

## STEWARDSHIP IN LIGHT OF ETERNITY (INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL) COLOSSIANS 3:1-3; 1 CORINTHIANS 4:2; MATTHEW 6:19-31

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*“FIVE MINUTES INSIDE OF ETERNITY I BELIEVE EVERYONE OF US WILL WISH THAT WE HAD SACRIFICED MORE, PRAYED MORE, LOVED MORE, SWEATED MORE, WEPT MORE ...”*

*-LEONARD RAVENHILL*

### **A WORD TO THE TEACHER:**

This series of Sunday school lessons has as its primary objective to help students and teachers alike to have a more eternal perspective on life, especially in this matter of stewardship. In other words: *“to inspire each of us to desire and dedicate ourselves to “SET OUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE” (Colossians 3:1-3) or to live in the light of eternity; again, especially in this matter of stewardship. The passages Colossians 3:1-3 and Matthew 6:19-31 are the spring board for the entire series. Concerning this passage, the great Bible commentator Matthew Henry wrote:*

*Upon the wings of affection the heart soars upwards. Things on earth are here set in opposition to things above. Heaven and earth are contrary one to the other, and **THE PREVELANCE OF OUR AFFECTION TO ONE WILL PROPORTIONATELY WEAKEN OUR AFFECTION TO THE OTHER.***

As teachers, as well as students, it would be helpful if we would dedicate ourselves to memorize and meditate upon **Colossians 3:1-3; 1 Corinthians 4:2; and Matthew 6:19-24, 33**, over the next few weeks. The apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit writes, *“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14).* Concerning this passage, Matthew Henry wrote:

*Heaven is the prize of the high calling; what we aim at in all that we do, and what will reward all of our pains. ... **THIS WAS THE THING WHEREIN ALL GOOD CHRISTIANS AGREED, TO MAKE CHRIST ALL IN ALL, AND TO SET THEIR HEARTS UPON ANOTHER WORLD.***

Our great desire over the next few weeks is to come to a clear understanding that this world is not our home; we are simply passing through as strangers, pilgrims and ambassadors (**1 Peter 2:5-11; 2 Corinthians 5:20**) for from a heavenly kingdom. In **2 Corinthians 5:20**, we are referred to as ambassadors. According to the *Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language*, an ambassador is *“a minister of the highest rank employed by one prince [His name is Jesus] or a state [it is called heaven], to manage the public concerns of his own prince or state, and representing the power of his sovereign.”*

One of the great – if not the greatest – tragedy in the churches today, especially the churches of America, is our lack of an eternal perspective. The twenty-first century churches, especially those in the West (the United States, Canada and Europe) have lost the concept of eternity and the capability and desire to live in light of eternity. In his book *Whatever Happened to Heaven* Dave Hunt writes:

*Unfortunately, too many persons—even dedicated Christians—find such a topic (eternity) of only minor interest because they consider it to be largely irrelevant to the challenges of this present life. ... **Nothing is more important** in shaping how life on earth is lived and what is accomplished both for time and **eternity** than a person's attitude about **the life to come.***

Hunt continues with these words:

*What Jesus had to say about this present life and **the life to come**, and the particular promises he made about **heaven**, gave the early church a **hope** unknown to the followers of any other religion. That hope ... is so unreal to the average Christian today that it has lost its*

transforming power. ... One cannot read the New Testament without seeing its **heavenly** orientation. **Heaven** was continually on the heart of our Lord and was the context for everything He taught His disciples. He made it clear that He was calling them to turn their **attention** and **affection** and interest from this world to **heaven** ...

**Men and women who set their affection on things above, who live in the light of eternity are going to invest their time, their talents, and their treasures into the bank of heaven:**

- *It was an eternal mindset that stirred men and women through the ages to sell all they had, uproot themselves and their families, and go to a foreign mission field to reach a people with the Gospel.*
- *It was an eternal mindset that stirred men and women through the ages to give up their own ambitions and surrender to the calling of God for their lives.*
- *It was an eternal mindset that stirred men and women through the ages to say no to the world and yes to the Word.*
- *It was an eternal mindset that stirred men and women to live simple and sincere lives in the midst of a materialistic culture that has no understanding of simplicity or sincerity.*
- *It was an eternal mindset that stirred men and women through the ages to give up their personal dreams for their children and to place their children into God's hands for God's purpose.*
- *It was an eternal mindset that stirred men like CT Studd and William Borden to give up their material riches to reach the lost with the Gospel.*
- *It was an eternal mindset that stirred men and women through the ages to talk differently, dress differently, and behave differently than, not only a lost and dying world, but also a comfortable and complacent church.*
- *An eternal mindset is spending time focused, more on heaven and heaven's agenda, than on the world and the world's agenda!*

Of course, when we talk about stewardship, we are talking about being faithful stewards of our time, our talents, and our treasures. As believers, redeemed by the blood of Christ (**1 Peter 1:18-19**) we belong to HIM (**1 Corinthians 6:20**) and all that we do should bring HIM glory (**1 Corinthians 10:31**). As Children of God, if we could get hold of this concept of biblical stewardship in light of eternity it could, should and no doubt, would transform our lives!

While we will give you a lesson each week, you may feel free to tailor the SS lesson towards your class. You may feel free to add material or subtract material from your personal lesson. If you would like this material emailed to you, in order to make a fill in the blank lesson for your class send me an email at [johnnye@pacificbaptist.com](mailto:johnnye@pacificbaptist.com) and let me know. **If you read the passages, meditate on the truths, and then break it down to "bite-size pieces" for your class, you and your students will get something that can and will enrich (and possibly change) your life.**