

A CONCISE STATEMENT ON BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP

Board Of Stewardship, Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

I. God, the sovereign creator¹, has given man the responsibility to act as His agent in the exercise of dominion over the creation for His own glory², through the faithful application of lawful means³. Man is obliged by the gifts, talents, favors, privileges and graces received under divine providence, to submit himself entirely to the holy and righteousness demands of the moral law and the gospel and to fully consecrate himself to active obedience to them as a steward of God⁴. This obedience is a most particularly just and binding obligation upon the beneficiaries of the eternal covenant in Christ⁵ and is acceptably discharged by faith alone arising out of a sense of gratitude to Christ for salvation⁶. The obedience of stewards extends comprehensively to every sphere of human activity and life.⁷ The end thereof is service to the Lord, the comfort and increase of the body of Christ⁸, and the enjoyment of God⁹.

II. As the steward of God, man has a duty to recognize that all gifts, talents, graces and abilities find their true and original source in God alone, the sovereign creator¹⁰. Therefore God reserves the propriety of these gifts to Himself, holding all men responsible to glorify Him by them, and calling men into account for their use or misuse at the last judgment¹¹. No man is made more honorable, able, gifted, or prosperous than another out of any particular and singular respect to himself but for the glory of his creator and the common good of man¹².

III. Time, itself a product of God's eternal creative power, is given to mankind along with life¹³. The number of days allotted to men being comparatively few in light of eternity¹⁴, great importance is attached to the proper use of time, all of which is to be employed under God in lawful activity. Time does not belong to man in autonomy, but must with conscious and diligent effort be used for God's glory in every area of life whether in evangelism, vocation, recreation or other personal activities¹⁵. He is to administer the private and public affairs of life so that they, with God's blessing, will be fruitful and profitable to his family, his neighbor, his superiors and himself, all to the furtherance of the Kingdom of God¹⁶.

IV. God, as the owner of all things, has given to mankind the privilege to hold and own property and to possess and use wealth for lawful uses as stewards of God¹⁷. This property and wealth is entrusted to men by God and is to be used for the fulfillment of duties and obligations to their family, vocation, church and civil government and other purposes acceptable to God¹⁸.

V. The giving of ten percent of one's income (the tithe) to the local church is a lawful means of supporting its ministry. The tithe is given in tangible response to the recognition that the sovereign and covenantal God is the true owner of creation and even of life itself. Tithing is an integral and important part of Christian growth and represents the ideal minimal financial participation of church members, deacons, and elders in the Lord's work through the local church¹⁹.

VI. Benevolent giving is a regular part of Christian and is to be done responsibly and discretely as unto the Lord by faith²⁰. This giving should not be motivated by selfish gain but by love for God, obedience to His Word, and love for neighbor²¹. Benevolent giving beyond the tithe is a rightful part of public worship as well as a private duty for the relief of distress and suffering²².

- ¹Gen. 1:1; Deu.10:14; 1Chr.29:11; Ps.24:1; 50:10-12; 89:11; Hag.2:8; 1Cor.10:26
- ²Gen. 1:28; 9:1,7; Lev. 25:23; Ps. 8:6-8; 127:1; LC 17, 20
- ³Lev.26:1-13; LC 105, 141, 193
- ⁴WCF 5:1, 19:2, 19:7; LC 104
- ⁵WCF 5:7, 26:1
- ⁶WCF 16:2; LC 32
- ⁷WCF 33:1; LC 104
- ⁸WCF 26:1
- ⁹LC 1; SC 1
- ¹⁰WCF 2.2; 21.1; LC 101; James 1:17
- ¹¹Mat.25:14-30; WCF 33:1; LC 104, 105
- ¹²Ps.75:5,7; 1Cor.4:7; LC 147; Rom. 12:3-8
- ¹³Gen 1:1; Ps. 102:25; John.1:1,2; WCF 4:1
- ¹⁴Ps. 90:1-12; James 4:13-15
- ¹⁵Col. 3:17; 4:5-6; I Cor. 10:31; LC 190
- ¹⁶LC 140-142, 123-132; Lev. 19:18; LC 104; WCF 25:3; II Thes. 3:13
- ¹⁷Ps.115:16; Acts 4:34
- ¹⁸LC 140-142; Gen.4:9; Mk. 7:10-13; Luke 20:25; Rom.14:7-8; 1Tim.5:4, 8; LC 147-148
- ¹⁹Gen.14:20; Heb.7:1-10; Gen. 28:20-22; Lev.27:30; Deut. 12:9-11; 16:17; 1Cor.9:13-14; Mt. 23:23; II Cor.9:6-7; II Cor. 8:9; Num. 18:21-24; ARP BOW Ch. II; LC 75, 97, 104
- ²⁰Mat.6:4; Luke 19:8; II Cor.8-9; Col. 3:17; Deut. 14:7-11; LC 141; Mt. 6:3
- ²¹Lev. 19:18; Luke 6:32-35; I Cor. 10:31; John 14:21; I John 3:17-18; LC 122,141,147
- ²²1Cor.16:1,2; Deut. 10:17