**True Meaning of Stewardship Under the Microscope**

Words have a certain buzz sound that makes them desirable or detestable. Words sound either nice or weird, can be taboo and rarely used or likeable and widely used. Words have an impact on the heart and the mind of people.

A words’ sounding can change over time; it is not unusual for certain words to go from having a likeable sound into becoming detestable or vice versa. At times words can fall completely out of use or are revived back and used after decades or even centuries of being forgotten.

The term “Stewardship” is an example of a word that has gone through this process and has currently become a less desirable word, and many parishioners don’t seem to be inspired by it, and do not prefer or choose to use it.

This is interesting especially knowing that “Steward” in the holy bible has a positive connotation. In the story of Joseph the Patriarch “Steward” means, as the case is in other books, a person of trust and or a person holding a position of power. “So they went up to the STEWARD of Joseph’s house, and spoke with him at the door of the house, and said, “Oh, my lord, we came down the first time to buy food; and when we came to the lodging place we opened our sacks, and there was every man’s money in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it again with us, and we have brought other money down in our hand to buy food.” (Genesis 43:19-22)

In the holy gospel the term “Steward” continues to mean a servant of Christ that is deemed trustworthy by God and to whom God would reveal his knowledge of divine mysteries; “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy” (1st Corinthians 4:1-2). How this eloquent word with such a deeply positive meaning came to mean a donor or someone who supports financially his parish? It is of importance to bring back to memory the forgotten positive and profound meaning of this expression by reexamining how it was used in the Holy Scriptures.

The term “Steward” in the holy gospel was used to refer to all Christians. It refers to the faithful believers that are graced by God with a divine gift; hospitable people that care for one another; “Practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another. As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 4:9-11).

According to Apostle Paul, a God’s “Steward” must have certain noble characters such as that being “Blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, master of himself, upright, holy, and self-controlled” (Titus 1:7-8)

Based upon the aforementioned, it becomes clear why the current practice in church communities when the question is asked how much to donate in order to become a member or whether filling a stewardship card would make someone a steward could not be any further from the spirit of the Holy Scriptures.

The understanding of “Stewardship” and its practice must be healed and restored into its original biblical form and understanding in order for church communities to flourish spiritually. It is hard for a parish to reach its potential not understanding correctly or practicing “Stewardship” according to the teachings of the Holy Bible.

Even though generosity is an integral attribute of a Christian steward; but “Stewardship” is not about writing a check or donating money. Reducing stewardship to the level of donating money or filling out a stewardship card is a sad understanding and a wrong practice.

A Christian “Steward” first and foremost is a person that is declared by God as worthy of trust to be entrusted with God’s divine mysteries. A Christian “Steward” is a caring individual, inspired by Jesus and the love of Jesus Christ that makes him desire for all people to enjoy the same benefits and divine gifts from God as himself.

A Christian “Steward” would be enthusiastic about sacrificing time, energy, and putting forth thought and material support to further the work of God and help the Church spread the message of salvation because he is touched by the fervency of the love of Christ.

The love of Christ and the desire to be united with him, and like him is the root of inspiring and fulfilling Christian life. Any and all good deeds are done in vain and will not sanctify the soul if they are not inspired by the love of Christ, through his power, for his sake, and in his name.

Next time the question is brought up about the requirements of stewardship or church membership remember that being part of the body of Jesus Christ is s much more than filling out a piece of paper and/or making a donation.

“For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” (2 Corinthians 5:13-15)

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