

Rid Yourself of This Dangerously Independent Spirit

Stewardship—it brings significance to the mundane of life, forms part of our identity and when done well, advances God's purposes in the earth and earns us an eternal reward.

The psalmist Asaph said God declared that the entire world is His—"and all its fullness"—including the beasts of the forest and the field and "the cattle on a thousand hills" (Ps. 50:10–12). Later in Scripture, we read that God said the silver and the gold were also His (see Hag. 2:8). In short, God owns it all! He said, "It's all mine!" And so it is. Throughout the law and the prophets, God repeatedly reminds us that He is the Creator, and therefore He owns all, including us: "Indeed, heaven and the highest heavens belong to the Lord your God, also the earth with all that is in it" (Deut. 10:14).

Furthermore, Paul reminds us in Colossians: " For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him" (Col. 1:16).

This complete, sovereign, authoritative ownership of God is potentially offensive to a person with a spirit of independence. But the Bible says, "Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens ... who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it" (Is. 42:5, ESV). God created the planet, He created the human race, and then He put breath and spirit into the people He had created. We only exist because He decided to create us.

Though God owns the world in its entirety, He graciously

grants humanity the privilege and responsibility of managing His workmanship, keeping His creation, serving within His household and advancing His purposes. When servants act faithfully in love-filled obedience to their Master, that action is called stewardship and is the lifelong responsibility of every Christian, regardless of his or her occupation. There is considerable dignity in possessing the role of a steward or the position as God's manager. No matter our role in everyday life—business owner, housewife, teacher, lawyer or construction worker—we all become co-laborers with God when we have the perspective of stewardship and live as servants under His leadership. This should excite us and fill us with a great sense of purpose.

God uses tangible things we can see, touch, and smell for the purpose of global redemption and the fulfilling of His promises. He entered into time and space, and, through the human frame of Jesus, He brings about global redemption. Through material things like water, fish, bread, nets, homes, coins and upper rooms, God brings about global redemption. This is not something God has only done sometimes, but God has always used yielded human beings to bring about His will in the earth.

Because of this, each of us can play a major role in His plan as we surrender our will to serve God's greater purpose. We can yield our pocketbook, our food, our car, our job, our time, our house, our spiritual gifts and any other resources we have been given. When we give our time in service and our money to ministries that are proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, we are partnering with the victory of Jesus and the plan of God.

Good Bible schools, missions work and various other ministries are all playing a part in extending the finished work of the cross. The kingdom of God, its message and its purpose are all advanced on the earth when we function in our roles as His stewards. If we were to fully function this way, we would be

the most satisfied people on the planet and a million other woes would also be dealt with.

You and I were made by God to partner with God as He brings His will, kingdom and renown to the earth. He has entrusted us with spiritual gifts that should be managed in a way that glorifies Him (1 Pet. 4:10). He has put within our trust money, property, talents, relationships, businesses and even our bodies, all of which should be managed accord to His will. If we manage and operate our lives in any other way, we will have no choice but to live life at a lesser degree than what we were created for. Our daily decisions matter.

Ask the Lord to reveal any area where you may be living under the delusion of ownership. Ask Him for the grace to surrender to Him all that is rightfully His. And ask God for the wisdom and grace to be His good manager.

Rob Parker was born again in 1990 through a dramatic encounter with the Lord. In 2006, after 21 years in the marketplace, Rob felt the Lord leading him into full-time ministry. Rob currently serves as director of Partnership Development at the International House of Prayer. Since 2010 Rob has trained over 1,500 missionaries at IHOPKC, around the country, and in the nations to raise their own financial partnership teams. Rob resides in Kansas City with his wife and son. Living nearby are his daughter, son-in-law, and their three children. He is the author of *The Fully Funded Missionary* and its companion training manual, *Partnership Development for the Fully Funded Missionary*.