**Leadership Leads to Stewardship *by Kris Swiatocho***

As far back as I can remember, I was told by my mom to keep my room tidy. "Kristine, Kristine.” “Yes, Mom.” “Did you make up your bed?” “Uh, yes.” “Did you shut all the drawers to your dresser?” “Hmmm, yes.” “Did you hang up your clothes?” “Yes!” “Did you use pine sol to clean..?” “Yes, Mom, yes, I cleaned my room.” And then she would come behind me and realize that her level of what was clean and tidy was not my level. She would tuck, smooth out, straighten, and fold till it was perfect in her eyes. I remember when I would purposely not clean my room that great just to see her come behind me to do it instead because I knew she would. Why is being so clean and organized such a big deal to her? Why did every toy have to have a place? Why did the sheets have to be tucked a certain way? Why did pillows have to be even on the bed? Why, why? And why was this just my bedroom? Why did everything in our home and yard have to be just right? What looked like a control issue for my mom was her being a good steward of what God had given her—something I would need to learn as I grew up.

Where did it start with my mom? My mom grew up very poor. She was number 10 of 12 children. She grew up working on a farm, getting up in the dark before school to work tobacco, cotton, or whatever was ready for harvest. She only owned one pair of shoes and wasn't allowed to wear them from spring to fall. She lived in an old, broken-down house with floorboards with gaps large enough to see the ground below. She didn't have indoor plumbing or electricity till she was 16. Life was hard. But one thing my mom remembered was their house was clean. Even though they were very poor, they cared for what they had. They took care of what God had given them. This care would continue into adulthood when she finally had her own home. She knew if she took care of things, it would last longer. She could share things with others if she took care of them. She knew how to be a great steward.

Jesus gives us a great example of the importance of stewardship as an individual and a leader. As we lead in our ministries, we are being watched by others on how we take care of what God has given us. Why would anyone take our advice or guidance if we are, in fact, not living what we teach? Not only in the things we possess, like our material items, but also in the people and ministries God has given us to lead.

In Mathew 25:14-30, when Jesus talks about his second coming, he emphasizes that only faithful stewards will be prepared for his return. He shares with us about the master who entrusted his servants with various amounts of his wealth. We learn what each man did with his portion revealing how much each trusted their master and how much each believed he would return.   
  
*“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’ His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’ His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. Take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For those who have will be given more, and they will have an abundance. As for those who do not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'”.*

**What can we learn from this scripture?**

**1. The Lord entrusts us with whatever according to our ability.**   
God gives us things, resources, talents, spiritual gifts, spouses, children, etc., based on our ability to handle what we have been given. I have often told folks that I will probably never be wealthy as I don't seem to manage money well. Sure, I am a good steward of what I presently have. However, I know the ability to manage large amounts of income, invest wisely, and not allow it to control you. Some folks are just better at it than me. Some folks have learned better how to listen to the Holy Spirit guide them to do the work of the Lord. And as a result, they have been given more to manage and steward. The "master" in these verses, like our Lord, knows what to give each of us in this life because he knows each of us. He knows how we will spend our money, time, and resources on him. He gives based on how we take care of what we have now. God isn't going to provide us with a massive ministry if we can't manage the three leaders he put us over now. God isn't going to give you a bigger house when the one you are in is falling apart due to you not taking care of it. And God isn't going to provide you with a spouse when you choose not to change, so you are [healthier](https://www.thesinglesnetwork.org/intentional-relationships.html) when he does bring them to you.

God gives us the building blocks for the next step of responsibility. It's not what we have compared to the next person or ministry; it's what we are doing with what we have now.

**2. The Lord expects us to use our abilities now for the Kingdom.**   
So you know you have a gift of administration or mercy, or you know God has open doors to work with the elderly or special needs folks. He has shown you how these gifts could be used in your singles or other ministry. Then why haven't you started working? What are you waiting for? The key here is not what your gift is but using it when God asks you to. So many of us are waiting for something to do for God when God has already shown us over and over places to serve. The problem is we want to serve in our power, in our talents in which we are comfortable, versus in the power of the Holy Spirit. Just be available where you are, and God will give you something to do. Ask God today how to use your gifts and talents through his Holy Spirit to lead and serve others.

**3. The Lord teaches us not to hoard the resources he gives us to lead with.**   
It's so easy to lead our ministries where we are the only ones leading. Dealing with people can be challenging. Sometimes they don't show up. Sometimes they don't follow through. Sometimes they don't do things the way we would. As a result, it’s easier just to do things ourselves. But when we hoard our leadership and the time it takes to teach others, we rob folks of God's blessings. We are robbing them of the work he has given them. We are setting up the ministry to fail. For ministry to be successful, you must learn to delegate, [teach others how to lead,](https://www.thesinglesnetwork.org/leadership-articles-by-kris-swiatocho.html) and give away the ministry. Investing in others by sowing into them with your time, talents, and energy has excellent returns. You may not always see the returns, but they are there. If you hold your knowledge, experience, and gifts to yourself, then you are like this man who dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. Maybe it appears it was stored for safekeeping, but that is not what God has told us to do. Remember, whether you sow it or bury it, God owns it all. It's not about the money, the gifts, the talents, or the resources. It's how we use it to advance God's kingdom. What has God given you, and how are you using it? Has he given you a car that you could be helping carry people to church in? How about a home to have a Bible study in? How about skills in planning events or leading prayer for your ministry? Yes, it might be a step outside your comfort zone or cost you something, but isn't the price he paid on the cross worth more than your stuff, your time, and your resources?

**4. The Lord rewards us with more responsibility and ministry when we are faithful with a little.** It's an honor for God to entrust us with more responsibility. As you serve in leadership and are reliable, God is watching. He sees you give of yourself, relying on the Holy Spirit to guide you. He sees you sow into others’ lives by trusting in him. He has seen you step out of your comfort zone to do things only he could do through you. And as a reward, he has given you more to do.   
  
Some may say they didn't want anymore to do, that their plate was full already. Please understand more responsibility doesn't necessarily mean more to do. As a leader, if you are delegating correctly and building the team that leads your ministry, the work should become more manageable. You should be able to step away sometimes, allowing your team to run things. We get tired and worn out because we don't teach others or train or give the ministry away. So get excited when God gives you more to do because you have proven you are a faithful servant, and he is pleased.  
  
**5. Sometimes, good intentions fail.**   
I know we all get scared when we lead. It's hard to trust God in all he has given us—from our ministries to our homes, families to our stuff. We want to serve and do it his way; we want to trust, but, but, but … God says there is no but. We are not on this earth to hoard what he has given us to USE, not own, USE for ourselves, or even for him. All things were made for God and used for the advancement of his kingdom. From our jobs to our cars to our voices to our relationships, all are for his purpose. God isn’t interested in excuses for what you didn't do with what he gave you, even if you thought it was to help him. This doesn't mean that even if we do sow, we will always see the fruit. But we must trust God and have his affirmation in what we are doing that it IS making a difference. We have to be obedient, trusting him completely. Having a ministry that is the same size year to year with the same people is like the man who buried the treasure to protect it. Our ministries need to see growth not just in the numbers of people but in the maturity of the people. How, by your example, are they seeing you use the resources God has given you to advance the kingdom?   
  
**6. Ignorance is no excuse.** It's up to us as leaders to [research](https://www.thesinglesnetwork.org/resources.html), search out training, read books, and surf the Web to find additional resources. We know that God can grow the ministry in places we have never seen or been to. We know what he is capable of. If so, then why are we living in that truth? Why don't we believe he can do anything, specifically through us and the use of the resources he has given us? Leading where we simply give orders is not leading. “You wicked, lazy servant,” his master replied. In other words, “Get off your butt and start leading, start teaching, and start being a good steward of the gifts you have been given.” Remember, too, that when we go before the Lord, he isn't going to ask you what you did with someone else's gifts or what you did with something you didn't have. He will ask you what you did with what you were given. Are you prepared? Are you ready for Christ’s return?

**7. God will take your ministry away if you don't lead by being a good steward.**   
Some of you need your ministries taken away as you do more harm than good. If you need help, ask for it. If you are over your head, slow down, start over, etc. Do what it takes to get things back on track. If you continue to lead in your name only without doing what God requires, he will take your ministry away and give it to someone else. Discipleship is serious to God. We have such a short time on this earth. We are in a race to reach as many souls for Christ as possible.

Even in her golden years, my mom still loves a clean and tidy house. I can't tell you how many Bible studies, cookouts, picnics, dinners, lunches, parties, and so on she has had over the years as a way to reach people for Christ. Her talents, her gifts started with hospitality and mercy and took her way out of her comfort zone to leadership and discipleship. Hey, I smell Pine Sol! Is my mom here?

**Application:**   
1. What are some areas of stewardship besides money and stuff?   
2. How have you handled what God has entrusted you?   
3. Where do you need to improve and/or make changes?   
4. How can you be an example to others as a good steward?

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• [www.TheSinglesNetwork.org](http://www.TheSinglesNetwork.org)

• [www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org](http://www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org)

• [www.LaborDaySingles.org](http://www.LaborDaySingles.org)

• [www.IntentionalRelationshipSolutions.org](https://www.intentionalrelationshipsolutions.org/#/)