

Stewardship of the Heart

By Richard M. Eyre

Dear Reader,

Those who have read my books over the years know of my interest in (some would say obsession with) the word *joy*. I've tried to write about what it is within the gospel context – and about how to pursue it and how to give it (we even named one of our children Joy).

Eventually I decided that joy was not merely the product of some conscious formula or the end result of some multi-ingredient recipe. Rather, I came to feel that it was precipitated by an *attitude*. I found a name for the attitude I felt led to joy, and emerged with a second favorite word – *serendipity* – which means “a state of mind in which we are aware enough and in tune enough to discover something good while seeking something else.” To one with an attitude of spiritual serendipity, life become an exciting adventure of finding joy through discovering God's goodness and God's will. I wrote *Serendipity of the Spirit*, the companion volume to this book, as a personal prescription for joy (and of course we have a child named Saren).

Somewhere along the way I began to feel that the spiritual and mental quality of serendipity needed a closely linked quality of the emotion and of the heart to become a complete attitude of joy. *Stewardship* became my third favorite word. (By this point we had run out of children to name, so we don't have one named Steward. Maybe a grandchild, someday.)

Stewardship, for me personally, and for my family, has become a way of looking at everything – a way that has increased peace and enhanced joy. The word or the concept is like a *lens*. It turns things into a new focus and causes me to see them in a completely different context, to see them as they really are, and sometimes even to glimpse them as God would wish them to be.

The Apostle John admonished us to “know the truth” and promised that “the truth shall make you free.” There is great freedom in the truth of stewardship. Once we mentally release ourselves from the burden, the inaccuracy, and the “prematurity” of *ownership*, we lighten and enlighten ourselves.

For me, life is a question, and stewardship is a new answer, or at least a new way to grasp and pull together and use the oldest eternal answers.

May it be so for you,

Richard M. Eyre
Jackson Hole, Wyoming
Winter 1990

P.S. Stewardship and ownership are not just two way of dealing with material possessions. They are two alternate ways of thinking about everything in life, from our talents to our opportunities to our children.

This book does not suggest that everyone live like Gandhi or Thoreau or sell all they have and give to the poor, or that we all adopt a completely Spartan life of live communally. It is not a book on *lifestyle*. Rather, it is a book on a *mindset* (or *heartset*) that can free us of the cares of ownership and help us see our lives as I believe God would have us see them.

P.S. 2 Each person's stewardship is unique. Each of us has separate and distinct foreordinations. Therefore, there is no standard formula, no pat answer. The goal of this book is not to provide ready-made answers but to produce perspective and stimulate thought – the very thought that can

work within us, prompting prayer and inspiration, and accessing us to real answers from the real source.

P.S. 3 We come to this earth that our Father has made for us and receive gifts which are ours as stewardships but still *belong* to Him. He wants all good things to become ours eternally, and in this sense stewardship is not an opponent of ownership but a precursor to it and a preparation for it.

But ownership in the worldly context of “I earned it, I deserve it, it’s mine” is the vehicle of pride and the enemy of stewardship. The term *ownership*, as used in this book, refers to the prideful form which forgets both the source and the nature of our gifts. The term stewardship is the accurate acknowledgement of where all came from and whose all is.

P.S. 4 I’ve tried to “get at” stewardship from as many angles as possible... by using fiction, prose, poetry, quotations, and some other styles that I don’t have names for. I’m also rather liberal about punctuation. I like ellipses (...) and dashes (--). They seem to make some kinds of writing flow more like open conversation between friends.

The Direction

(based on feelings)

...written from Nazareth to Walden Pond

as well as here,

and written over the past several millennia

as well as today...

This part of the book is an *orientation*, seeking to help us start with broad vision – looking at many aspects of stewardship from many perspectives.

Don’t try to find an order or a sequence in the quotations, vignettes, case studies, and stories that follow. They are intended to be random, linked together only by their relevance to the concept of stewardship.

Let your mind flow through them, focusing on the ones with which you most identify, filling into your emotional memory the feelings they carry and the general directions in which they point your heart.

They will, I think, be like little beacons or sign posts (and later, reference points as we look back) along the course, leading to an understanding and to a valuing of the attitude of stewardship.

Don’t struggle, as you read, to find every level of meaning and inference of every quote or story. Relax and enjoy them but do try to see how much is *connected* to the negative ramifications of perceived *ownership* or to the positive outgrowths of an attitude of *stewardship*.

*“The world is too much with us, late and soon,
getting and spending, we lay waste to our powers.
...the sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
the winds that will be howling at all hours, and
are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers; for
this, for everything, we are out of tune; it moves
us not...”*

William Wordsworth

“It is the pre-occupation with possession, more than any other thing, that keeps men and women from living freely and nobly.”

Bertrand Russell

“More, more, more, more, my word, what are we all becoming, morticians?”

e.e. cummings

Many years ago, while I was a graduate student living in Boston, our ward basketball team won the regional Church tournament, qualifying to go to Salt Lake City for the “All Church Tournament.” We all wanted to go; but since most of us were struggling students, we couldn’t afford the plane fare. We asked the Bishop what he thought we should do, and he surprised us by suggesting that we go and see Brother Hartly who, he said, might be interested in helping with the expense.

The reason we were surprised was that we had no idea that Brother Hartly could afford to offer such help. He was a quiet, unassuming man who gave no indications of being wealthy.

But we went to see him. Brother Hartly, as it turned out, was a man of means, but also a man who lived simply and humbly, and a man who understood stewardship. He listened to our situation and then said something like this: “Yes, I’ll help. I don’t think of what I have as belonging to me anyway. I’m a steward, and when someone like the Bishop suggests some worthy use for money or something else I’m taking care of, I always feel relieved to return some portion of my stewardship and to have that much less to worry about.”

“The true cost of a thing is the amount of what I call life that is required to be exchanged for it.”

Henry David Thoreau

“Thou shalt not covet.”

Exodus 20:17

“Whatever you have, it is the Lord’s. You own nothing.”

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 10:298

Imagine

A man who owns one hundred acres,

Proud, protective;

Then an inheritance, a gift, a bequest comes to him –

An additional hundred acres.

Wow! Suddenly

He is twice as rich, twice as proud, twice as protective.

“Aren’t I doing well?” he says

as he extends his fence,

and his line of credit,

and his ego.

Now imagine a man who is the steward over one hundred acres,

Grateful and guided (by his master's will).
Then an increase of stewardship,
An additional hundred acres.
"Thank you for your trust," he says,
"but I am happy and busy with what I care for now,
I don't need the extra –
Still, I will care for it all,
Give myself to it, seek your will for it,
Honor you with it."

"There are more and more who have the means to live and less and less who have meaning to live for."

Viktor Frankl

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Matt. 6:21

A church leader was asked why he spent so much time at the church and so little time with his growing family. "The Lord needs me," was his reply.

He was wrong. The Lord may use us, but He does not need us. We need Him. And our families need us. And the eternal stewardships of our families mean more to God (and should mean more to us) and any mere temporary assignment.

"God does not need either man's work or his own gifts; who best bear his mild yoke, they serve him best; his state is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed and post o'er land and ocean without rest: they also serve who only stand and wait."

John Milton, *Sonnet: When I Consider*

"The Lord doesn't really need us to take care of the poor, but we need this experience; for it is only through our learning how to take care of each other that we develop within us the Christlike love and disposition necessary to qualify us to return to His presence."

Marion G. Romney, Conf. Report, Oct '81, p. 131

"Minister to one another as stewards."

1 Peter 4:10

Thoreau once likened going to jail with owning a farm. Both confine and control us. We are encumbered by things we think we own.

Thoreau also said: "Our houses are such unwieldy property that we are often imprisoned rather than housed in them"

And

"Men have become tools of their tools."

"Seek not to be cumbered."

D&C 66:10

I was hitchhiking one day, years ago,
On Hawaii's "big island"
Trying to get from Hilo to Kona.
Thought it would take all day, many rides.
It did take all day, but only one ride.
Rusty and Honey, bona fide native Hawaiians,
Stopped for me in old, rusted, dusty car.
"Where you go?"
"Kona."
All day we rattled along, stopping to
See waterfalls, walk through hidden glades.
Rusty and Honey, like children, showing toys of joy
To a new-found stranger-friend.
Sunset arrival in Kona.
"Thanks – how lucky that you were going to Kona."
"Oh no, we not going Kona!"
"What...why...where...?"
"We were going grocery store."
"What...aren't there grocery stores in Hilo?"
They looked at me – as incredulous
As I looked at them.
And Rusty's next words were a sermon:
"We can go grocery store tomorrow,
but can't take you Kona
or show you island tomorrow!"

"Ye are not your own."

1 Cor. 6:20

*There are two ways to achieve financial independence: one is to have unlimited money;
the other is to have limited needs.*

Like our ancestors, we view the outside world
Through rectangular panes of glass.
The difference is that we switch ours on and off
With a knob, or a button, or a remote.
Television promotes competition and comparison
And poses more ownership as the deal.
Advertising is the subtle art
Of making us think we need
What we really only want.

Would you like to see a return
To a simpler, family-oriented society
With less emphasis on materialism?

Yes: 82% No: 18%

(National public opinion poll – Chavez, fall 1988)

“We are stewards over our own property.”

D&C 42:52

“If I have horses, oxen, and possessions, they are the Lord’s and not mine; and all I ask is for Him to tell me what to do with them.”

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 6:48

If we think of our children as the genetic creations of our own bodies, flung into first-time life as we give them birth, it may follow to think of them as un-programmed computers that we can program or as lumps of clay which we can mold into whatever we wish them to be.

But if we think of our children as God’s children, our own brothers and sisters, as old spiritually as ourselves, then the better metaphor is seedlings, each with built-in and unique possibilities. We are not sculptors working with stone, but gardeners or stewards, nourishing and cultivating so each kind of tree will grow up to its own unique best.

“The secret to being miserable is to have the leisure to bother about whether you are happy or not.”

George Bernard Shaw

“When a man takes leave of believing in imaginary property, then only will he make us of his true property.”

Tolstoy

One who is all wrapped up in himself makes a very small package.

The sea belongs to him who appreciates from the shore.

How like an angel came I down
How bright are all things here
When first among his works I did appear
Oh how their glory did we crown!
The world resembled His eternity,
In which my soul did walk;
And everything that I did see,
Did with me talk.

Cursed and devised proprieties,
With envy, avarice
And fraud, those fiends that spoil even Paradise,
Fled from the splendor of mine eyes,
And so did hedges, ditches, limits, bounds,
I dreamed not aught of those,
But wandered over all men’s grounds,
And found repose.

Proprieties themselves were mind,
And hedges ornaments;
Walls boxes, coffers, and their rich contents
Did not divide my joys, but shine.
Clothes, ribbons, jewels, laces, I esteemed
My joys by others worn;
For me they all to wear them seemed
When I was born.

From *Wonder*
(a child's view of the world
undisturbed by notions of ownership)
by Thomas Traherne

As a young missionary I served as a guide at the Mormon Pavilion at the New York World's Fair. On one occasion, Elder Hugh B. Brown of the First Presidency came to speak to us and apparently thought some of us were a little caught up in the importance of our assignment. He corrected this impression by telling us the number of stars or suns astronomers had so far discovered in the universe. He wrote the number on a blackboard, and it was huge, with 15 or 16 zeros. To help us understand its size, he asked how thick we thought a book would be if it had that many pages. One elder guessed 100 feet thick. Another thought it might be ten miles. President Brown informed us that the book would be thick enough to extend around the world 600 times. He then pointed out that we were tiny specks on one planet that went around one of those innumerable suns. When he had us feeling incredibly small, to the point of nothingness, he gave us the other side of the principle.

"When I look out on the night sky," he said, "I see your handwork of God. But when I look out on your faces, I see His offspring!"

He then told us that all we could see, wherever we chose to look, was made for us – that we were stewards over all that our father had made.

Years later, when President Brown was too old to speak in General Conference, he once gave the closing prayer. Showing that his star-story lesson still applied, and to everyone, he said, "Heavenly Father, please bless the General Authorities on this stand with a realization of their own nothingness."

*Proud talent serves the self
While humble talent serves the world.*

"All I want is the property next to mine!"

Excerpts from E.M. Forster's essay *My Wood*:

"I bought a wood...it is the first property I have owned...what is the effect of property upon the character?"

"In the first place, it makes me feel heavy. Property does have this effect. Property produces men of weight, and it was a man of weight who failed to get into the Kingdom of Heaven. They (the Gospels) point out what is perfectly obvious, yet seldom realized: that if you have a lot of things you cannot move about a lot, that furniture requires dusting, dusting requires servants, servants require insurance.

“Property makes its owner feel that he ought to do something to it. Yet he isn’t sure what. A restlessness comes over him...Sometimes I think I will cut down such trees as remain in the wood; at other times I want to fill up the gaps between them with new trees. Both impulses are pretentious and empty. They are not honest movements towards money-making or beauty. They spring from a foolish desire to express myself and from an inability to enjoy what I have got. Creation, property, enjoyment form a sinister trinity in the human mind. Creation and enjoyment are both very good, yet they are often attainable without a material basis, and at such moments property pushes itself in as a substitute.

“It (materialism) is also forced on us by an internal defect in the soul, by the feeling that in property may lie the germs of self-development and of exquisite or heroic deeds, our life on earth is, and ought to be, material and carnal. But we have not yet learned to manage our materialism and carnality properly; they are still entangled with the desire for ownership, where (in the words of Dante) ‘Possession is one with loss.’”

Mahatma Gandhi, in perhaps one of the most dramatic statements of anti-materialism ever made, gave up the cumbrance and ownership of every earthly thing save three: his loin cloth, his spectacles and his scriptures. Anything beyond these, he had decided, would occupy his attention and consume the thought and energy that he wished to devote to others’ needs and to higher causes. (It is important to remember, however, that Gandhi’s goal for his people was freedom from poverty.)

“All things are mine, saith the Lord”.

“All the earth is mine.”

D&C 104:12, 14

Two upwardly mobile young professionals were discussing what they considered to be a very deep and intellectual topic. “We seek wealth because of the freedom it brings,” said one. “It allows us to go and be and do what we want.” “But the question is,” said the other, “at what level does wealth start removing freedom because the things we own take so much of our time and attention to look after them?”

A good question, and one that may lead to voluntary simplicity and to release from the manacles of materialism. Yet still an inaccurate question because we own nothing and therefore are always non-wealthy while God is all-wealthy.

The better question is, “What stewardships has God given, what stewardships does He want to give? What can others use, or care for better than we, and how can we find God’s guidance in what we do with what is His?”

“All must render an account of their stewardships...now and in eternity.”

D&C 72:3

“Humility was largely meant as a restraint upon the arrogance and infinity of man...if a man would make it world large. He must be always making himself small...pinnacles are the creations of humanity...it is impossible without humility to enjoy anything – even pride.”

G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, p. 52-53

“...it is better to have enough of what we really need than an abundance of superfluities, much better to escape from our many present troubles than to be burdened with great masses of wealth.

“...every man’s perception of where his true interest lies, along with the authority of Christ, our Savior (whose wisdom could not fail to recognize the best, and whose goodness could not fail to correct it), would long ago have brought the whole world to adopt Utopian laws, if it were not for one single monster, the prime plague and begetter of all others – I mean Pride.

“Pride measures her advantages not by what she has but by what other people lack. Pride would not condescend even to be made a goddess, if there were no wretches for her to sneer at and domineer over. Her good fortune is dazzling only by contrast with the miseries of others. Her riches are valuable only as they torment and tantalize the poverty of others. Pride is a serpent from hell which twines itself around the hearts of men; and it acts like the suckfish in holding them back from choosing a better way of life.”

Thomas Moore

Airplane chat:

Next to me sat a financial planner,

Poring over balance sheets

As I worked on this manuscript.

“What do you do?”

(we exchanged the classic American conversation opener).

“I’ll tell you something I’ve observed in my work,”

he said,

“That might tie into your book.”

He said people typically came to him initially and said,

“Help me earn and plan and save so I’ll have *enough*.”

He helped them set a goal

(a number they thought would be enough)

He said most people, when they reach “enough” say,

“Help me get a bit more, as a cushion.”

He said most people, when they get the cushion say,

“I’ve decided enough isn’t enough,

and the cushion isn’t big enough.”

We like to say “enough is enough,”

But enough isn’t *ever* enough

Because we get the *more* habit,

And we’ve learned so much about how to get ore

And so little about how to use and enjoy

And give what we have.

“Trust in the spirit and walk humbly.”

D&C 11:12

“Be a wise steward over earthly blessings.”

D&C 78:5-7

The husband who demands

“Follow the priesthood”
does not understand oneness or marital joy
and runs the incalculable risk of taking the agency
(the single true ownership)
from the covenant-keeping wife.
To *have* the Priesthood
Does not imply ownership.
This
Is a fundamental example
Of stewardship with accountability.

“We will be blessed for the righteous desires of our hearts even though some outside circumstance has made it impossible for us to carry those desires into action.”

Elder Dallin Oaks,
“The Desires of Our Hearts,”
BYU Devotional, 8 Oct. 1985

“If time were our natural element, why would we wear wrist watches?”

Neal A. Maxwell

“Before ye seek riches, seek the kingdom.”

Jacob 2:18

“Level one” parents raise their children by reaction – by trying to solve problems when they arise and meet crisis when it comes. “Level two” parents try for an offense and a plan to go with the defense and the reaction. They ask, “What do we want for our children? What can we give our children?” “Level three” parents ask a higher and more accurate question that brings light and guidance. “What does God want for these, His children, and how can we assist in helping Him give those gifts to the small brothers and sisters who live in our home?”

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt.”

Matt. 6:19

“For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be must required.”

Luke 12:48

We’ve heard it so much it has become a cliché:
“My mission was the happiest two years of my life!”
Doors slammed, early hours, cold flats,
Long days, bad food.
Stop! The list could go on but does any of it
Describe happiness?
They why?
Because missions are simple lives of stewardship.
We forsake ownership of all kinds and serve,
And build,

His way.
We should come home and make of our lives
A continuation!

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.”
Psalms 24:1

“Behold, all these properties are mine, or else your faith is vain...and if the properties are mine, then ye are stewards.”

D&C 104:55-56

Two couples saw a masterpiece in a private gallery.
“We must own it,” said one. “It is so beautiful
it possesses us,
so we must possess it.”
The other couple moved quietly away
And said to each other,
“Would that we could give it to all, place it in a
public place
for it is too beautiful to won and too uplifting
to be kept from all.”

One message of the movie *Butterflies Are Free* is that nothing is ours until we are willing
to let it go and see if it will return.

“We must, in the first place, remember that (the property that we have) is not ours. Why? Because the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof. We have no cattle, no gold or silver, no watches or jewelry, no property of any description, no houses, lands, or anything else which is our own. Then in the consecrating that which we have been in the habit of calling our own, we are only returning to the Lord His own property.”

Orson Pratt (1855:99)

*“Zion can be built up only among those who are pure in heart, not a people torn by
covetousness or greed, but a pure and selfless people.*

*“Zion is to be in the world but not of the world, not dulled by a sense of carnal security
nor paralyzed by materialism.”*

Spencer W. Kimball (1978:122-123)

*“It is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the
world lieth in sin.”*

D&C 49:20

Time spent walking
Alone
Among peasants in China, natives in Africa,
Lower castes in Sri Lanka.

“Alone” because we are separated by gulfs
of poverty.
The same feeling in all three places, like déjà vu.
Wonderment!
How is it possible that I see more smiles here...
Less stress and hollow hurrying?
The only three places I’ve ever been
Where people have nothing
And while I walk with them I have noting.
Is it just my imagination
That I notice more?
That I feel more?

“I’m sorry that this people is worldly minded...their affections are upon their forms, upon their property, their houses and possessions, and in the same ratio that this is the case, the Holy Spirit of God – the spirit of their calling – forsakes them.”

Brigham Young (1867:216)

“Some time ago, as I was officiating in the nightly ritual of getting our little children into bed, I may have seemed a bit dictatorial with the direction to ‘pick up your clothes, brush your teeth’ and other such utterances. Then our five-year-old wistfully looked and said, ‘Daddy, do you won me?’ While she has doubtless long since forgotten her question, I have remembered it as a challenge to distinguish carefully between ownership and stewardship.

“Often as parents and leaders we may be tempted to direct as owners rather than as stewards rather than as stewards. In the last analysis, we own very little, but are stewards over much.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson
August 17, 1971, Manchester, England

Linda and I accompanied Russell and Danzel Nelson and others on a trip to Israel some years ago. The Nelsons were accompanied by some of their younger children, including their only son, Russell, Nelson often referred to his son as “little brother.” At first I thought it was a simple term of endearment, but sensed as the trip went on that it was a reminder of their eternal relationship – and of his important stewardship.

(Still, it must be remembered that parental love is deeper and more sacrificing than sibling love. Christ becomes our Father as well as our brother when we are accepted into His kingdom, and our love becomes more like Heavenly Father’s love as we become parents.

“Be poor of this world but rich in faith.”

James 2:5

“Those who are faithful over a few things are made rulers over many.”

Matt. 25:21,23

“A wise steward in the time shall inherit all things.”

Orson Pratt, “Concecration”

Some funerals
Fill the spirit with a sublime oxymoron: sweet sorrow
Where stewardship is understood,
Where death is known as birth.
The return of a steward and a stewardship to master, owner.
We miss, so we grieve; but we believe, so we rejoice
And
The sweet sorrow tastes exactly like joy.

“A wise steward is the joy of his Lord.”

D&C 51:19

“...relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and finisher of their faith.”

Moroni 6:4

Within his stewardship of family, the parent has full right to call upon the Lord and receive answers through the Spirit.

Paraphrasing D&C 58:24-29

“We are not our own, we are bought with a price. We are the Lord’s; our time, our talents, our gold and silver...and all there is on this earth.”

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 14:88

“Poetry is sane because it floats easily in an infinite sea; reason seeks to cross the infinite sea, and so make it finite. The result is mental exhaustion. To...understanding everything is a strain...the poet only asks to get his head into the heavens. It is the logician who seeks to get the heavens into his head. And it is his head that splits.”

G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, p. 27

“Each individual stands as a steward over his respective assignments whether as an executive or teacher, or as a local, regional or general worker.”

Joseph Fielding Smith
Conference Report, Oct., 1966, p. 84

“If a man undertakes to squander the stewardship which the Lord has entrusted him, He takes it away, and gives it to another who is a more wise steward.”

Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses* 2:100

“There is only one right you have, and that is to keep the commandments of Jesus Christ. He has a perfect right to tell us so. We have no right to refuse!”

Joseph Fielding Smith
Conference Report, April 1967, 120-121

“I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things are mine.”

D&C 104:14

“Man’s earthly existence is but a test as to whether he will concentrate his efforts, his mind, his should upon things which contribute to the comfort and gratification of his physical nature or whether he will make as his life’s purpose the acquisition of spiritual qualities.

“Spirituality, our true aim, is the consciousness of victory over self, and of communion with the Infinite. Spirituality impels one to conquer difficulties and acquire more and more strength. To feel one’s faculties unfolding, and truth expanding in the soul, is one of life’s sublimest experiences.”

David O. McKay
Conference Report, April 1958, 6-7

“Sanctification cometh because of their yielding of their hearts unto God.”

Helaman 3:35

“Whosoever will be friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

James 4:4

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

1 John 2:15

“For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

Matt. 16:26

“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

James 1:8

Ownership is a comparatively recent concept. For primitive man, a grazing ground, a well, or a flock was not his property, but his privilege to use. Man was part of a larger whole. The earth owned him rather than being owned by him.

Jesus’ Parable of the Talents (Luke 19:11-17) is not an effort to teach His disciples some basic principles of efficient business. Rather, His lesson was this: If people exert so much care and industry to the management of their own business, how much greater should be their zeal when the administer on God’s behalf.

Luke, in his telling of Christ’s parables, uses the words *steward* and *servant* interchangeably.

Luke 12:37-38, 42-43, 16:1-13

When an individual has received the gift of charity, as a steward of God, he must share his gift with others.

Paraphrasing 1 Peter 4:8-10

“We so easily forget that we came into life with nothing. Whatever we get soon seems our natural right, not a gift. And we forget the giver. Then, our gaze shifts from what we have been given to what we don’t have.”

Bishop Henry B. Eyring
Conference Address, 1989

“Ministers of Christ and stewards over the mysteries of God.”

1 Cor. 4:1-5

Summer holidays.
Beach houses and boats.
Owners spending their vacations fixing, polishing,
Worrying.
Worrying
About their things,
Protecting them with alarm systems,
So pre-occupied with ownership, they miss
The infinitely greater joys of wind, sand,
Sky and lake,
All of which belongs to them just exactly as much
As the boats and beach houses do.

“Things are in the saddle and rule mankind.”

Emerson

Today: A Time for Stewardship

Truth never changes,
But *relevance* does.
God’s ownership and our stewardship
Have always been as true as they are now,
But perhaps never as relevant.
Because, today,
Society’s sentiments slide us and suck us
In opposite directions,
Off toward getting and having, and particularly toward
Wanting more.
History’s graphs of greed, materialism, and stress
And peaking
Even as the second advent and the new world approaches.
The forces of dark apply deceit
In layer of pride, and pre-occupation with possession.

We look to light, place in His path the palm branches
Of being and giving.
We learn who we are and whose we are,

Using His gifts and our agency
To discover His joy and ready His way.

Now, more than ever, in these last scenes,
Of the closing act,
He uses stewards, and we need stewardship.

The Hope

That you now begin to see that
Stewardship has many facets and dimensions
That it is the root and the trunk
Of so many of the qualities which we seek
And which we need now more than ever.

Stewardship of the Heart

*...that you are personally interested
in developing it.*

Intermission

Pause with me now and consider the word
And the concept.
“Stewardship”
as I’m trying to know it, trying to teach it...
defies description – or is difficult,
because it evolves, expands, elevates.
It begins as an attitude, a mental approach,
An aware assessment of things as they are...
But as it mixes and mingles with the spirit of the Giver,
It becomes a feeling,
Deeper and sweeter than the mind,
Touching us, moving us,
Reaching in to heart, to soul.
It intertwines with guidance, with gratitude,
And creates the peaceful speed of going slow,
Expanding time,
Warming the colors and textures of the every-day,
Revealing unexpected, exquisite joy,
Sifting and softening the strong sunlight of self
So that it absorbs and accepts and assists others
Rather than reflecting off of them.

Stewardship is not so much
A part of life,
But a definition of it and a way of it.

His definition, His way.

This book tries to be a highlighter

And a guide into the process.

The thesis of this book is simple and startling. It is that in the perspective of eternal reality, human beings own nothing except the agency God has given them. Furthermore, the illusion of ownership, and particularly the pre-occupation with it, causes:

- Pride
- Envy
- Greed
- Frustration
- Win-lose competition
- Selfishness
- Stress
- Hoarding
- Vanity
- Manipulation
- Squandering
- Covetousness
- Conceit
- Over-confidence
- Condescension
- Fear
- Bitterness in tragedy
- A judgmental nature

Think about the cause and effect. Remove the notion of owning and each of these traits loses its very foundation. Or think of each of these negative and unhappy characteristics as branches and realize that the illusion of ownership is their *root*.

The simple and powerful truth is that God owns all. But to us, His children, He has given the use of, the responsibility for, the stewardship over things, talents, time, callings, physical bodies, and even over others of His children.

We need to understand stewardship, first, because it is reality, and any other paradigm or world-view is a deception; and, second, because thinking and living like stewards can rid us of the damning characteristics above and replace them with their opposites:

- Humility
- Empathy
- Generosity
- Fulfillment
- Win-win cooperation
- Selflessness
- Peace
- Sharing
- Modesty
- Respect
- Frugality
- Satisfaction

- Meekness
- Worshipful faith and awe
- Equality
- Courage
- Sweet acceptance of sorrow
- Tolerance

Each of these qualities are *effects* which can stem from the *cause* of an attitude of the heart called stewardship.

This is not merely
 A book on anti-materialism
 (although it includes that)
 material things (mis-named possessions) are just one category
 of what we don't own,
 but do have stewardship over.
 There are many other categories:
 (and their "ownership" is often harder to give up than possessions)
 abilities
 friends
 callings
 earth's beauty
 opportunities
 talents
 "our" children
 time
 spouse
 physical bodies
 trials
 tests
 loves.
 If we think we own
 Any of these
 Or have earned them or deserve them
 We're wrong,
 And we're *harmed* by the error.
 But
 He has given them to us!
 Yes,
 But they are gifts of
Stewardship
 Which can produce the opposite effects
 Of wrong, prideful ownership
 And
 Which is a step toward
 The right kind of ultimate eternal ownership.
 God

Wants us to have all that He has
And be
All that He is
Thus He gives all –
But wisely, gradually,
Through a sequence involving stewardship.
Ownership
(in its right and righteous form)
follows
sometimes here,
usually hereafter.
If,
For now
As stewards,
We learn to love them, build them,
Guide them, build them,
We will come to know their joy
And the joy of their Giver.

The Paradigm Perception
(based on truth)

*...written in isolation high in the
Rocky Mountains at the start of the
Last decade of the sixth millennium...*

A paradigm is a world-view, a perspective or a framework within or through which we view our world. One's paradigm is his reality – the way he thinks things are.

Every once in a while we gain a new insight or discover a new reality which changes or shifts our paradigm, and suddenly everything looks different to us. Consider the captain of a ship who sees on his radar another vessel which is directly in his path. He gets on his radio and requests that it change course. It answers back, “*You* change course.” Angered, the captain sends a more authoritative message, demanding that the other vessel move. “*You* move,” comes back the answer. Enraged, the captain asks for the identity of the insolent answerer. The reply totally changes the captain's paradigm.

“I am the lighthouse!”

paradigm shifts of an even more serious nature happen when people hear and accept the Gospel. Eternal truths about who we are and where we came from change how we see ourselves and how we view our lives. In turn. The way we *view* life changes how we live life – alters what we think is important, and motives us to reach higher and strive to be better.

Change a person's glasses and you may change his sight, thus improving the clarity with which he sees his surroundings, but add to a person's knowledge and you may change his *insight*, thus improving his clarity and understanding of himself and of his life.

Insight is a fascinating word because it implies an *inner* sight – our “real eyes” – something we view with our spiritual eyes – something deeper and more permanent than the surface – something that may change how we *live* as well as how we see.

There are at least fourteen insights, all of them gifts of the restoration, which can assist in shifting our prevailing paradigm from one of ownership to one of stewardship.

And *that* paradigm shift, as already promised, can make all the difference.

The Plan of Our Father and Our Elder Brother

I had just knelt with my precocious two-and-a-half-year-old daughter at her bedside for her evening prayer, trying to help her talk candidly and personally to God. As we finished, she looked up full into my face and, with a sparkle in her round, blue eyes, made a proud (and profound) declaration:

“I have two daddies!”

“Who?” I asked.

She answered without words but with a beaming smile and pointing finger which pointed first at me and then straight up in the air.

Then she went on, “And, I have another brother. A big, big, big, big brother named Jesus!”

I patted her on the head, told her that she was exactly right, and tucked her into bed.

It wasn't until later, lying in the silence of my own bed, that I thought about the fact that there was no deeper insight in the world, no more profound or important statement of truth, nor fact that could impact more on how we see or how we live.

The literal reality of God as our father and Christ as our eldest brother (and also as a father through the birth of our baptism) is the *root* of all that we understand about the purpose of this earth and of this life. Without this insight, religion itself is vague, symbolic, and even impersonal.

If you want to start an interesting discussion with a non-LDS Christian, ask him why he refers to God as Heavenly Father. The answer may be, “He created us, and thus is like our father,” or, “It is a title of ultimate respect,” or, “His love is like that of a great father.” Without a belief in a pre-existence (which no other Christian church holds) where we were born as spiritual offspring of God, calling Him Father is merely a metaphor.

What a wondrous insight to know that “Heavenly Father” is not merely a title, or a symbol of respect, but a simple, literal reality; and to know that Jesus, as the first born spirit, is our eldest brother as well as our Savior.

Primary children sing “I am a Child of God,” unaware that their words form the most profound truth of all. Knowing these relationships changes everything. Our respect for all men, all women, and all children (including our own) is enhanced because we see them as all brothers and sisters. Our tolerance expands, because we are aware that no matter how big our differences may be with others, they can never match our similarities. Our confidence expands as we accept our Godlike heredity, even as our humility deepens in acknowledgement of His perfection and our imperfection. We begin to see the earth and all of mortality not only as a gift, but as an inheritance.

And as if the relationship was not enough, we also are privileged to know the plan. How natural that a father would plan for his children, that a father, to the best of his ability, would provide a way, a means, a path for the happiness and well-being of his children. A father or perfect abilities would provide a perfect plan – as our Father has done – containing *agency* by which we can test ourselves, *atonement* by which we can overcome the sin and death that must

be part of our test, *families* through which we can assume the role of parents (previously a role and title only to God) *physical* bodies to experience physical beauty and develop discipline, and a world full of challenges, opportunities, surprises, gifts, and joys.

The best one-word title or description of this plan – in which a wise father entrusts his finest things to his children, allowing them to develop and prove themselves – is *stewardship*.

The Adversary's Alternative (Plan B)

We know the story, or part of it, through restored scripture. It is the story of ourselves, in our first estate, and the story of the great conflict where agency, atonement, and the glory of God was pitted against coercion, manipulation, and Lucifer's glory.

Lucifer, as we know, lost the battle but won the mis-guided allegiance of one-third of our spirit brothers and sisters. He did not lose graceful or with any reconciliation but with vows of eternal opposition, thus becoming the adversary that the Father's plan required.

With his departure, the scriptural story ends, but the story only begins of his demonic and unceasing struggle to win us to him and take us from God.

How does Satan go about his sworn objective to take us from God and to control the world God has made? Yes, he tempts us and tries to run us from the light and cause us to break the Lord's commandments. But how does he go about his? What is his strategy or game plan?

We know something of Satan's nature. It is unwise to dwell on him or become too aware of him (C.S. Lewis said, "There are two grace mistakes we can make with regard to the devil – one is to think too much about him, the other is not to think enough about him"), but it is always helpful (and healthy) to know an opponent's strategy well enough to fight or avoid it effectively.

When Satan's "plan A" (coercion and force) failed, he adopted "plan B." Here are hints of plan B in scripture. "I will buy them up," he says, "with gold and silver." He says that if we do not care for what we have been given he will take it away.

Plan A was to keep us from having agency. Plan B is to use our agency against us. In a way, the plans are not too different. Satan's goal has always been to enslave us. First he tried to do so by taking our agency. Now he tries to do so by *using* our agency, in its most selfish forms, to orient us to *getting* and *keeping* and *hoarding* and *having* – all of which enslave us.

Satan's plans are always *counter* to God's. He tried to counter God's plan of agency with force. Now he tries to counter God's plan of selfless *stewardship* with selfish *ownership*. Where a stewardship mentality can build pride and enslave.

How well is Satan's plan B working? Looking around! People spending more than they earn – and spending it before they earn it; judging themselves and others on how much they have; becoming jealous and envious of each other based on relative possessions. Bumper stickers say, "he who dies with the most toys wins" or "I owe, I own, so off to work I go." A pretentiousness reigns in which we spend more than we can afford for houses bigger than we need, or for cars and clothes designed to impress.

Satan's plan B of ownership involves counterfeit connections between *things* and *joy*. The connections don't work. All that ownership provides is pride, worry and selfish "protectiveness," and dangerous feelings of independence from God.

Case studies of the effects of plan B abound in The Book of Mormon. Riches and perceived ownership repeatedly led to pride which led to apostasy and wickedness. Only a couple of times was the cycle broken – and then only by unselfishness and attitudes of stewardship.

Now, as then, the defense against plan B and the antidote to Satan's poison of pride is the acknowledgment of God's ownership of all, and the joyful acceptance of our favored role as children, stewards, and heirs!

All Things are Mine Saith the Lord

I was driving with my oldest daughter from Jackson Hole to Salt Lake City – precious one-on-one time, enjoying her company, her strong, individual opinions, her experiences from her just completed freshman year at Wellesley College in Boston.

This book, halfway written, was a major topic – partly because Saren had become my best editor and my best critic. I jumped to the heart of the topic too quickly, and she balked.

I said the bottom line of my book was that God owned all and we owned nothing. All we have, from possessions to talents, are His and as they had been given, so they couldn't be taken away.

She wasn't ready to go that far. She said, "The earth is His, but we are not His. We are co-eternal with Him. There is something of us that has always been and thus that is ours. Talents are part of what we are. We've better off thinking of talents and fits as ours, but giving them to God and using them for His purpose.

We learned a lot from each other that day, and from the Spirit, and it was more brother-sister than father-daughter. We decided that all of God's stewardships were real gifts that could become ours forever but that, in the dynamics of His plan, the stewardship either grew as they were invested and developed or diminished as they were buried.

As we drove and talked, we listed related insights:

1. In one way, God owns *us* as well as all things. In fact, His ownership is *doubled* where we are concerned. We are the Father's because we are His children. We are Christ's because He purchased us with His blood.
2. One way of realizing that we own nothing is to acknowledge that there is nothing over which we have ultimate control or which we can never lose or have taken from us. Talents and gifts, like callings or Priesthood, like possessions and like children, are given to us to use and develop, but can be forfeited (and perhaps, in God's perfect economy, given to others) through ill use. Satan, for example, no longer has some gifts and talents that once were his stewardship.
3. It could be well argued that we own our bodies. We will lose them at death, but we will all reclaim them in the resurrection. Christ's atonement assures that. Still, since we will lose our bodies for a time, and since their *nature* and glory when we take them again depends on our righteousness, it behooves us to think of them in their present form as a stewardship.
4. The more complete exception is our agency. This we *own*. This we can never lose or have taken from us. This one thing is given not as a stewardship but as an outright, absolute gift. Since it is the one thing we own, it is the one thing we can give God.
5. Religion, without his sense or insight of stewardship, may not *work* in the lives of men. This is why, in many "religious" people through the ages and in many "active and faithful" Church members today, there is greed, selfishness, and materialism.
6. There are four levels on which people can live, depending on their paradigms. The highest level, level 4, is stewardship:

Level 1. “The world owes me a living.”

Level 2. “I own, you own. I deserve what I’ve got, and you deserve what you’ve got.”

Level 3. “Where much is given, much is required. I’ve been given much, so I must give.”

Level 4. All is God’s. Through my stewardships I can assist Him in His purposes.

Noble and high as the third level is, it does not “plug in” to God’s power as level 4 does.

On level 3 we might seek guidance by asking “What would Jesus do if this were His?” On level 4 we would ask, “What would Jesus have me do with this since it *is* His?”

Once again the bottom line of the insight is stewardship. All are His and we are His. “All things are mine, saith the Lord.”

Owning, Renting or Stewardship

Anyone who has ever had rental property knows the disinclination of most renters to take good care of anything. Absentee landlordship is the worst of all. You optimistically assume all is well with your property and your renters only find that nothing is well.

My best (worst) example of this is a little rental home we had in Salt Lake City. We were living elsewhere and one month the rent check (which usually came late) didn’t come at all. I called an acquaintance who lived nearby and asked her to check it out. This acquaintance is an interesting woman, extremely blunt and candid. When she called back, she gave her report in two three-word sentences. “They are gone.” “They trashed it.”

Indeed they were, and indeed they had. Everything had to be replaced – the carpet, the doors, the appliances, the fixtures, even several of the walls.

Two other rental experiences by way of contrast. First, a home we owned in Virginia. We lived nearby so we watched it and were concerned that the renters weren’t taking very good care of it. Then they offered to buy and we accepted their offer. We still drove by occasionally and noticed the incredible difference. Their sloppiness had become fastidiousness. Every blade of grass was trimmed, every broken shingle replaced.

The only better-cared-for home I’ve seen was one we leased to some people with an option to buy. They wanted the house really badly and intended to exercise their option as soon as they could afford it, so they took immaculate care of everything even though it was not yet theirs.

We generally care for things better when we own them than when they belong to someone else. But there is a third level – a higher level with a motivation for care that is much higher than ownership. Imagine that you had been given the use of something incredibly precious by someone for whom you had ultimate respect and admiration. You were told to care for it well, but to use it – even develop it and improve it. You were also told of the possibility that it could someday become yours.

Whereas *ownership* could become routine – you could tire of what you had, perhaps set it aside, lose interest in it, or take it for granted, a *stewardship*, bestowed by a great owner, would challenge you and stimulate you and prompt you not only to do your own best but to seek advice and guidance from the owner. Ownership might evolve into laziness. Stewardship under a watchful and much loved master never could.

Stewardship must never become a let-up or a cop-out, or a give-up – if so, it becomes rentership, which is lower than ownership. We must remember who the owner is and how high His standards and expectations are.

One of the most striking ways in which LDS theology differs from Catholic or Protestant Christianity is in the prototypical descriptions of heaven. They say “eternal rest”; we say toward rest. If we own enough, we can settle back and quit working. Stewardship leads in the opposite direction. As entrustment increases, the progress and challenge of stewardship grows and expands.

And not only does our challenge expand, our need for guidance grows, deepening our humility, and we come to love and depend on the spirit, and to cherish Christ’s offer to “cast our burdens on Him.”

An Antidote for Pride

I had been working hard on the manuscript for this book, thinking and writing stewardship 16 hours a day. I was trying, at that point, to describe the attitude of prideful ownership as the basic opposite of the attitude of stewardship. But it was general conference weekend, and I set the book aside. I looked forward to listening and thinking.

The opening session began, and I was disappointed when it was announced that President Benson’s ill health would not allow him to give his opening address. He had written his talk, however, and it would be read by President Hinckley.

Then followed the most remarkable and timely and personally relevant message I had ever heard.

“Pride,” said President Benson, “is the great stumbling block to Zion, and we are warned that the proud shall burn as stubble.” Then with a wonderful directness and economy of words, he said that pride:

- is ugly, saying “if you succeed, I am a failure.”
- Keeps us from learning new things, since doing so sometimes requires us to admit that we were wrong.
- Prevents unity and thus keeps us from God who says, “If ye are not the one ye are not mine.”
- Is the seed that brings the fruit of secret combinations.
- Is sometimes the rich and successful looking down on those with less.
- But is more often those who have done less, resenting and criticizing and being jealous of those who have more.
- Centers in competitiveness and *enmity* which pulls us apart and divides us from others.
- Kept the church from establishing Zion in the day of Joseph Smith.

President Benson then warned that “God will have a bumble people; we can choose to be humble or we can be compelled to be humble.” He suggested ways that we could move away from enmity and pride and toward humility: give selfless service, forgive others, serve missions, attend the temple, confess and forsake sins, become as a child, love God, and submit our wills to Him.

The talk came as a strong confirmation to me of the things I was trying to write. I took my pen and wrote the following words:

“Pride, in all the forms that President Benson mentioned, stems from the false concept of ownership. Thinking we own things breeds enmity because if someone else owns it, we can’t; and if we win, someone else loses. With stewardship, we appreciate others’ gifts as much as our own; we are increasingly humble as more is entrusted to us, more inclined to use what we have in His service; and the only pride we feel is pride in our Lord, which manifests itself in the form of praise and worship.”

If the “what” is to eliminate pride and to develop humility, then the “how” is an attitude of stewardship.

Definitions and Roots

I sat at dinner with a friend, talking about stewardship and about an early draft of this book, which he had read.

“We have a lot of wrong ideas about stewardship,” he said. “Even in its economic sense, in the early days of the Church and in the United Order experiments, the idea was not to have all things in common or to have exactly equal or similar stewardships. People were given what they could handle, and the goal was the common good.”

My friend had some expertise in semantics and etymology. We talked about how words sometimes evolve outside their original meaning. The English “Commonwealth,” for example, is often taken to mean the common wealth – or things owned in common. The original word, however, was “common weal” which meant for the common good – things which could be used by all and not be diminished.

Stewardship is not intended by God to make everyone poorer, but to make everyone richer, to wisely transfer all that He has to His children, His heirs.

The root *stig*, which means “upward reaching,” to strive, to try, evolved into *stew*.

The root *ware* means to watch out for, as in “beware.” This evolved into the root *ward*. A ward of the court in England is an *heir* who is watched over until he is old enough to take over on his own.

Steward: One who watches over that to which he is heir, while reaching upward, acknowledging its source, remembering its Giver, striving to handle it as He would, use it as He would, give it as He would.

An acceptor of true stewardship tries to build, to strengthen, to multiply. He does not take pride or abdicate or give up, but neither does he wish for less. A steward over property does not count it as power or superiority, but neither does he give it up by a vow of poverty. A steward over sexual desire and powers of procreation does not squander or use them lightly, but neither does he try to ride himself of them by a vow of celibacy.

Ownership vs. Stewardship

Charting contrasting effects

True principles have a way of expanding and becoming more luminous in our minds the longer we hold them there. Line grows on line and precept on precept. Soon the principle begins to affect how we see and feel, how we act and react.

Thinking about the principle of stewardship over the past several months has established a sort of conceptual matrix in my mind – so that nearly everything in life can be perceived in two opposite ways – as ownership or as stewardship. The difference is astounding, like seeing a negative and a positive of the same subject.

The bottom line is that the ownership paradigm reminds us constantly of self; the stewardship paradigm reminds us constantly of God.

Consider the matrix that follows. Its left axis are some categories of things that many believe (and act as though) they own...but that are accurately (and righteously) perceived as stewardships.

	Ownership	Stewardship
material possessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ pride, covetousness ■ greed ■ hoard and protect ■ wastefulness (squander) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ humility ■ satisfaction ■ share, use and enjoy ■ frugality
goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ eternal rest (earned it!) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ eternal progress
talents, abilities, gifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ selfishness ■ conceit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ selflessness ■ meekness
callings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ over-worry ■ over-analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ guidance ■ “cast burdens”
time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ hoard it ■ protect it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ use it ■ give it
bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ vanity ■ mine, to abuse ■ appetites and passions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ modesty ■ God’s, to care for ■ temple of spirit
friends, associates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ manipulation ■ envy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ respect ■ empathy
beauty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ignore it ■ exploit it ■ try to buy it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ appreciate it ■ care for it ■ preserve it
children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ make them what we want ■ extensions of our egos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ help them become what God made them ■ extensions of God’s glory
spouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ push, demand ■ expect support ■ liaison of convenience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ build, sponsor ■ outgive ■ oneness
trials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ bitterness ■ despair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ acceptance ■ hope
own salvation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ earn it ■ deserve it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ work for it ■ accept it
strangers, new acquaintances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ judgment, prejudice ■ enmity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ tolerance, acceptance ■ cooperation
opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ self-confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ faith

Stewardship of Joy

We lived in a ward once where the bishop was a relatively uneducated but a very wise and practical man. Professionally, he was a plumber, there was often dirt under his fingernails, and to those who were proud of judgmental, he did not make a great first impression.

Also in the ward there happened to be a highly trained and very expensive clinical psychiatric analyst. Certain ward members were going to this psychiatrist, seeking help with personal problems, particularly with depression. Some of them were also going to their bishop for counsel.

Many noticed that the plumber-bishop seemed to be rendering more help and having more effect than the expensive analyst. One person who noticed this was the analyst.

With some frustration, he went to the bishop one day and asked, "How do you do it, what technique do you use?" The humble bishop gave a simple answer. "I just keep asking and listening until I find out what commandment they are breaking – and then I tell them to stop."

Joy is the result of righteousness. And joy (not happiness or pleasure) is also the *measurement* of how well and how faithfully we are living. The Egyptian God Osiris is said to ask only two questions to those who pass on: "Did you find joy?" and "Did you give joy?" An ancient rabbinical saying indicates that God asks those who die to give an accounting of "the things He made for them that they refused to enjoy."

What keeps us from enjoying God's gifts is the mistaken impression that we have *earned* them or that we *own* them. This notion encourages hoarding, over-protection and worry, and wipes away the gratitude and appreciative use of things that bring us joy.

Lehi tells Nephi (and us) that Adam fell that men might have joy. So whether the Osiris story and the rabbinical saying are valid or not, it does seem clear that what will be asked for on the other side is not a resume or an accounting of worldly wealth or accomplishment, but a reporting on the joy we obtained and passed on from our stewardships.

Satan has contrived and concocted a great collection of false *connections* ... connections between worldly things and joy, connections of the material with the beautiful, of outer circumstances with inner happiness. He has conned and confused many of *us* into connecting pretentious materialism with success and respect, and into thinking that we can win respect and peace through bigger homes, newer boats, more expensive cars. Some feel that the pattern of pretension seems to grow from east to west. In New England (and more so in England and Europe) the exhibition of wealth is usually rather passé. Discreet people of means may spend money on fine art or education, but not on lavish, highly visible, public displays of wealth like ostentatious homes or expensive "toys." The tendencies seem to move toward the reverse attitude as we move west, with pretentiousness peaking somewhere near California.

Some people seem to have the *capacity* for deep, welling joy – the ability to be profoundly and emotionally *moved* by beauty, or by love, or by excellence and courage. These capacities are often muted and muffled by materialism.

"Seek not to be cumbered," say the scriptures. When we are cumbered and heavy with the pride and weight of "too much," it is hard to be *moved* or to find room or time for simple joy. It is easy to be *moved* if we are *light*. The accomplishments and excellence of others can move us if we are not jealous, and the simple beauties can move us if we see them as the great gifts they are.

The relationship between joy and stewardship is a direct and powerful one. Joy is the objective and stewardship is the vehicle. Joy is the goal and stewardship is the plan. Joy is the *what* and stewardship is the *how*.

Stewardship and Serendipity

For many years, I have been giving a lecture called Serendipity to corporate and business groups. I was in the process of writing the companion volume to this book, called Serendipity of the Spirit, and had defined the word as “a state of mind whereby a person is sensitive and aware enough to find something good while seeking something else.” The message of the book is that one can be structured and spontaneous, disciplined and flexible – if we can develop a serendipity attitude.

One night, I found myself in a rural setting, giving my serendipity seminar to a group that consisted mostly of farmers. I sensed as I spoke that this group either didn’t “get it” or else they needed it less than the groups I was used to.

A farmer came up afterward and convinced me that it was the latter. “I enjoyed your speech,” he said, “and I hadn’t ever heard the word ‘serendipity’ before. But you know, farmers are sort of naturally that way – we have to be.” He explained that, as a farmer, he had plans of what he would like to do in a certain day, but the weather and natural conditions forced flexibility and observing them often caused him to shift his attention to a more pressing need or a more “do-able” project. “You can’t just act on a farm,” he said, “You’ve got to learn to react as well.”

I had also mentioned stewardship in the lecture and he had a quick comment there, too. “Farmers mostly know they are stewards,” he said. “Anyone who really thinks about it knows that the land is God’s, as is the water and the wind. It’s our land just to use and to care for.”

I drove home that night thinking that I now better understood Brigham Young’s advice to stay close to the soil and his warning that professions more than one step removed from the farm were spiritually dangerous.

I also left with a better understanding of the *connections* between my two favorite words. *Stewardship* and *serendipity*, two eleven-letter S words that symbolize the two attitudes I want most to live by. The words are *linked* in many ways. Serendipity requires spiritual awareness and guidance from the Spirit (that we might see what God wants us to do and what unexpected ways He has prepared for us – even as we are pursuing some other worthwhile goal). This same *guidance* also lies in the heart of stewardship where we acknowledge that we must be guided by the *owner* if we are to be good stewards over *His* things.

The acknowledgment of our status as stewards causes us to seek the very guidance that brings about spiritual serendipity or the awareness of what God wants us to do. And the consistent pursuit of guidance and of awareness of the serendipitous directions God may have in mind for us is the best way to become worthy and effective stewards.

As our stewardships increase and expand, so does our *need* for spiritual serendipity. If our assignments, or entrustments, or callings are very basic (like simple times tables in a math class), that perhaps we can do them or care for them in a rather routine, self-reliant way. but we want to get beyond “basic arithmetic” into higher and freer forms, and the greater our stewardships, become the more we need spiritual serendipity or an open, sensitive attitude in which the Spirit can show us purer, stronger, more creative ways to multiply and magnify what we have been entrusted with.

Try to imagine how the Lord might view one of us as we sat down to set our goals and make our plans. Perhaps He would smile as He observed. Part of His smile might be His

approval of our efforts to decide what we want to do and what we want to contribute. And part of His smile might be His amusement in how little we know of what is in store for us and therefore how incomplete our plans usually are.

If we seek to know and understand the stewardships we have been given, and if we seek to have the constant, serendipity-like guidance of the Spirit in magnifying those stewardships – then perhaps His smile will also reflect His pleasure in our faithfulness.

Stewardship and Leadership

I have a friend who loves to talk about ideas. He and Richard Rosine (who has passed on and to whom this book is dedicated), are the only people I have ever known who have no interest in talking about people (they would call that gossip) and no interest in talking about the weather or everyday events (they would call that small talk). It's not that they are uninterested in people, and they love the weather – it's just that ideas are what they like to talk about.

Anyway, I love to take long drives with this friend of mine because the time is filled with the exploration of ideas. One day, on the way back from a trip, he said, "Why do you think that the meek will inherit the earth?" For the next several hours we worked on the question. Certainly leadership would be required to run the earth. Is meekness a quality of leadership? That is certainly not the usual context. We identify leadership with assertiveness and aggressiveness. Aren't these opposites of meekness? Wouldn't the earth be inherited by those who had demonstrated leadership that included wisdom, intelligence, compassion, vision, courage, discipline, and love?

Yes, we decided, leadership included all of these, but great and trusted leadership included one thing more – one capstone quality that made all the other qualities work better and that allowed others to trust the leader enough to give him leadership over them, to entrust their destiny to him. This final, great quality, we decided, was meekness – defined as a humble dependency on God that would rely on the Spirit and thus avoid any unrighteous dominion or prideful dominance.

This kind of meekness is an attitude of stewardship. A leader who sees himself as a *steward* over those he leads will lead with gentleness, persuasion, and long-suffering. He will follow the leadership formula of the 121st section of the Doctrine and Covenants. He will acknowledge that God is the true leader and, as a steward, will try to do what God would do and care in the way God cares. Such a leader is the type that others will want to be led by, that others will entrust leadership to, and thus that will inherit the earth.

In the leadership sense, stewardship is like "shepherd-ship." The shepherd, Christ's most common leader metaphor, *led* his sheep rather than herding them, and cared for them as individuals rather than as a flock.

The attitude of stewardship is not the only quality of leadership, but it is the capstone quality – it is the factor that can help us to lead with the guidance of the true leader and that causes those we lead to trust our motives and to want to give us their support.

Most importantly, stewardship is the fundamental requirement for spiritual and Priesthood leadership simply because all such leadership is God given and we know that he Lord increases and expands the leadership and responsibility of "good and faithful servants."

Stewardship and Balance

*When Linda and I wrote our nationally published self-help book *Lifebalance* (Ballantine, Random House), we hoped it would be a manual and a guide for people who wanted techniques and methods for better balancing work, family, and personal needs.*

To some extent, it has been so. But we've realized something. It's not mental methods or temporal techniques that get people balanced. The desire to be balanced, to prioritize the things of eternal importance, doesn't come from the mind. It must come from the spirit and from the heart.

If our hearts are turned to our children, to service, to true acceptance and honoring of stewardships from God, *then* we will remove the materialism and much of the selfishness in life, replacing them with a spiritual balance.

So, as it turns out, I wrote the books in the wrong order. *Stewardship of the Heart* and *Serendipity of the Spirit* are the attitudes that bring the guidance of the Spirit into our hearts and that give us the desire to balance our lives according to the Lord's pattern. *Lifebalance* should have been (and perhaps still can be) a follow-up.

With this in mind, we can look at a chart (see below) that tries to relate and connect these "favorite words."

Connections Between Stewardship, Serendipity, Joy, Leadership, and Balance

I've already revealed that joy, serendipity, and stewardship are my favorite words. Let me attempt, at this point, to chart some connections between these three word-concepts and some bridges that connect them and the two qualities perhaps needed most by the world in the closing years of the 20th century – leadership and balance.

The chart is not a "quick study." But with some pondering, and with the notes of explanation that follow, it can review the process by which great attitudes become great capacities.

[CHART – page 119]

Notes on the chart:

Both *Serendipity of the Spirit* and *Stewardship of the Heart* begin with and develop from a relationship with God. The Spirit's serendipitous awareness "draws down" nudges, impression, and divine insights and returns awe and calm, profound worship. Acceptance of oneself as a steward generates gratitude and peaceful acknowledgement of God's hand in all things and derives guidance, gifts, and stewardship responsibilities.

Both the "receiving" and the "returning" produce joy.

The heightened awareness of a serendipity attitude opens one to opportunities and creative possibilities that others miss and allows him to see both the adventure in life and the broader view that gives him vision.

Through stewardship we see both how close we are to God as His children and yet how far our imperfection is from His perfection. Thus, confidence and humility have the same source

(an understanding of our relationship with God) and generate the kind of meekness that allows others to entrust themselves to us.

The vision of serendipity and the meekness of stewardship are two of the rare yet indispensable qualities that are involved in true leadership.

Also, from the open-minded awareness of serendipity comes sagacity and sensitivity which allows one to be flexible and to balance the structured, task-and-list oriented left brain with the spontaneous and creative impulses of the right brain.

At the same time, the correct and clear priorities and values of stewardship prompt and balance of our time and energy among the eternally important aspects of life.

Through Serendipity we:	Through Stewardship we:
SEE LIFE AS	
<i>Adventure:</i>	<i>Giving and Receiving:</i>
We welcome questions, surprises, interruptions, needs, opportunities, and ideas as adventures. We learn to find them when and where no-one else does. We look for them with physical and spiritual senses, believing that each surprise comes from God who knows us better than we do. We let each instance of spontaneity and flexibility bring joy.	We receive all, knowing that every good thing is a stewardship from God. We give when we see needs and give care to our entrustments. We find joy in each moment of receiving and of giving. We become good at letting go and letting in, and at forgiving and repenting (two things that are virtually unlearnable except on this earth).
SEE SELF AS	
<i>Receiver</i>	<i>Ultimate-potential nothingness</i>
Of beauty, experience, guidance, surprise, insight, hidden treasure.	Grateful for guidance, natural inclination to be generous.
SEE GOD AS	
<i>Loving Father</i>	<i>Great Master</i>
Giver of nudges, impressions, inspiration, and guidance	Who we serve, and in serving, love, and in loving, know

Provident Living

“We need a new car, Dad.”

“Why?”

“Because this one has dents and paint chips and the air conditioning doesn’t work.”

I found it interesting that my ten-year-old didn’t entertain the possibility of fixing or repairing the old car.

Partly as a lesson to him, I fixed it, had it repainted an exciting new color, tuned, repaired, and showed him that it cost less than a tenth of the cost of a new car.

That time (it’s certainly not always this way with kids) the payoff was almost immediate.

The next day my son said, “Dad, you know that \$200 I had saved up toward a new bike?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I’m spending \$50 to fix up my old one. It will be better than new because I’m getting forged pedals, and I’m putting the other \$150 in my savings account.”

We live in a throw away society. Our children, if we're not careful, being to think that all things, including themselves, are disposable.

The word *provident* and the phrase "provident living" imply frugality but not miserliness, neatness but not perfectionism, preservation but not hoarding, self-reliance but not selfishness.

Most of all, provident living implies *guidance*. The root word is providence, meaning "of God." It implies a worshipful, grateful, God-acknowledging approach to life. Provident living involves caring for the stewardships God has given us and seeking guidance in their care, their use, and their giving.

Provident living is a combination of self-reliance and God reliance. We accept responsibility and stewardship, but we seek God's help. the kind of self-reliance we try to develop is the kind Marion G. Romney spoke of when he said, "The reason we must become self-reliant is so that we can serve. The reason we must serve is that service brings satisfaction." (Melchizedek Priesthood Manual 1989, Lesson 24.)

We are not told not to have things

(that is asceticism)

We are not told not to enjoy things

(that is Calvinism)

We are told not to set our hearts on things or value them as ours

(that is stewardship, and provident living is one of its insights)

Being In the World But Not of the World

I was a small boy, newly acquainted with tests and examinations in school, newly impressed with their gravity and seriousness. That was my position in the world when I first heard the Sunday School answer to the question, "Why are we here on this earth?"

As a test.

To me, as I suspect to so many others, that was a rather ominous answer. A test was something to be feared, something where someone checked to see if you could avoid mistakes and get everything right. God, then, wanted to test us and grade us so he made a place with a lot of hard questions and tough obstacles.

It took me many years to realize that this was a different kind of test, better named a gift of love and joy and endless possibility. If there is a test, it is to prove ourselves to ourselves, and to see how much of the joy we can find.

The "test mentality" leads some into thinking of the world only as an obstacle course, as evil-to-be-avoided, danger-to-beware-of. It is this defensive orientation that makes many try to escape the world...from monks who isolate themselves and try to cut off the physical world through vows of celibacy (misnamed vows of chastity) and vows of poverty...to everyday people who think the world is out to get them and who try in various ways to hide from it.

It is people of this type who misinterpret the marvelous and positive couplet, "be in the world but not of the world." They take it as support for their view that the world is a bad and dangerous place to be feared and avoided.

Instead, we should think of the phrase as two separate and positive admonitions. “Be in the world” – be involved, partake and enjoy. “Be not of the world”—avoid the materialism and worldliness that can destroy the joy.

Thus interpreted, there is such *power* and *balance* in this little saying. Like a teeter-totter with righteous weight on each end, it can keep our lives in harmony and balance. On the one hand we’re advised to be in the world – to love and appreciate God’s incredible gifts, to care for all that we’ve been given stewardship over. On the other hand, we’re asked to rise above the misuse of mortal gifts that exist in a place made dangerous by the mixture of our agency and Satan’s tempting. The couplet suggests an offense and a defense, a concentration on both doing good and avoiding evil, a challenge to seek the light side and shun the dark side. But above all, it is an invitation to put a positive interpretation on mortality, to live and to love as faithful, joyful stewards.

In But Not Of

“Worldly”

“Sensuous”

“Temporal,” “Physical,” “Materialistic,” “Earthly.”

Words we use to describe what we hope we’re not.

Yet,

We “voted” for the temporal plan

And should shout for joy at the prospect of

a physical, material earth,

a world of senses and sensation.

We knew it would be a laboratory of learning,

Of expansion and expression,

Of freedom and faith.

Sad then,

If we hate the world, or hide from it;

If we fear passion or shut out what we came here to know.

Our “physicalness,” like

A horse’s power (capable of hurting us or running away with us)

Can be feared and killed

Or bridled and enjoyed.

A vow of poverty like

A vow of celibacy

Is an attempt to kill passion, to escape the world,

To abdicate stewardship.

“Be in the world but not of it”

should be read not as

“You have to be so try not to be”

but as two separate, joyful admonitions.

To make it so, we must remember that the world
Is not our master or our identity...but our gift,
That we are spiritual beings entering, experiencing, enjoying
A physical extension of ourselves.

We must bridle, we must use with discipline – like disciples,
And most of all, we must remember
Who it all belongs to.
Remembering this, and understanding and loving
Our role as stewards,
Makes it impossible to be “of the world”
And equally impossible not to find the joy of being “in it.”

The Hope:

That you now share a
belief in the accuracy and the
validity of stewardship and grasp
its central position and key role
in Heavenly Father’s plan for the
joy and progress of His children.

*Stewardship of the Heart
...that you understand it.*

The Treasure Map

*(based on limited travel and
partial experience)*

*...written while still on the search
but closer to the destination...*

There is an old legend that insists pirates needed only *general* maps to locate booty that they or other pirates had buried years before. It is claimed that they had a type of sixth sense and that, once they were close, they could find the exact spot by smell, or intuition, or instinct.

So it is with stewardship of the heart. The attitude, the feeling, the perspective and paradigm of stewardship cannot be located by some precise and detailed road map, or created by some do-it-yourself recipe of measured ingredients. But if it is understood and desired there are steps that can be taken that bring us into its vicinity, and from there, our own true sixth sense (the Spirit’s influence on our spirit) can guide us to the exact spot and we can *have* the treasure.

The full attitude and spirit, the full stewardship of the heart is a gift and can never be independently found, discovered, or earned, but there are commitments and covenants that can be made, habits, and patterns that can be developed, and adjustments in thinking and perspective that can be adopted...all of which *put us in the vicinity* of stewardship and which make us prepared and ready to receive the gift.

The Start: Nothingness

As with any race, any hurt, any journey, the start is crucial. Without a good start, races are seldom won, searches rarely succeed.

The start in the search for stewardship must be the realization and the clear understanding of the nothingness of man the “everything-ness” of God.

I had read this scripture many times – in fact, I had memorized much of it and used it in talks. King Benjamin, speaking from his tower, said in Mosiah 4: “Ye shall grow in the knowledge of him that created you...ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but live peaceably...ye shall not suffer your children to go hungry...or transgress the laws of God and fight and quarrel...ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth...to love one another and to serve one another...and ye yourselves will succor those who stand in need.”

A wonderful, practical set of admonitions, I had thought. A list of suggestions, or even commandments for how we should think and live.

But at this moment, I was reading it carefully and in context, and realizing with some shock that this was not a list of admonitions, but a list of promises. Clearly it was so.

All of King Benjamin’s promises, from verse 12 through verse 16, are based on one set of admonitions in verse 11:

“Remember, and always retain in your remembrance, the greatness of God and your own *nothingness*...humble yourselves...calling on the name of the Lord daily and standing steadfastly in the faith.”

Verse 12 then begins: “And behold, I say unto you that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God and retain a remission of your sins, and ye shall grow in knowledge...” Everything on the list that follows, the list I had thought was admonitions, is a *promise*, a promise of something that will be ours if we are humble and grateful, faithful, prayerful, and if we *remember our own nothingness*.

We know that we are God’s children and His heirs, but we must joyfully acknowledge the current reality of our dependence on Him. It is the stewardship attitude of “retaining in our remembrance the greatness of God and our own nothingness” that gives us the humble mind-set in which we have no inclination to injure others, in which we give service and succor, and in which we train children in gentleness, love, and service.

The crucial beginning point in our search for stewardship is the simple acceptance of God’s greatness and our relative nothingness. We are potentially *everything* through Him and through being His children, but of ourselves we are nothing. Such a realization develops attitudes of humility, of awe, and of worship.

C.S. Lewis said, “Beware of a professed Christian who possesses insufficient awe of Christ.”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell said, “The more we ponder where we stand in relationship to Jesus Christ, the more we realize that we do not stand at all, we only kneel!”

Nephi, in 2 Nephi 31:19, indicates that we should “rely *wholly* upon the merits of Him who is mighty to save (Christ).”

And the Lord himself, in Doctrine and Covenants 59, tells us that we “offend God” when we fail to “acknowledge His hand in all things.”

The simple acknowledgement that we are nothing without the Lord and His spirit, and that we have nothing except what He has entrusted to us, is the beginning – the indispensable starting point in the search for the joyful and powerful attitude called stewardship of the heart!

The Prerequisite Commitment: Consecration

Many in the Church have made the personal and spiritual commitment of *consecration*. We *want* to turn over all we have to the Lord.

But what does our commitment mean? Does it mean we'll give up everything when the Church asks us for it? Does it mean we'll pay tithing and fast offering now as a sort of token of our willingness to give up everything later? Or does it mean we *have* given up everything *now* – no longer valuing what is not ours, and thinking of our selves only as stewards?

There is nothing “future tense” in the commitment and covenant we make. We do it *no*, and we do it always. And in the context of stewardship, this should not be difficult. Consecrating everything to God is simply acknowledging that it is all His anyway, acknowledging as Alma did that “whatsoever is good cometh from God.” (Alma 5:40)

But to get on our way in the search for stewardship of the heart, this covenant must be deep and real within us.

The Lord does not want us to give up the use and management of what we have. He just wants us to give up the notion of owning things. The scriptures do not warn against appreciating or using what we have, just against valuing them, against setting our hearts on them, against thinking they belong to us.

Our challenge is not to take monklike vows of poverty and get rid of everything we have. Rather, our challenge is to care for and magnify everything the Lord has given us and to use it for His purposes according to His will. Often this will mean the sharing and giving of portions to others.

When the Lord asks us to consecrate all we have to Him, His statement is, like *all* of His commandments, for *our* good, our growth, our happiness. God's commandments are not mandates from a dictator, but *loving counsel from a wise father*. He knows that stewardship is the *happiest* as well as the most accurate and appropriate way to live. The commitment He asks is an investment in our own joy!

The Search: Finding the Key Landmarks on the Map's Route

When something is lost, or its whereabouts unknown, there are two alternative ways to search.

One is to run around frantically, turning everything upside down in hopes of chancing on to it.

The second way is to sit and think; to reason and contemplate where something is and how to get it; to pray and feel and try to sense answers that are beyond our own range.

First there must be a total commitment to the principle, a covenant that releases us from ownership and binds us to stewardship.

Thought and prayer then reveal three keys, three landmarks in our search, three kinds of effort which are not only requisites to the stewardship attitude but *elements* of the attitude.

Let's introduce the identity of the three keys through a poem:

The Search:

I've never cared for poetry that rhymes.
It underplays freedom, overplays structure.
But occasional sets of rhyming words are all right
If they serve a purpose, make a point, peg our memories.
And,
It so happens that the three keys to stewardship's pursuit
Rhyme.
It's fortunate that there are only three keys.
Three can be remembered, retained, related to the
Day-to-day
Especially when they rhyme.
You might come up with the triad yourself
If you asked yourself the questions:
What three elements does stewardship include?
What are three prerequisites to the attitude?
What are three things that good stewards always do?
What three qualities combine to create stewardship?
What are three basic soul-patterns or practices
Which, when constant and consistent,
Cultivate stewardship?
Prayer.
Share.
Care.
Stewardship requires awareness of the Owner
And thanksgiving to Him, and stewardship operates by
Communication between master and steward
Called *prayer*.
True stewards use their entrustments to benefit others
Called *share*
And stewardships grow as they are nurtured,
exercised, expanded, developed under the
Master's direction...
Called *care*.
There
I tried to like the rhyme
But I still think I like freer verse, freer words
Maybe assonance or alliteration, but no rhyme.
Let's try again.
The three keys are,
The three answers to the earlier question are,
The three pursuits of our treasure hunt are,
Gratitude,
Generosity, and
Guidance/

Of course
Gratitude can be prayer,
Generosity can be share,
Guidance can be care.
But they give us another look, less cute, more functional.
Gratitude: appreciation for all, acknowledgment to
Him in all.
Generosity: willingness to use all for
Him and for His.
Guidance: His guidance of you, your guidance of what
He's given.
Gratitude, generosity, and guidance and the fruits of
Stewardship's tree.
But they also contain the seeds!

So,
Those of us who lack the tree
Must plant, nurture, and grow the seeds.
To grow them well we must understand them well.
The following discussions of the three fruits,
The three seeds, the three *keys*,
Will help.

Key One: Gratitude and Acknowledgment

I mentioned earlier the night when my two-year-old finished her sweet and spontaneous prayer and then she looked up at me and said, "I have *two* daddies," pointing at me with one hand and straight up with the other.

Orson Pratt said, "The extend of an individual's understanding and response to the relationship between man and God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, determines whether that man is able to live the law of consecration." (Journal of Discourses 17, pg. 106)

Gratitude requires (1) things to be thankful for and (2) One to be thankful to. Knowing that God is our Father, that He has given us all we have and wants to vie us all that He has, brings a joy unspeakable. It also brings not only a *willingness* to live the law of consecration, but a deep, joyful *desire* to live it.

Gratitude is an indispensable part of happiness. It is also an indispensable part of stewardship. Acknowledging God in all things and in being grateful to him in all things is the first key in the search for stewardship.

The Art of Gratitude and Glorifying

My Swedish maternal grandmother could not say a prayer without crying. Her gratitude welled up so deeply that sobs and heartfelt weeping were as much a part of her prayer as were words. She thanked God for everything because she acknowledged Him in everything. She glorified and praised Him because she couldn't think of anything good without thinking of Him.

The longer I have lived, the more I have come to appreciate the gift my grandmother had. It is an *art* to be able to feel as deeply as she did.

Perhaps it was the hardship and struggle she had endured during her life that made her so aware of and so grateful for every small blessing.

But perhaps it was also because she *acknowledged* God as the giver of all – and because she fasted and prayed often and was acutely *aware* of God’s goodness and God’s gifts.

Using and Enjoying

Also mentioned earlier was the rabbinical saying, “God will ask us to account for the things he made for our enjoyment that we refused to enjoy.”

Part of stewardship is *use* and the joy and growth of doing things with what we’ve been given. Most stewardships are more like a muscle than they are like a depletable resource: the more we use them the stronger they will grow, the longer they will last.

Stewardships, of course, must be used carefully and appropriately, but this is not to say they cannot be used joyfully. Again, the Lord told us through Nephi that men are that they might have joy. When we glimpsed the idea of mortality from the pre-existence, we shouted for joy. And why not? Mortality is a time when God gives us stewardships over bodies, children, talents, callings, a beautiful physical earth, etc.

Remember that the Lord’s sternest condemnation was of the steward who buried his talent – who did not use it or magnify it or enjoy it. I once wondered if the parable should have had a fourth steward who reported, “I spent my talents – used them up – but in learning and good experience and service.” Perhaps the master would have been pleased with such a steward. But then again, most God-given stewardship do not deplete as they are used, so perhaps the steward who multiplied his talents from 4 to 10 also used and enjoyed and was generous with those talents as the master intended.

Some have suggested that most stewardships fall into three categories, each starting with a T – time, talents, and things. Each of these categories needs to be used well, developed wisely, and *enjoyed*. It has been said that “there is no greater form of thanks to a giver than to find joy in what is given.” Surely this applies to all God-given stewardships.

Acceptance and “Thy Will Be Done”

One of the great songs in our hymnal is hymn number 88, called “Thy Will, O Lord, Be Done.” Its words illustrate the Savior’s pattern of always doing His Father’s will. As stewards we must not only be grateful and joyful regarding our stewardships we must be fully accepting of them, even if they are not always what we have hoped for or experienced.

In most cases, we do not determine what stewardships we are given. What we do determine (and what becomes the judging fact of our lives) is how well we accept and how well we handle the stewardships we are given. When a calling seems more than we can handle, we say “Thy will be done” and grow into it with humility and the Spirit’s help. when a trial or sorrow comes that seems more than we can bear, we say, “Thy will be done” and find hidden strength from the Spirit. When we become prosperous we say, “Thy will be done” and try to use anything we have for His purposes.

The fact is, it is dangerous to pray for things and not conclude with “Thy will be done.” *Asking* is such a powerful process, which such a strong connected promise of *receiving*, so we must be careful not to ask persistently for things that fall outside of God’s will.

The Gift of Stewardship of the Heart

Stewardship itself, this beautiful and peaceful *attitude* herein called *stewardship of the heart*, is not something that is earned or obtained by something that is *received* as a gift from God. Thus, part of true stewardship is *gratitude*.

We can prepare and position ourselves to be more worthy and more receptive to the gift, but it is still a gift.

“My peace I give unto you,” said the Lord, “Peace be unto you” was His most common greeting. True peace comes with stewardships where we cast our burdens upon Him (Psalms 55:22), thus making the “yoke easy” and the “burden light” (Matt. 11:30).

The feeling of peace and guidance that God gives to those who acknowledge Him and accept their own stewardships is the very gift that all the world wants.

That soft silent sureness,
That gentle guidance,
The peaceful pattern
 Of inspired insight.
The ongoing opportunity
 To serve, to strengthen, to shepherd
 As steward.

Key Two: Generosity and Service

As with many things, the middle step is, for many, the hardest. We can all improve on gratitude, but for those with awareness and faith it is *natural* to be thankful. Likewise, we all need greater abilities and capacities for guidance; but again, for all who believe in an all-knowing, all-powerful Creator, what could be more natural than to seek His help?

The middle key, generosity, is perhaps somewhat less natural. Indeed, *until* we have achieved an attitude of stewardship, many would contend that our inclinations run opposite. Self-preservation, self-interest, even self-indulgence seem instinctive. Generosity usually does not. It is in this sense that “the natural man is an enemy to go.”

Yet it is clear, even obvious, that a steward must purge selfishness and develop generosity. It is clear that the Master desires stewards to use what they are given to serve, to give, to build, and to benefit others. Jesus said it in many ways, including “He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.” (Matt. 23:11)

The “middle key” of generosity is the outgrowth of the other two. The more grateful we are, the more we want to repay, and the more we realize that we can give to Him only by giving to others of His children. And the guidance we receive, if it is from the right source, will point us toward generosity and service. Bishop Henry B. Eyring made these connections beautifully in a conference address centering on King Benjamin’s admonition to *remember* our nothingness and

our gratitude to God for all. Bishop Eyring said, “Remembrance is the seal of gratitude which is the seal of generosity.”

In Central Europe, a small village was badly bombed in World War II. One of the casualties was the statue of Christ in the town square that was knocked down by the blasts and broken into pieces. Townspeople painstakingly re-assembled the pieces and were able to restore the statue except for the hands which were too broken to be fixed. Rather than sculpt new hands the decision was to add an inscription reading “His only hands on earth are yours.”

Is any principle more certain or more repeated than the simple truth that we serve Him by serving others? Is it any mystery that His gifts, our stewardships, all of them, have the common purpose of bringing joy and salvation to His children? Is it any wonder that all Satan’s efforts work counter to this, pulling toward selfishness, indulgence, and ownership?

How do we *become* more generous? How do we overcome the natural man and become spiritual stewards?

Again, the quality may be beyond our individual grasp. Generosity may be a gift and the best pursuit may be to ask for it.

But there are some things we can think, and some things we can do that may position us better to receive and add power to our asking.

Goals of Growth and Service (Broadening and Contributing)

We live in a goal-oriented society. We learn to set objectives, manage our time, and be effective in *achieving* things. But too often, all of our goals revolve around *doing* and *getting*, and we have no goals for *being* and for *giving*.

Check on the latest goals you have set. “Get the promotion, finish the house, do the project, reach a certain income level, get the shopping done,” etc. There is nothing wrong with these objectives. They may be just what you need. But that is the point. What do *others* need?

Stewards must try to balance *being* and *giving* goals with *doing* and *getting* goals. When we sit down to think, to plan, we should focus some mental effort and faith on goals which *broaden* and develop ourselves, and goals which contribute to others. We should set goals for learning, for expanding, for developing a gift, for using a talent. And we should set goals for helping friends, assisting family members, giving to and serving the needy.

As we think about and as we write down goals of being and of giving, *they will happen*. We will *become* more as stewards, and we will sense that what we become and what we give last forever, whereas what we get and what we do are forgotten by tomorrow.

The Spirit teaches us to broaden our stewardships – to expand, to magnify, to develop and to turn our five talents into ten. At the same time, the Spirit teaches us to want to give way whatever we grow.

Simplifying

“Our life is frittered away by detail,” said Thoreau. “Simplify, simplify, simplify.”

Edward Abbey said he loved the desert because there was less there, so he could appreciate each tiny thing more.

The scripture tells us to seek not to be cumbered. Does it mean not to seek so many things or does it mean to seek to get rid of unnecessary things? Perhaps both. Gandhi, as mentioned earlier, decided he needed nothing material.

We came home from a weekend trip not long ago and found that our home had been broken into. Drawers were pulled out. Everything was exposed. But nothing was missing. Linda remarked, "We must have done a better job of simplifying that I thought. Whoever broke in couldn't find a single thing worth stealing."

There were things in our home worth stealing, of course, and I found myself with a new sense of appreciation for them as I took inventory after the break in. All the things we cared about were there, were safe. Apparently the intruder was looking only for money, on things there is very little of around our home.

The anxiety I felt that day as I checked to see what was missing, made me worry about simplifying and about stewardship. I was worried so much about *having* things as about *valuing* things, about caring too much for them and thinking of them as mine.

Do we need to get rid of everything like Gandhi, or move to the desert like Abbey, or sell all we have and give to the poor like the young rich ruler Christ addressed? Is simplifying and giving up everything the kind of generosity that will get us to the stewardship attitude?

I think not. In fact, giving up everything would be, for most of us, a kind of anti-stewardship. We would be saying, "I don't want responsibility for anything." A true steward would say instead, "I want all that I can care for and use well for God's purpose and glory."

There is an interesting difference between *having* and *needing*. If we think we *need* all the things we have, then it is hard to consecrate them, hard to give them up, hard to use them for the benefit of others. On the other hand, if we realize how little we really need, how simple our basic requirements really are, then it *allows* us to be more generous, to see what we have as stewardships and to care for and develop the things we have been given without selfishly hoarding or hiding them.

We've tried to give our children experiences that would increase their gratitude and their generosity – and that would help them see how little they really need. We spent one summer in Oregon, living a completely primitive life and building a log cabin from scratch. We all learned that we didn't need closets full of clothes, or cars, or television, or even plumbing or electricity. We did need good, some basic shelter, and we needed each other.

Another summer we lived in a tiny mountain town in Central Mexico among amazingly poor but remarkably happy peasants. Everything all of us learned was capsulized by our eight-year-old daughter when she was asked what the experience taught her. She answered, "That you don't need shoes to be happy."

The kind of simplifying required to gain greater generosity and a deeper attitude of stewardship is the kind in which we give things up *mentally*. As stewards, we should accept the generosity of God and enjoy the stewardships He gives, anxious to use them and give them as He calls us or as opportunities come. We should stop short of the aggressive pursuit of things far beyond our needs and should ask Him to give us only what we can care for well and use for His purposes. We should strive to be conscious of how limited our real needs are, and thus make it easier for ourselves to give when we see needs and to serve when we have the chance.

Watch and Pray

Perhaps there is no greater three-word motto for life than the scriptural admonition spoken by Christ to “watch and pray.” (Mark 13:33) I believe the phrase is a how-to formula for everything from parenting (watch children closely enough to see who they really are and what they really need, and pray to their Eternal Father to help you help them become all He wants them to be) to *business enterprise* (watch for opportunities, needs, new methods, etc. and pray for the ability to do *your* best and to do what *is* best).

The combination of our own *awareness* and *God’s help* causes us to ask the right questions and get the right answers. The formula works best of all for the development of deeper generosity. First we must *watch* – with our ears and with our hearts as well as with our eyes. We must watch for the less-obvious emotional or spiritual needs like simple encouragement or basic friendship as well as the more obvious physical needs. Most people don’t give much because they don’t see very many needs.

Watching leads to thinking, and thinking is something we all need to do more – for its power, for its insight, and sometimes for its pure enjoyment.

Second, we must pray – first to become better at seeing needs, then to know how and when and where to give help. Pray for additional opportunities to give, to serve, to help. Such prayers are readily answered by a Father who wishes for His children to serve one another. Sometimes prayer should not be to know what to do, but should *be* the thing you do. Sometimes the greatest help you can give is to pray with power and with faith. Prayer is a way of helping people as well as a way of knowing what help to give.

It is sometimes useful to change the formula to “watch and ask” because *ask* can refer to other people as well as to God. Ask people if you can help them in any way. Ask how they feel. Ask why they look a little down. Ask them how their big meeting went. Ask them what is on their mind. Ask. Ask. And then *listen* and discover the needs that will give you opportunities for generosity.

Watching, asking, and praying will often lead to spontaneous and creative ways of offering help. Awareness on the streets of Boston one day led us to help a transient not with money (which we feared he would spend on wine) but by taking him to lunch and hearing a remarkable story of ups and downs and of what had led to his current state.

Awareness on another day caused us to notice, as we ate in a restaurant, a young couple who looked very nervous about eating at such an expensive place. We paid their check anonymously and were repaid by the relief and confusion we watched in their faces.

An intuitive impression at another time led Linda to give a large tip to two people who were doing some repairs at our home. They told us later that the extra money kept them from having their electricity cut off the day that followed.

The Purging of Selfishness

The most hurtful thing anyone can say to me is that I am selfish. It hurts the most, I think, because of all the criticisms I might receive, it is the most true!

My only consolation (and it is not much of one) is that I am not alone. Selfishness is the curse of so many. I say curse because it stops us, damns us, keeps us in such a narrow tunnel, unaware and unappreciative of so much.

“One who is all wrapped up in himself,” the saying goes, “makes a very small package.” I know of only four ways to attempt the purging of selfishness.

1. *Practice empathy.* Sit down with your spouse, or with a child, or with a friend, and try to tell them how they are feeling and what they are thinking. Have them stop you and correct you where you are wrong. Try *hard* to get inside their heads, to think their thoughts and inside their hearts to feel their feelings.

2. Ask yourself (frequently), “What would Jesus do?” The very question will jerk you away from selfishness and toward selflessness.

3. Try to form a mental habit of catching yourself thinking “What do I want?” and instantly replacing the thought with “What does he need?” or “What do they need?”

4. *Ask!* Simply ask to feel more for others, to care more for them, to be more sensitive to their needs, and to become more “transparent” and less aware of self.

Key Three: A Guidance Mentality

President John Taylor has explained:

“We believe that it is necessary for man to be placed in communication with God; that he should have revelation from him, and that unless he is placed under the influences of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he can know nothing about the things of God. I don't care how learned a man may be, or how extensively he may have traveled. I do not care what his talent, intellect, or genius may be, at what college he may have studied, how comprehensive his views or what his judgment may be on other matter. He cannot understand certain things without the Spirit of God, and that necessarily introduces the principle I before referred to – the necessity of revelation. Not revelation in former times, but present and immediate revelation, which shall lead and guide those who possess it.” (1989 Priesthood Manual)

Socrates said, “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

Many high achievers say, in essence, “The unplanned life – the life without clear goals and objectives – is not worth living.”

Do we want to live our lives with an analytical mentality, with a goals-and-plans mentality? Certainly these are important, but there is a higher realm, a higher mentality that acknowledges the incompleteness of our finest analysis and the short-sightedness of our best goals.

To one who strives to be a steward, the world's measurements or phrases are not adequate. “A successful life.” “A full life.” “A life of broad experiences.” “A life of service.” Successful by whose standard? Full of what? Experience in what areas? Service to whom?

To those who believe in *foreordination*, and in the individuality and uniqueness of each of God's children, and in the crucial and pivotal nature of each of God's children, and in the crucial and pivotal nature of mortality in our Father's eternal plan – to us who *believe* in these, the goal must be a *guided* life. We must seek a life governed by an orientation that gets us not necessarily to where we want to be or to what the world calls success, but that gets us to what He has foreordained us to be and to do.

It does us little good to scale the heights if we are climbing the wrong mountain or if we have leaned our ladder against the wrong wall.

Reason tells us that a good steward is one who has his own thought and takes his own initiative, but who knows his master's heart and communicates sufficiently with Him to be sure he is going His way and doing His will. This mind-set is best called a *guidance mentality*. The kind of living is best called a guided life.

It requires faith, strong mental effort, and consistent prayer, because answers and guidance do not come automatically or easily, nor do they come in long-term blueprints for whole sections of our lives. We walk by faith, receiving confirmation from our Master's messenger (the Spirit) on one step at a time. A poet who understood this who penned the words:

I said to a man who stood at the gate of years
Give me a light that I might step forth.
And the voice came back,
Step out into the darkness and put your hand in mine,
For that is better than a light,
And surer than a known way.

Faith over Confidence

An easy way to understand *guidance mentality* is to recall your biggest or most overwhelming challenge, or perhaps a calling for which you felt unprepared or inadequate.

Most Church members can remember such a time, and how the weight of the calling or challenge drove them to their knees in humble prayer. Abraham Lincoln said, "There are times when I am driven to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I have nowhere else to go!"

The humility and consciousness-of-inadequacy caused by some callings and challenges creates a guidance mentality. We pray and fast and ponder, and we emerge with a strength and a direction that is not our own.

To strive to live *all* of our lives with the same degree of humility and the same God-given strength and direction is to adopt a guidance mentality.

In situations where we are overwhelmed, the world's formula of self-confidence and positive mental attitude are almost amusingly inadequate. Our strength does not come from looking into the mirror and saying, "Every day in every way I'm getting better and better" or by telling ourselves, "I can do anything." Indeed, the strength comes from an opposite approach – from saying "of myself I cannot do this, I don't know what to do." It is our humility, our nothingness, coupled with our faith in His power that brings the infusion of strength and insight that allows us to do His will and meet the challenge He has given.

Faith does not require self-doubt, weakness, or insecurity. On the contrary. We take upon us His name; we hold His power; we walk with His joy and His love. But the point is, they are all His, not ours, and in remembering that, we will have the necessary humility to live guided lives.

The Lord's spirit is not one of fear, but "of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). When we go forth with faith, with a guidance mentality, and with a stewardship attitude, we will find our foreordinations, we will feel His power, and we will know the meaning (and the joy) of phrases like "Cast your burdens on me" and "My peace I leave with you."

Asking and Confirmation

Much of our popular culture portrays *asking* as a sign of weakness. Independence and rugged individualism is interpreted as not needing anyone else, not needing help, not needing to ask.

In fact, asking and listening are great strengths. They are also skills, even *arts*, that can expand us far beyond our own capacities and make us the beneficiaries of the experience, the insight, and the gifts of others. Asking for advice, asking for opinions, asking for assistance, asking for input...all are indications of intelligence, of respect, of an open mind – not of weakness or a lack of independence.

Good stewards must ask if they are to be wise managers. They must ask others who have had similar stewardships. Most importantly, they must ask their Father, whom they serve.

Our all-wise Father, however, will not answer questions that are lightly raised. Or, better put, He will answer, but with a rebuke like that given to Oliver Cowdery in the 9th section of the *Doctrine and Covenants*: “Ye took no thought save it was to ask.” Asking alone is not enough. God, whose plan includes a world where we live away from Him and learn to be self-determining, will not take away our agency by guiding us according to His initiative and not our own. He wants us to think and ponder, even to struggle and wrestle with things, seeking His guidance and inspiration along the way. Then He wants us to make our own best decision and bring it to Him for confirmation. His promise to Oliver (if he studied it out in his mind, came to his own answer and then asked if it was right) was that He would cause either a burning sureness or a stupor of thought so that Oliver (or anyone applying the formula) would *know* whether or not his decision was right.

The brother of Jared posed an open-ended question or problem to the Lord – “It is dark in our boats” – and received no answer. But when he struggled, molted the stones from the rock, and presented his answer, God touched them, and they burned, and glowed, and were confirmed.

Other thoughts on asking:

It is communication between steward and master that allows the steward to *know* the Master, to do His will, to feel and share His joy, and to become more like Him.

Real prayer is real communication that involves thanking and asking, listening and heeding.

Years ago, as a young missionary in New York, my companion and I had the opportunity one evening to be joined by a visiting General Authority for our bedtime prayer.

I offered the prayer and was somewhat disturbed to hear the unmistakable sound of pencil writing on paper. I went on with the prayer, thinking that my young and inexperienced companion had become impatient and was starting his nightly letter to his girlfriend. When I finished and looked up, I saw that it was the General Authority who held the pencil. In keeping with my own immaturity, my first thought was that he was doing some sort of evaluation on my prayer. I imagined perhaps a B for content, a C for grammar, etc.

He noticed my consternation but said nothing until a few minutes later as he left our apartment. “Elders,” he said, “I sometimes worry that I will forget the answers that come in prayer if I don’t take some notes.”

I remember lying awake most of that night, trying to realize that prayer was communication, that we had to listen as well as ask, that the guidance received should be remembered, and implemented.

“Ask,” is the most frequent admonition in scripture. Only when we ask can God guide us without infringing on our agency. And sometimes “ask” is more than an admonition. It is a commandment (as in D&C 46:7).

Confirmation may be a burning, or it may be a soft, pure sureness. A confirmation feels *right* and a stupor of thought feels wrong (somewhat like folding your hands with one thumb on top feels natural and folding them with the other thumb on top feels foreign or strange).

“Ask and listen” is a wonderful motto for communication with men as well as with God. When we ask and listen we learn, we show esteem, we grow and we share.

As with anything containing great *power*, caution must be applied to asking. Beware of what you want, for you will get it. G.K Chesterton said, “Do not ask for pleasure, or you will rob yourself of the chief pleasure, which is surprise.”

Gifts, Goals and Foreordination

Adopting the attitude of *Stewardship of the Heart* requires us to change some of our terminology. We *seek goals* rather than *set goals*. We desire *guidance* rather than *greatness*, and we find *humility and awe* in our gifts rather than *superiority and pride*.

A good steward must know two things: (1) exactly what he has been given stewardship over, and (2) what the Master wants him to do or to “bring to pass” with those stewardships.

We ought to perform a kind of *spiritual inventory* of the gifts, callings, and other stewardships we have been given, to keep track of them and to note their use and their expansion. This ought to be done in writing – in a journal or other private place – and it ought to be referred to and updated regularly. Also in writing, perhaps in the same place, we should keep patriarchal blessings, notes on other blessings, notes on prayer and guidance we have received about what our foreordinations are and what things God wants us to work on with our stewardship gifts.

Use the following chart as a guide – or develop your own way of analyzing. If you use this chart, write down your stewardships in the left-hand column (use the lists from earlier in the column as a starter, but be more specific – fill in *your* unique and individual stewardships).

Then grade yourself in some way (perhaps with an academic grade or maybe on a scale of 1-10) on each stewardship in each column across the page. How grateful are you for the stewardship? How well do you use it and how much do you enjoy it? Are you magnifying it, making it grow? How much do you give it and serve with it or through it? How well do you do in seeking guidance and His will for the stewardship?

Joseph Smith said: “When we work by faith we work by mental effort rather than physical force.” Work by faith as you analyze and strive to improve your performance as a steward.

Stewardship	Gratitude	Use and Enjoyment	Magnifying or Growth	Giving or Sharing	Guidance or Doing His Will With It

All have need of repentance, which, while it involves sorrow and remorse, is nonetheless a joyful and positive principle.

Repentance requires the same broken heart and contrite spirit that are indispensable part of humility and of stewardship of the heart.

Repentance is pre-requisite to guidance and must be consistent and ongoing, dealing with small sins of omission as well as large ones of commission.

I remember a Sunday School story that made the point:

In the old country lived Olga, who had committed a grievous sin. She went, sorrowing, to her somewhat self-centered and self-righteous friend, Helga, told her she would take her to the wise sage on the mountaintop who would know what must be done.

The sage heard Olga's confession and told her to go into his garden and return with the large and heavy stone that lay there. Olga went willingly.

While Olga toiled with the huge stone, the sage gave Helga a burlap bag. "Go into the garden," he said, "and gather up as many tiny stones as you can carry and bring them to me." Helga went grudgingly.

When Olga returned, the sage asked her to return the large stone to the place she had found it. This, he told her, was repentance. When Helga returned, the old sage asked her to go back and replace each tiny stone in the exact place where she had found it.

Giving Back Our Agency

As part of His plan for our joy and our growth, Heavenly Father has given us *our* agency. It is an outright gift, something which (unlike stewardships) can never be taken back or even given up. Agency must be ours or it would not truly be agency. Agency is God's first outright gift in His plan to help us become as He is. Agency is the power with which we choose, and with which we use the stewardships He gives.

Now the question: What can we give to a father who has all and who is in the process of giving all to us, his children?

As our love for Him and our gratitude to Him grows, we desire deeply to give something in return. He tells us that we can give to Him by giving to others. So we try.

But is there anything we can literally give to God directly? Only something we own. And the only thing we own is our agency. Can we give it to the Lord?

In a sense, we can! We can by living the law of consecration. Not by agreeing to live it sometimes, but by living it now. And we can by saying, "Thy will be done" and by trying to know and do His will in all things. And we can by saying, "I relinquish my agency to thee. Use me as an instrument." And we can by adopting, obtaining, and practicing the attitude called *Stewardship of the Heart*.

We are here to *choose* for ourselves. We can choose to be part of His family. We can choose to be His stewards. We can choose by giving our choices to Him.

The Search: A.B.C.

To implant the three keys to stewardship deep

In our hearts, we

Restate them, rephrase them, re-look at them

From other angles;
Metaphors of treasure hunts,
The three fruits,
The three seeds,
Enter the heart over and over.

Here's one more: The simplest yet: A.B.C.
The three qualities that develop the stewardship
Attitude are:
Appreciation
Benevolence
Conforming.
Appreciation, awareness, acknowledgment,
Benevolence, the betterment of benefit of others,
Conforming all things (including our will) to His will.

Nothing new, just new words.
Appreciation = gratitude = prayer.
Benevolence = generosity = share.
Conforming = guidance = care.
Use whichever set you like.
Use all the sets and move to self-learn the three keys.
Apply them everywhere, on every stewardship:
(Think through how *appreciation*, *benevolence* and *conforming* applies to each one.)

ON THINGS:

Appreciate all material things, acknowledge all as God's.
Benefit other through "your" property. Give it freely.
Conform your handling of things to meet His will for their use.

ON CALLINGS:

- A. Thank Him, see that it humbles rather than puffs up.
- B. *Give, lift, help*, as He would.
- C. Magnify it to His level.

ON CHILDREN:

- A. Thank Him for the joy He gives you through them.
- B. Give them respect as your brothers and sisters.
- C. Ask Him to help you raise His children.

ON BODIES:

- A. Be grateful and joyful for what they let us experience.
- B. Use them for their good and for doing good.
- C. Tune them, sharpen them in His image.

ON ABILITIES:

- A. Be aware of what they are and who they came from.
- B. Remove the bushel – shine them for others
- C. Multiply and magnify.

ON FRIENDS:

- A. Thank God for them, thank them for what they make you.
- B. Introduce them to each other.
- C. Serve them.

ON THE EARTH:

- A. See it, be awed by it
- B. Share it, try to paint it or poem it.
- C. Care for it, not as something we've inherited from our fathers but as something we've borrowed from our children.

ON OPPORTUNITIES:

- A. Be thankful and humble rather than self-congratulatory and proud.
- B. Judge them by how much they'll do for others.
- C. Bring them to fruition with His guidance.

ON TALENTS:

- A. See them as tools in God's hands.
- B. Let God's hands use them to help His children.
- C. Seek to empower and expand them through His energy.

ON TIME:

- A. Thank Him for it as a mortal measurement and motivation.
- B. Learn to take time and give time.
- C. Give it to Him, use it for Him.

ON TRIALS AND TESTS:

- A. Know that they make you more like Him who has suffered all.
- B. Give others a chance to help you.
- C. Take *care* of them (as in "resolve").

Everything is a stewardship
 And
 Every stewardship works for our salvation,
 Others' salvation,
 And God's glory...
 If we approach them through
 Appreciation
 Benevolence and
 Conforming.

“Training” “conditioning”

The connotations are physical.

The images are work-outs, calisthenics, sweat and effort

To re-shape our bodies – stronger and firmer.

Is there training

Of other types that can re-shape our attitudes?

Conditioning of mind and spirit

That strengthens wisdom

And sharpens the accuracy

With which we see ourselves and the mortal world?

In Mosiah we read of the committed

Who did fast and pray oft

And “waxed stronger and stronger,

Firmer and firmer” in their faith in Christ,

In their knowledge that they were God’s children.

(Helaman 3:35)

Fasting and prayer conditions our spirits,

Reveals hidden insights, and re-shapes

Our attitudes to the pure reality of stewardship.

Read the rest of this verse

As if it were a work-out chart,

Designed not to increase biceps or decrease heartbeat,

But to develop gratitude, generosity, and guidance.

Gratitude exercises:

1. *A ten-minute “thanks only” prayer*
No asking, just thanking. Press yourself
Beyond the usual.
Exceeding the time limit is permissible.
2. *“Morning-first-thoughts” of stewardship and glorifying*
Consider three realms – as measured by
Your first conscious thought when you wake up:
Lower realm: “What do I have to do today?”
Higher realm: “What do I choose to do today?”
Highest realm: “What would He have me do today?”
And how can I glorify Him during this day?”

Generosity exercises:

1. *Tithing.* Pay it before you pay anything else.
Pay it joyfully.
2. *Fast offering.* Fast with a purpose.
Pray for the purpose. Give more than the food cost.
3. *Anonymous giving.* Find needs,
And then find ways to help in secret.

4. *Give time.* Volunteer, take time, spend time.

Guidance exercises:

1. *The W.W.J.D. habit.*
Ask yourself, several times a day, in all situations, “What would Jesus do?”
2. *Inventory of talents and gifts.* Actually write them down.
Ask yourself if you are magnifying each, using each for His glory.
3. *Record your requests*
Asking, since it draws down Heaven’s powers,
Is a powerful (and should be a thoughtful) process.
Keep record of what you ask for,
Then *work* in parallel with the request
And be awed and grateful when you receive.

The Finish: Knowing the Owner

The ultimate performance and implementation of stewardship (as well as the great *reward* of it) is to come to know the Owner.

The scripture tells us that man’s eternal goal is to know God.

In knowing Him, we will do His will. In doing His will we will know Him. In knowing and doing, we will love Him, and love as He loves.

How do we know Him? The question of the ages.

We know whom we love.

We know whom we serve.

In life we *always* love those we serve – especially as we serve them diligently, over time. Parents love their children, bishops love their flocks, because they serve them. In life we do not always love those who serve us. Sometimes we resent or resist the service. Other times we take it for granted.

To know God we must love Him, to love Him we must serve Him.

In life we come to know and love those we work under.

By becoming God’s stewards, by embracing and internalizing and “eternalizing” the attitude of *Stewardship of the Heart* we come *under* His power, under His wing, under His employ, under His mastership, and thus begin to know Him.

The Hope:

That you now feel that the
Attitude, the paradigm, and the power
Of stewardship
Can be pursued;
That you know the keys,
The seeds, and the fruit;
That you know the path
That leads there, and
That you will follow it.

Stewardship of the Heart

...that you obtain it.

Summary: *The Oxymorons of Stewardship*

Oxymorons!

Word pairs or phrases that work even though
(literally) one word

Contradicts the other:

“pretty ugly”

“freezer burn”

“jumbo shrimp”

Sometimes they creep into our sports terminology:

“back-up forward”

“two-center offense.”

Sometimes they poke fun:

“airline food”

“postal service”

“Military intelligence.”

The interesting thing about real oxymorons

Is that while the individual words conflict,

The two-word phrase is useful and workable.

Stewardship of the Heart – as an attitude,

Creates three workable, useful oxymorons:

1. “confident humility”
(we are humble because of the greatness of God,
Confident because we are His children)
2. “frugal generosity”
(stewardship means *caring* for what we have, and *growing* it, but it also means
giving it and not valuing it into ourselves)
3. “independent reliance”
(we learn to think and to self-determine,
Even as we depend and rely on His guidance).

A Summarizing Story

There was a touch of humor in the humility with which Brother Haycock stated his request. Arthur Haycock, private secretary to President Spencer W. Kimball, was calling from Salt Lake City. When I answered my phone in the mission home, just south of London, Arthur said, “President Eyre, we’ll be landing there very late tomorrow night. I am so sorry for the imposition, but could you possibly arrange to meet President Kimball and me at the airport? We’ll only be there overnight. If you could just bring us to our hotel?”

Imposition? To greet the prophet? To tell him of the British Saints’ love? I knew Arthur well enough to joke a little. “Well, it is a grave inconvenience, but I suppose we’ll manage somehow.”

I hung up the phone and sat there, trying to think of something I could do to demonstrate the gratitude of all church members in England and the high esteem in which they held President Kimball. I tried to think of some gesture or token of respect. An idea occurred to me and I acted on impulse. I called Lord Grade, British movie impresario, producer of films like *Gandhi* and *Chariots of Fire*, who had become a personal friend and who I knew had a large, comfortable limousine.

I got him on the phone and made my request. His answer was remarkable. "I know of your President Kimball and hold him in the highest regard. Which limousine do you want?" I had no idea that he had more than one. He said he would send the biggest.

The next evening, as I sat in the study on the front of the mission home, we seemed to experience an eclipse. I looked up to see what was blocking the light and saw, at our curb, a classic and truly enormous black Rolls Royce limousine. I couldn't see the front end. – the car seemed to be longer than the house. Suddenly I had serious misgivings about my "gesture." I recalled how our humble, unpretentious Prophet was driven around Salt Lake City in a simple Chevy.

But it was too late now. The uniformed chauffeur was ringing the doorbell and President Kimball's flight was due in an hour at Heathrow.

When we got there, the chauffeur simply pulled up to the curb directly in front of the terminal. I realized that no one questioned the authority of this car. It could park wherever it wanted.

The flight was delayed, so Linda and I waited at the age, feeling ore and more certain we had done something very silly by coming in London's biggest limo. (I had visions of President Kimball stepping into the car and saying, "President, can we have a look at your mission budget?")

When the plane finally arrived, it was nearly midnight. President Kimball looked tired as he walked up the jet way with Arthur Haycock, but his face beamed as he caught our eye.

As we proceeded back down the concourse he insisted on carrying his own briefcase – the old fashioned kind that opens at the top. The hasp was broken so one side was sagging out and it looked as though some papers might fall out. Before I could do anything, Arthur noticed the situation and acted dramatically. Whipping off his belt, he wrapped it around the President's briefcase, pulled it tight, buckled it up, and stood back looking quite proud of himself. A twinkle came to President Kimball's eye and he said, "Why thank you, Arthur, but are you sure we don't now have a more serious problem?"

I was amazed – a man in his eighties, tired and jet lagged, but still full of humor and light.

By pure chance (or maybe more than that) the nearly deserted concourse led us toward a gate where 12 unmistakable, dark-suited, brand-new missionaries awaited a delayed connection to the Continent. President Kimball caught sight of them and his whole demeanor and energy level changed. He made a beeline for them, leaving Linda, Arthur, and me in his dust.

I've often tried to imagine what those new elders thought. Standing there in Heathrow Airport, one day out of the Missionary Training Center and on their way to their field of labor. They look up, and there is the Prophet of the Lord, heading straight for them, beaming like a light bulb.

He didn't shake their hands, he bear-hugged them – his short arms reaching right around the waist of some of the taller elders. There were tears in his eyes, and in theirs. I've since wondered if that one brief moment didn't give them a strength and power that lasted throughout their entire missions.

We proceeded down the concourse and finally emerged directly in front of the ominous car. The chauffeur opened the door for President Kimball and he climbed in without any comment. Arthur joined him and they walked back through the deep recess of the limo to the back seat. Linda and I sat up in front with the chauffeur and we were off down the motorway.

It was quiet inside the limo and I was left to worry about the pretentious impression I'd created. Then there was a shuffle way back in the rear and I turned to see President Kimball walking up toward the front. "Here comes the question about the mission budget," I thought, hoping that the Prophet's sense of humor was still activated.

But it was the chauffeur he wanted a word with. He put his hand on his shoulder and the driver turned, somewhat startled. Chauffeurs are rarely spoken to in England, they are thought of as part of the car. There was concern in his deep voice as President Kimball said, "Young man, it's late and we kept you waiting for some time. I'm so sorry if we are keeping you from your home and family."

I've never forgotten the moment or its lessons. This was the Prophet of the Lord. His briefcase and his mind must have been full of matters more important than I could imagine. Yet he saw the lighter side and lifted us with his humor; he gave his love to the surprised missionaries in a way they will never forget; he cared about one insignificant stranger who was driving the car, and about his family.

I was worrying about what impressing a car would make. But President Kimball was uninterested in cars. He was interested in people, in their feelings, in their lives. He was a *steward*, not only over his vast calling and responsibility but over the opportunities, the situations, and above all the people who passed through his sweet and worthy life.

May we all move in that direction.