

Practicing Our Faith

Keys to Going

Deeper in Faith

and

Further in
Mission

As Individuals

and

Members of Christ's
Body

- ◆ God's Word Must Be Our Text
- ◆ God's World Must Be Our Context
- ◆ Being the Person You Are and Can Become
- ◆ Being the Body We Are and Can Become
- ◆ All Life Seen in Kingdom Perspective
- ◆ Everyone Called to Whole-Life Stewardship



What Is Whole-Life Stewardship?

- ◆ “Biblical stewardship is often referred to as ‘whole-life stewardship’ because God calls us to be good stewards of every area of our lives.”
- ◆ This includes all of our time, talents, treasure, and the continual sharing of our witness to his grace.”





Everyone is Called


- ◆ “Biblical stewardship recognizes that God’s resources are to be deployed through [every one of] God’s people to accomplish God’s mission”

Covenant Stewardship Bible Studies



Whole-Life Stewardship Takes:

- ◆ All God's people
- ◆ In all their daily life and activities
- ◆ Focused on God's Spirit
- ◆ Offering their time, talents, resources, and witness to others
- ◆ For the sake of furthering God's kingdom and God's will in this world.



Whole-Life Stewardship Sums Up This Whole Series:

- ◆ Living by God's Word as text
- ◆ In God's whole world as context
- ◆ Being who you are and can become
- ◆ Being the body we are meant to be
- ◆ Seeing all life in kingdom perspective
- ◆ Giving our best to the Master

Are You Participating in God's Miraculous Work?





Look at Yourself ... and God!

- ◆ The place to begin is not by trying to measure your time, talents, and means. God wants you first—all of you!
- ◆ Soak yourself in the vastness of his being, and measure rather the unbelievable nature of his grace.

Be Remade and Resourced from Within

- ◆ Let [Christ] free you from self-concern - not to mention the terror of trying to live up to the expectations of others.
- ◆ “It is more blessed to give than to receive,” but you cannot give others what you haven’t truly received first from God.



Don't Fence Yourself In

Seven Deadly Sins Against Whole-Life Stewardship

Pete Hammond, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship

- ◆ “1. Clericalism – the long-standing and all-too-popular view that the ‘kingdom of God on earth’ is basically, if not exclusively, developed by professional ministers, monks, missionaries, and martyrs.”
- ◆ [The job of everyday believers] “in the established church is to faithfully support and follow the ‘full-time religious professionals.’”



Antidote?

- ◆ “Restore ‘ministry’ as the calling, privilege, and responsibility of every child of God.
- ◆ Re-write the job descriptions of our pastors-teachers as equippers of all the people of God for ministry in all places at all times (Eph 4:11-17)





- ◆ “2. Laicization - labeling 95% of God’s people with the term ‘laity’ is devastating. Webster...says, ‘Laity means uninformed and not involved.’
- ◆ “What better way to de-motivate and marginalize God’s everyday saints, and undercut their calling to deliver salt, light, and leaven into the world’s systems of family, community, and work?”



Antidote?

- ◆ “Stop using this demeaning term and recover terms like ‘people of God,,’ ‘believers,’ ‘followers,’ ‘disciples,’ and ‘servants’ as descriptors of our beloved community of faith.




- ◆ “3. ‘Calling’ Is Professionalized.
 - The view that only official employees of the church are ‘called’ by God is not biblical. It is [both] wrong and very destructive to the practice of faith in everyday life.”

Antidote?

- ◆ “Renew our understanding that in the Bible ‘calling’ is primarily used to emphasize God’s invitation to all lost sinners to return to him and be restored to the ‘image and likeness’ of our creation, so that we can be managers / stewards of all our resources for God and humanity.”



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- ◆ “4. Church-ism – the institutional captivity of the people of God as only being ‘church’ when we are gathered in buildings we own and meetings that are led by church or religious professionals is biblically unsupported and historically filled with abuse.”

Antidote?

- ◆ “Break out of our edifice complex and institutional captivity.”
- ◆ “... Affirm to all believers that they are the church in both its gathered life and its scattered service.”





- ◆ “5. Work Is Cursed – the ‘Thank God It’s Friday (TGIF) syndrome of American culture thrives when believers slip into viewing jobs and work as the result or sentence from ‘the curse’ in Genesis 3.



Antidote?

- ◆ Celebrate the truth that our DNA is that we are designed to be workers for God (Gen 1:1-31), and that the curse has impacted, but not irrevocably damaged, work.



- ◆ “6. Privatized and Individualized Spirituality – isolating spirituality to personal devotion, church activity, and religious volunteerism is wrong, unbiblical, and reductionist.
- ◆ “It is not God’s will to be compartmentalized...used only as a charm for very select portions of life....”

Antidote?

- ◆ “Recover biblical truths like *avodah*, the Hebrew word that describes both worship and work as devotion to God.
- ◆ “State that the ancient and dangerous ‘sacred-secular’ divide is a lie and a contradiction to God so loving the world that he gave - to bring salvation, redemption, and renewal to all of creation....”
- ◆ We are “to develop examples of ‘the kingdom of God on the earth as it is in heaven’ for all to see and join.”





- ◆ “7. Limited Lordship – to reduce Jesus’ rule and reign to a few leftovers drains him and his authority over all creation.... These ‘leftovers for Jesus’ include: money (only 10% belongs to God, and that actually happens for a minority of believers); time (only 1/7 of the week is labeled ‘the Lord’s Day,’ and that less during football season); real estate (only a few buildings in the community designated ‘the Lord’s House’); and work (only when we are paid religious professionals or volunteers in religious service do we call it ‘the Lord’s Work.’”

Antidote?

- ◆ “Rediscover Jesus as ‘Lord of all,’ including broken families, dangerous communities, and challenging job environments, as well as troublesome leaders, bosses, and employees.
- ◆ “Train ourselves to engage these contexts with the intention of finding God already at work in the world....
- ◆ Design our activities to compliment, extend, and add evidence of the kingdom to this ongoing ‘moving upon the waters’ (Gen 1:2)”



Notes on Philippians 2 & 3

- ◆ Whole-Life Stewardship is much more attitudinal in nature than mechanical. We cannot authentically offer to life and others what we have not received.
- ◆ Note how Paul begins Philippians 2 by invoking sacred memories— of “encouragement in Christ, consolation from love, sharing in the Spirit, compassion, and sympathy.” Such are the founts of whole-life stewardship. Less them, who could proceed?





If You Have These Things, Then:

- ◆ “Be of the same mind, having the same love, being of full accord and of one mind.
- ◆ “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourself.
- ◆ “Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.”



Let Christ Be Your Model

- ◆ Who emptied himself of himself
- ◆ Who became a slave, took on human form
- ◆ Who humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
- ◆ Now highly exalted, with the name above all names, before whom every knee shall bow

‘Work Out Your Own Salvation’

- ◆ God is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
- ◆ Not murmuring or arguing, but as beloved children of God, ‘without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation’
- ◆ Welcoming and honoring others, a reference to ‘co-workers’ (2:19-30)
- ◆ ‘Finally, rejoice in the Lord’ - as ‘a safeguard’



'Beware'

- ◆ “Of the dogs ... the evil workers ... those who mutilate the flesh.
- ◆ Of pride in your own lineage (3:4b-11)
- ◆ Of your achievements to date (3:12-16)
- ◆ Of who you choose as models (3:17-21)



‘Stand Firm in the Lord’

- ◆ Get right with each other, and help those out of sorts with each other to do the same
- ◆ ‘Rejoice always ... be gentle ... don’t worry about anything ...in prayer and supplication let your requests be made known
- ◆ Finally, “whatever is pleasing ... commendable ... excellent ... worthy of praise ... think about these things”



Be Faithful ... and Hopeful

- ◆ “Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.” (4:9)
- ◆ “Learn to be content with whatever you have (4:11-12)
- ◆ Share what you have (4:15-20)
- ◆ And “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.” (4:23)

