

# Stewardship

In the nine years we've lived next-door to Rocky, I've never seen him so excited! "Hey," he called as he motioned two of us over to the side of the yard. "I've got to tell you about our trip. It was awesome!"

Rocky, a Physical Education teacher, is also an adult advisor to the youth group in his church. Why was he so excited? He and his son had just returned from a ten-day trip with their youth group.

## Kids Give Time

The church had flown thirty-two high school boys and girls, plus their counselors, to a four-day work camp. There they'd slept in sleeping bags on the basement floor of the church they were helping. They cooked their own meals, and worked untiringly painting, repairing, etc. at this small church. The kids had also prepared a number of very moving worship services. In his words, "They jumped in with both feet." It had been a "life-changing experience."

Then they headed on to a national meeting. One evening, their group put on a lively musical program for the two thousand other youth and adults in attendance. He was so proud of these kids, their talent, their dependability, their hard work, and their cooperation. He was radiant and still excited by it.

## Parents Sacrifice Vacation

What a joy for parents to feel this way about their children and their activities. It's rewarding when families faithfully

participate in their church and grow spiritually. It's satisfying to contribute money and help with the fund-raising needed to make such trips possible.


Worshipping with their children and their friends adds a special blessing. It was worth sacrificing some summer vacation time to not just send their kids,



but go with them to work at a needy church, attend an inspirational national meeting, and to share in a "life-changing experience."

You can call these stewardship choices. By his actions, Rocky has said, "Yes, count me in!" I'm willing to give my time. I'll share my talent. And I'll contribute money, too.

Does he have any regrets? Only one, and that is that his wife and daughter couldn't be there with them. But that's because they'd already volunteered to go on a medical mission to South America!

Our neighbors are excited about stewardship! They're excited about the worldwide "neighborhood" in which they live and serve! 

*We cannot all be missionaries. But we can all give of our time and energy right where we are. This is where such gifts are most needed and most appreciated.*




## Pastor John's musing...



There is one fact that every gardener knows, and it is the “Law of the Harvest.” In order to enjoy the harvest of fruits and vegetables at the end of a growing season you must first have planted the seeds in the spring. If you do not plant, you will not have a harvest. And, you cannot plant the seeds one day and expect a harvest next week! The seeds need water, fertilizer, sunshine and time to grow. So the gardener who is hoping for a harvest must first pay attention to the basics and take time to plant a garden.

In your personal life of service in God’s garden here on earth, what type of harvest are you planning for? If you are expecting to reap the rewards of a fulfilling life, what “seeds” of service are you offering to God today?

God has blessed us all with unique talents that he expects us to be using now when we have time to plant. Or, are you waiting for just the right time ... delaying planting for “the right conditions?” Only God knows when we will be called to account for our actions and the use of his resources of time, talent and treasure. *The fruits of our labor in service to the church are pleasing to God.*


We cannot hope to gain heaven by our works, but our actions here on earth reflect our faith and the hope for a heavenly harvest after our earthly lives. 

## Spiritual Benefits of Giving

Tom Gildee broke out of a tough Baltimore neighborhood, got rich on software and retired a few years ago ... to a full-time job giving away his money.

But somebody forgot to tell Tom he was supposed to retire to a yacht and a private island. He started spending all of his time in charitable activities, giving away several hundred thousand dollars a year, mostly for scholarships to Baltimore private schools. By 2012 he was giving away \$1 million a year to help pay for 300 poor kids to go from kindergarten through high school. When he dies, he plans to leave his entire estate to his Kids-R-VIPs program.

Take a look at his upbringing. Gildee grew up in a poor area of Baltimore, raised by his maternal grandmother, who stepped in after his mother abandoned him when he was five years old. His grandmother, on welfare at times, persuaded a parochial school, St. Ambrose, to accept him on a full scholarship.

Many years later he sold his company. Now it was payback time. He is giving St. Ambrose, his elementary school, \$50,000 a year for several years for scholarships. “Some donor obviously had to pay for my education,” Gildee says. “I want to do the same thing for other disadvantaged kids.” 

*Scripture tells us God Sows all things and places material things in our possession. God entrusts what is his to our care to use in his service. It follows then that we are not the owners, but managers of God's property.*



## *Our World ...and welcome to it!*




When thinking about Seattle, Washington, many people envision rain, rain, rain. But that's not always a true picture of this beautiful place. None other than *The Seattle Times* reported a summer of drought conditions in the area and told about a group of volunteers anxious to save drooping, thirsty trees.

One volunteer described herself and others as "tree stewards." Although the city cares for trees on city property, trees planted on residential streets are the responsibility of adjacent property owners. But unfortunately, residential care doesn't always take place. So, armed with hoses and four-gallon buckets, the volunteers seek out trees that are in trouble, especially the young

ones. They then go to work watering and alleviating the parched condition of those trees.

Trees need about five gallons of water per week per inch of trunk diameter. The more mature trees can survive the lack of rain quite well because they have long, deep root systems that reach subterranean water sources. But those younger than four years are dependent upon surface water.

In order to nurture those trees suffering from a summer of drought, the Seattle volunteers willingly shared their own treasure of God-given resources, time, and talents. Working together they are good stewards of this earth and the environment with which God has blessed all of us. 

*Stewardship relates to everything we have: our bodies, our minds, our talents, our family, our possessions, our finances. Mother Earth and "the fullness thereof." Nothing or no one is outside the realm of God's creation. And you and I are responsible for the care of everything and everyone.*







## Steward of the Month

**Stew's Saturday Night Choir** Submitted by: Jen, Spokane, WA

**S**tew is the director of the Saturday adult modern choir. He plays the guitar, sings, laughs, and shares so much more with us as a group. There are only thirteen of us now, but Stew works like crazy to make us sound good. We hold rehearsal every Tuesday evening, at times it takes us an hour to learn one piece, but he has faith in us and that gets us through. Stew also heads the stewardship committee, a job he has held for eight years now. Most of us are on the stewardship committee with him, and he comes up with wonderful ideas all the time. (The latest was a pancake breakfast to raise money to upgrade the kitchen in the hall.) Stew is very creative with his ideas, and is so happy about giving his time to church. He is a great model for all of us. ☩



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