

Daily Devotional, October 6, 2021 Are You a Good Steward of Your Garden?

Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” Genesis 2:8-9, 15-17 (NIV)

I had to smile when I read this meme sent out by a friend on Facebook recently. Now and then, social media redeems itself with remarks like this one. For a few moments, I re-read those words and considered the truth embedded within them. “We really do have to take it upon ourselves to be good stewards of our bodies, and if we aren’t, God has wired us to be made fully aware when something goes awry.”

I don’t generally think of stewardship as having anything to do with our physical bodies, although if we fail there, we will likely suffer consequences in the other areas of our life. Like Adam and the garden of Eden, each of us has been given various “gardens” to tend—areas of our life that depend fully on how we choose to be good stewards of our time and attention in our care for them.

These various “gardens” come in a variety of shapes and sizes: marriage, parenthood, the caring for aging parents, or any other role in a vocation—from overseeing hundreds of employees to being one of a hundred who are held accountable to a supervisor. Whether it be relationally or vocationally, the ways that we respond to what God has given us have eternal implications—whether we realize it or not.

God placed Adam in Eden to work the garden and to keep it. In addition to being given a task, Adam was given full permission to eat from any tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If he ate of the fruit of that tree, he would surely die.

Now, hindsight is always 20/20, isn’t it? Adam could never have imagined just how much the trajectory of mankind would hinge on his refusal to rightly steward his will. Instead of submitting to the voice of God, he submitted to the voice of his wife, and as a result, death was brought upon us all.

We, too, can be unaware of how our disobedience will impact not only ourselves, but the lives of those around us. When we steward our lives well, we not only take care of our physical needs, but we direct our spiritual needs as well. Neglecting the Bible, prayer, and the life of the church is sure to bring about a disoriented spirit, which will deter us from being faithful followers of Christ. Abiding in Him through the stewardship of conscientious Bible study, intentional prayer, and using our spiritual gifts in service to the church will always draw us back. However, cutting off our connection to Jesus by ignoring the Bible, letting our prayers lives dry up, and ignoring God’s call to serving God’s church only pushes us farther down the road to despair.

Death isn’t the end, and it never was going to be the end—at least not for those of us who are in Christ—those who keep the lifeline connected. And because we are in Christ, may we live, and move, and have our being in Him (Acts 17:28), being keenly aware of what He has in store for us today, and abiding in Him every other day all along the way.

Prayer: O Lord, giver of life, we know that all we have comes from Your hand. You call us to be stewards of your abundance, the caretakers of all you have entrusted to us. Help us always to use your gifts wisely and teach us to share them generously. Send the Holy Spirit to work through us, bringing your message to those we serve. May our faithful stewardship be a witness to the love of Jesus Christ in our lives. We pray with grateful hearts in His name. Amen.