

Owners or Managers?

The Treasure Principle (Alcorn)

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Last week we looked at Randy Alcorn's introduction to The Treasure Principle.

Matt. 6:19-21 NIVO

¹⁹ "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

We summed up the message: Your money and your faith are inseparably bound, for where your treasure is, there your heart always lives.

If you want to know the issues of your heart and faith you will need to hang out with us for the next several weeks. Many are willing to hear about God until it comes to talking about their money. The resistance to giving is a stronghold in many a person's life. If you understand what I mean by a stronghold, the source of resistance is spiritual, and it does not come from God. Spiritual strongholds are developed by an agreement with the devil against God. When you agree with a lie proposed by the devil your heart begins to build up walls of resistance to God's voice.

We might think that the stronghold against giving is bound in selfishness. However, I think much of it is located in the realm of fear that we will not survive if we give away too much. The voice of

that lie is the devil speaking that you cannot trust God to care for you.

I want to free you from the stronghold of the fear of giving so you can find the joy of the Lord's blessing.

If we are to be free to give, we must understand some principles about God and money and how we related to both. This brings us to Alcorn's first Treasure Principle.



Treasure Principle Key 1: God owns everything. I am His money manager.

1. God owns everything.

Repeatedly throughout Scripture, God asserts that He owns everything.

NIVO **Psalm 24:1** Of David. A psalm. The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;
² for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.
(Ps. 24:1-2 NIVO)

Psalm 50:9-12 NIVO

⁹ I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, ¹⁰ for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. ¹¹ I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. ¹² If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.

Haggai 2:8 NIVO

⁸ 'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the LORD Almighty.

Deut. 8:17-18 NIVO

¹⁷ You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me."
¹⁸ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

In our Western culture we are very strong about individual rights. We have inalienable rights. We have the right to own property, the right to free speech, the right to bear arms... These are God-given rights. We do exercise rights which are God-given. Yet, in the final reality, as those who are made by God and saved by God, we recognize that God is the final and ultimate owner of all we have.

God as creator has divine ownership of all things.

Gen. 1:1

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

John 1:1-4 NIVO

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning.

³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

Jesus as Savior has purchased our redemption.

1 Cor. 6:19-20 NIVO

¹⁹ Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

When we were saved, God purchased us off of the slave block of sin's ownership. We were bound to hell and destruction by our sin. When Jesus died on the cross, He died in our place and purchased our freedom. We are not freed to live for ourselves in selfish separation from God. Instead, we are freed to serve God as our Master.

God owns the future.

Rev. 1:8 NIVO

⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

The one who was, who is, and who is to come, past, present and future is the basic meaning of the I AM, the personal name of God seen in the YHWH, Ex. 3:14. "I am He who exists." As the Alpha and the Omega, God owns the beginning and the end.

2. God entrusts us to be managers for His Kingdom.

Stewardship is the idea that God is the owner and we are his managers, or stewards, caring for His property until He returns.

Managers are not owners.

In baseball, owners own the team. They hire managers to build and run their team. General manager makes the trades and directs the money. The team manager, manages the team's development and play along with other coaches. The managers do not own the team, they utilize the owner's investment of wealth to accomplish what the owner wants to accomplish in the teams' success.

Alcorn:

If God is the owner, I am the manager. I need to adopt a steward's mentality toward the assets He has entrusted to me, not given to me.

A steward manages money for the owner's benefit. He carries no sense of entitlement to the assets he manages. It is his job to find out what the owner wants done with the assets he manages and then carry out his desire.

Jesus used stewardship stories of to remind Israel that God is the owner, the King, and Israel was the managers of His kingdom. who will come back to get an accounting for all that has been entrusted.

Parable of the talents, Matt. 25:14-30, a man entrusts his wealth to servants and goes on a journey. When he returns he expects that they have handled his money properly and they given an account for what they have done with his money.

Rom. 14:10-12 NIVO

¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.

¹¹ It is written: " 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.' "

¹² So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

As Christians we are not judged for salvation. However, we will all stand before God some day and have to give an account of what we have done with our lives. This includes what we have done with our wealth. We are God's managers. God retains ownership of all things we have in our possession, even if human law says we own things. We manage our possessions and support God's ministry as part of that responsibility.

3. Joyful giving comes when we serve God out of love.

God desires for us to be joyful givers. He desires we give to serve His kingdom. Giving is more than tithing, even though tithing is a base for understanding giving. We look more at tithing later.

Be careful, giving a tithe, a tenth, may close your heart against giving more. You can tithe as mere religious duty. "I did my duty. I gave a tithe." Serving God out of duty is not the same as serving God out of love. Joy comes from love. When you give out of love, there is joy. If we have to pry the bills out of your hands, it will not be so joyful.

When you think like a manager, you realize everything you have is still ultimately owned by God. When your heart is open to do with it anything God requests, then you find joy in seeing what God is doing through your love response to Him.

God uses giving to conform us to His image. The more you can freely give in service of God, the more you become shaped to be like Christ, who gave it all.

God is the owner.

You are the manager.

So, manage your assets as to please the owner.