

Breathe

Rethinking Stewardship as a Path to Sanctification

By Dr. Roland Hill

In the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, the divine whisper “Breathe” calls us to pause, to reflect deeply, and to rethink the essence of stewardship in our spiritual journey. It’s a moment to quiet the noise, to still our hearts, and to contemplate stewardship not as a transactional obligation but as a transformative experience. This rethinking of stewardship moves us away from viewing it merely as a means to fund the mission of the church. Instead, it positions stewardship as the fruit of the church’s mission, a tangible expression of our sanctification.



Sanctification, the ongoing process of becoming more like Christ, is marked by the inward changes wrought by the Holy Spirit. Stewardship, in this light, becomes an outward evidence of this inward transformation. It’s a reflection of a life under new management—Jesus Christ. When we embrace stewardship as a form of sanctification, we acknowledge that every decision, every act of giving, and every resource we steward is an opportunity to manifest the work God is doing within us.

TRANSFORMATIVE STEWARDSHIP: BEYOND THE TRANSACTION

Transactional stewardship focuses on the act of giving as a duty, a necessary contribution to sustain the operational and mission-based activities of the church. While this perspective is not without merit, it narrowly confines stewardship to financial transactions, missing the broader, more profound implications of stewardship in our lives.

STEWARDSHIP IS REVOLUTIONARY GENEROSITY. IT INVOLVES THE 7 T’S:
TIME, TEMPLE, TALENT, TREASURE, TRUST IN GOD, THEOLOGY, AND TESTIMONY.

“Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods, prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing” (Counsels on Diet and Foods, p.81).

“In grains, fruits, vegetables, and nuts are to be found all the food elements that we need. If we will come to the Lord in simplicity of mind, He will teach us how to prepare wholesome food free from the taint of flesh meat” (Counsels on Diet and Foods, p.310).

Those who worry that a vegetarian diet lacks essential nutrients for true vitality should consider the example of Daniel, who wished to avoid the rich food of the king’s table and asked for a 10-day trial on a simpler diet of vegetables and water. The official agreed. “At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food” (Daniel 1:15). When their education was complete the king examined Daniel and his friends. “In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom” (Daniel 1:20).



THE CHALLENGE

If you are already a vegetarian, don’t give up talking and engaging your relatives or other people you meet at the gym, at the store, and at your workplace about eating a plant-based diet. Talk about how good and simple it is to prepare vegetarian meals. If meat is a regular part of your diet, cut consumption to be an occasional meal. You can train your tastebuds to enjoy a simple plant-based diet. Let’s be good stewards of our bodies. Let’s live the abundant life Jesus wants us to have.

Aubrey, A. (2022, August 31). The US diet is deadly. Here are 7 ideas to get Americans eating healthier. Retrieved from [www.npr.org: https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2022/08/31/1120004717/the-u-s-diet-is-deadly-here-are-7-ideas-to-get-americans-eating-healthier](https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2022/08/31/1120004717/the-u-s-diet-is-deadly-here-are-7-ideas-to-get-americans-eating-healthier)

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Transformative stewardship, however, sees every act of giving, serving, and managing resources as a spiritual discipline, an act of worship that reflects our commitment to God's kingdom. It's an acknowledgement that everything we have is not our own but entrusted to us by God to manage for His glory. This paradigm shift transforms our giving from a duty to a delight, from an obligation to a joyful expression of gratitude for what God has done in us.

STEWARDSHIP AS THE FRUIT OF THE MISSION

When we understand stewardship as the fruit of the sanctification process, it becomes clear that stewardship is not just about supporting the church's mission financially. It's about being active participants in that mission. As we grow in our faith and draw closer to the heart of God, our desire to give, serve, and steward our resources in alignment with God's purposes

naturally flows out of the transformation happening within us.

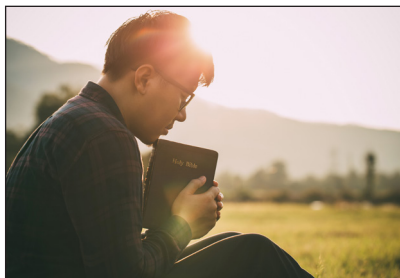
This perspective challenges us to look beyond the financial aspects of stewardship to see the broader implications of how we use our time, talents, and treasures to advance God's kingdom. It's a holistic approach that encompasses every area of our lives, demonstrating that the rule and reign of Jesus extend to every decision we

make and every action we take.

STEWARDSHIP: AN OUTWARD EVIDENCE OF INWARD CHANGE

The true measure of stewardship is not in the amount we give but in the posture of our hearts. A heart transformed by the gospel is a generous heart, a heart that mirrors the generosity of God Himself. Stewardship, then, becomes an outward evidence of the inward change that has taken place in us through the work of Christ. It's a visible sign that Jesus is the ruler and manager of our lives, a testament to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit within us.

As we "Breathe" and reflect on the depth and breadth of stewardship, let us embrace it as a vital aspect of our sanctification. Let us celebrate stewardship as a transformative journey that not only impacts the church and the world but also deeply shapes our own hearts and lives. In doing so, we testify to the power of the gospel and the transformative work of God in us, bearing witness to the kingdom of God here on earth."



Stewardship of Your Body

By Rudy Salazar

3 John 2 says, "Dear friend, I'm praying that all is well with you and that you enjoy good health in the same way that you prosper spiritually" (CEB).

Good health is something we all want. The happy Christian life is not only about prospering spiritually, but also enjoying good health. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). But unfortunately, the American diet is causing this life to be less abundant.

"The data are stark: the typical American diet is shortening the lives of many Americans. Diet-related deaths outrank deaths from smoking, and about half of U.S. deaths from heart disease – nearly 900 deaths a day – are linked to poor diet." (Aubrey, 2022)

Ouch! This means that even though cigarette smoking has declined in the last half century, our diet is killing us.

THE CULPRIT

One of the main culprits of the western diet is meat consumption. Meat-focused fast food restaurants are proliferating not only in big cities but even in small towns. It seems that what used to be a special meal for a Sunday



barbeque in the back yard has become the daily diet for many Americans. Meat consumption was not part of God's original plan for the human diet. A plant-based diet is the original and best diet for people. "Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food'" (Genesis 1:29).

As Bible-believing Christians, we need to believe that what God says is true. As Seventh-day Adventists we have been given even further light in respect to the best nourishing diet.

