, or vocally dispute the counsel of our leaders among our peers, Satan is pleased. The rule should be: God has called this individual to lead us at this moment in time in order to fulfill his purposes. I should not do or say anything that concerns his or her stewardship unless my counsel is requested; even though, if I was in his or her place, I would do things differently.

Principle: A person who is unwilling to follow the direction of a sustained leader because he feels that the leader is weak, uninspired, or imperfect, fails to fulfill his own stewardship.

Application: *It has never been a prerequisite to leadership as a Prophet or any other of the servants of God, to be popular, charismatic or 'warm and inviting'. Such leaders did not seek the position they hold, and they often feel themselves to be, as were Moses and Isaiah, unworthy and despised of men. Yet they are called of God and sent forth to reveal His will. History has shown us that the counsel of such men was not always readily accepted. They were criticized, chastised, ignored—and martyred. So when your leader's decision seems unusual, or runs counter to your best judgment, Satan is anxious to whisper the same disparaging thoughts to your mind as he did to the ancients. Because the behavior and decisions of a sustained leader do not agree with your predisposed ideas of how a leader should look, or behave, is no reason to*

dismiss him or her as being incapable of inspired leadership. At times like this it is wise for go to your knees and ask for confirmation rather than offering criticism.

Principle: The mantle is a gift from Christ, and is available to those called by God whether they are fully worthy or not. The mantle is given so that the flock need not suffer because of the sins of the shepherd; just as mankind need not suffer for the sins of Adam.

"We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression."
(Joseph Smith, Second article of faith)

Application: *None of us are worthy. God has made it clear that we are all sinners; yet he uses us, with all our warts and imperfections, to forward His work. But knowing of our weakness he allows us to have the help of a divinely given mantle. This marvelous gift allows us the discernment and wisdom (beyond our own capability) to bless others despite our imperfections.*

Principle: If a person wishes, he may grant another individual a temporary stewardship over him for a time.

- *"Supposing you have a problem, and you go to a friend asking him to help you solve it. What are you doing? You are allowing him to be your 'keeper' temporarily. You yield to him a stewardship to counsel you. In that circumstance, if the counselor is wise, he may be able to help you a great deal. But you must ask. If the same friend comes around giving unasked-for advice, he would be overstepping the bounds of your stewardship."*
(C. Chauncey Riddle)

Application: *Many of us have resisted, at times, the opportunity to counsel our friends, feeling that such matters should be handled by the bishop; but God knows the hearts of men, and often places in their paths the very man or woman who can help them most. While you should resist giving unasked-for advice, if a friend approaches you and asks for your counsel, feel free to do so, and the Lord will bless both of you as you counsel together.*

Principle: If an earthly steward wishes to become celestial within the bounds of his or her stewardships, it will be necessary to focus on the savior with every fiber of his being; withholding nothing from Christ.

"Therefore, let us be obedient. Let us correct our lives if we are in fault. Let us repent of our sins and put them far from us. If we have sinned let us humble ourselves before God, and in the very depths of humility ask forgiveness of our transgressions, and let us lay ourselves and all we have--everything that God has given to us, every faculty of our mind, every power of our body, everything that God has placed within our control, all the property and everything that he has placed in our stewardship--let

us hold all subject to His will and to His counsel, willing to go, willing to come, willing to give, willing to withhold, willing to do everything that God requires of us with glad hearts, for in doing so we secure unto ourselves our salvation and exaltation."

(George Q. Cannon, May 6th, 1883JD, Vol.24, Pg.149)

Application: *Follow Elder Cannons advice.*

Principle: The three basic stewardship relationships that mankind everywhere experience with one another are those of father/mother, brother/sister and son/daughter.

Precept: *The father/mother, brother/sister and son/daughter relationships are symbols of our relationships with those who govern us, and for those who we govern, in every aspect of our lives. When we perceive how each of these stewardships relate to each of the others, we will understand how to interact with anyone else in any situation. These relationships are:*

Father/mother

In the priesthood order, those in the father/mother role are those who have a specifically appointed stewardship given by the Lord himself. They are the fathers and mothers in family units, quorum presidents, bishops, stake presidents and general authorities.

Each of these has specifically appointed responsibilities, and authority within the stewardship over which they preside; but each has specific boundaries that limits his stewardship and he cannot righteously go outside those limits. Their task is to help their sons/daughters to develop and grow into strong righteous individuals. Their specific role is to make righteous decisions, and to support, instruct and protect. If discipline or chastisement is to be given, they are responsible to provide it.

Brother/sister

In the priesthood order, a brother/sister is a fellow quorum or Relief Society member, a co-worker or fellow member, none of whom presides over the other.

The proper relationship of brother to brother, brother to sister, or sister to brother, is to live together in harmony and to bear one another's burdens. When my brother suffers, I suffer with him. When he rejoices, I rejoice with him as I do with my sisters; but I do not instruct them without being invited to do so, nor tell them what to do, or chastise them. It was never given to just any brother to usurp the father/mother role and go around pointing out the faults of his brothers and sisters.

Son/daughter

In the priesthood order sons/daughters include all members who fall under the presiding authority of the leader above them.

The role of a son/daughter is to be obedient to those who they are under covenant to sustain in the Father/mother role.

Application: *It is far too easy for us to become entangled in our relationships with others simply because we do not understand our proper role. If you ever wonder how to behave, or react, in any situation these guidelines will suggest the appropriate way to behave.*

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