

Stewarding God's Word

1. **Stewardship:** how we manage what belongs to someone else. Usually this is applied to how we handle *money* and *time*.
2. Do you believe we are responsible to steward what God speaks to us?
 - a. One principle concerning stewardship that is clear in the Scripture is this: **When we are faithful with what God gives to us he will give us more.** “If you are faithful in little,” God says, “I will give you much.”
 - b. Is it possible that if we are faithful with the words God speaks to us that he will give us more words? But if we are *not* faithful with his Word, why would he give us more words?

Mark 4:23-25 (NKJV) *If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”*

²⁴ *Then He said to them, “Take heed **what you hear**. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. ²⁵ For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”*

3. Jesus applies these words concerning stewardship to *what you hear*. We need to be good stewards of what we hear.
 - a. Jesus was very careful to live by the Word of God. He said, “*Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*”
4. All of us from time to time need a word from God. We come to a decision point or a crisis and want to know what God has to say.
5. Please note *three ways* to carefully steward the Word of God. These three practices will ready us to hear God’s Voice through the text.

HEARING “Take heed to *what you hear....*” (Mark 4:24)

1. Is it possible God is speaking all the time, but the ones who are hearing are the ones who are tuning in?
2. Can we tune into the right frequency to hear God? Yes!
 - a. **Mark 4:9** *“He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”* NIV
 - b. Jesus says this phrase 7 times in Revelation 2 & 3 - *“He who has ears, let him hear....”*
 - c. Hearing has less to do with capacity and more to do with taking responsibility.

Isa 50:4-5 (NIV) *The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear **to listen** like one being taught. 5 The Sovereign Lord has **opened my ears**, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back.*

3. If we are going to hear God, we have to listen - to tune into him.

Jeremiah 7:13 (NIV) *While you were doing all these things, declares the Lord, I spoke to you again and again, but you did not listen; I called you, but you did not answer.*

4. God is speaking constantly - he speaks to his children - we must listen. Are we listening? Is there something in your life God has spoken to you repeatedly about? It is right there that the connection may be broken.

Romans 10:17 *Faith comes by **hearing** and hearing by the Word of God*

5. If you've ever met a person of great faith, you've met a person of great hearing, and a person who knows the word of God.
 - a. The way to have faith is to hear a word from God.
 - b. Spend time with God, learn to tune into his voice, listen to him, your faith will grow!
 - c. Then when you hear God, you can move with *confidence* because faith comes by **hearing**.
6. So "**hearing**", listen up, is the first way to steward God's Word.

HUMILITY "Take heed *how* you hear..." (Luke 8:18)

1. If you read the whole chapter of Mark 4 and Luke 8 you will see they are parallel passages. Luke 8 starts with the Parable of the Sower. Jesus talking about *how* we hear God's Word.

- a. Here's a good question: What kind of soil are you? When God speaks are you listening? Do you take heed? Does God's Word bear fruit in your life or is your life too busy to follow through on what you hear?
- b. Are you a good steward of God's Word?

2. Now in Luke 8 he says it a bit differently.

Luke 8:18 (NKJV) *Therefore take heed **how** you hear.* [Remember, Mark 4 said, "Take heed **WHAT** you hear; this says, "take heed **HOW** you hear] *For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him."*

3. Jesus is saying, "*Take heed **HOW** you hear God's Word.*" In other words, make sure you receive it in good ground. Fertile ground for God's Word, God's seed, to take root and bear fruit in your life. This happens when you receive the Word of God in *humility*.

4. Why is humility so important in the way we receive God's Word? If we are *prideful*, God will stop speaking. Now he will try to correct the pride, because he knows that will stop you from receiving his Word.

Genesis 37:5-11 (NKJV) *Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. ⁶ So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: ⁷ There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."*

⁸ And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

⁹ Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." ¹⁰ So he told it to his father and

his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?"¹¹ And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

5. Joseph's dreams are from God. But Joseph's reaction to the dreams might not have been from God. In the prophetic process of God speaking to and *through* humans, there are usually three aspects to be considered.

- a. **Revelation** – Always accurate though often couched in symbolism. (See Numbers 12:6-8)
- b. **Interpretation** – Discerning what the symbols mean.
- c. **Application** – Deciding what to do with the revelation.

6. Have you ever noticed that after these prideful episodes, God never gave Joseph another dream? Never. Not one. God gave him two dreams and look *how* he handled them. He went out and bragged about them. *"Take heed HOW you hear...."*

7. God did a wonderful work in Joseph's life. But read his story and see how God *humbled* him.

a. Once he learned that lesson, God used him to interpret dreams and raised him up to be the second most powerful man on earth in that day.

8. It is vital that we learn that when God speaks to us that we don't use God's Word to build ourselves up! We must be careful *HOW* we hear. We must hear with *humility*. We must not take God's word and become *prideful*.

James 4:6 (NKJV) *But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."*

9. To the humble, God gives *more grace!* Multiplied grace to the humble.

- a. But also notice the word *"resists."* *"God resists the proud."*
- b. *"But gives grace [contextually: more grace] to the humble."*

James 4:7 (NKJV) *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

10. Now listen to me very carefully. If you are **prideful** *God resists you.*

a. This word "resists" mean opposes. The Greek is word is picturing someone who plays for the opposing team.

11. **God does not speak to prideful people.** This is very important when it comes to stewarding God's Word. Please hear this: **humility** is vital to properly stewarding the Word of God. (See Psalm 105:16-19)

HEEDING "Take heed what you hear..." Mark 4:24

Mark 4:23-25 (NKJV) *If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. ²⁴ Then He said to them, "Take **heed** what you hear."*

1. Jesus says, "Take **HEED** what you hear." Think of the story of Jonah.
 - a. God first spoke to Jonah with a word. But Jonah didn't listen to God's voice so then God speaks to him a second time through circumstances.
2. Remember what Jesus is saying in our two passages for today. "Be careful **WHAT** you hear." "Be careful **HOW** you hear" and "Take **HEED** what you hear."
3. These verses also tell us "Whatever measure you use so it will be measured back to you." If you look at that as it is used all through the concept of stewardship, it is saying *if you will be faithful in little things, God will give you big things*. Many of us want to hear big things but we have not listened humbly and heeded the little things.
4. Listen, if God speaks to you little things and you are **attentive**, and you **humble** yourself and **heed** these little words, then God looks at you and says, there is a faithful, humble servant whom I can trust with big things.
5. God calls on you to treasure his Word. He wants you to put your faith in his word, in what he has said and done. Humble yourself and act accordingly. Take heed **what** you hear, **how** you hear, **humble** yourself and **obey** his Word. If you will become a good steward of God's Word, God will give you greater grace than you have ever known.

John 1:14-17 (NKJV) *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth... ¹⁶ And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses, but **grace and truth** came through Jesus Christ.*

6. God's **truth** without **grace** is only half true!
 - a. Be attentive to God; Humble yourself before Him and live in believing obedience.

Cleansing vs. Repentance

1 John 1:7-9 (NASB) *...but **if** we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son **cleanses us** from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we **confess our sins**, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and **to cleanse us** from all unrighteousness.*

Cleansing

1 John 1:7... IF we walk in the light...the blood of Jesus His Son **CLEANSSES** us from all sin.

(v. 9) *If we **confess our sins**, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to **cleanse us** from all unrighteousness.*

++ Don't miss God's **ifs!** Some of God's promises are **conditional**.

++ Confession of our sins is like taking a daily shower. Regular cleansing is vital. And God promises that his "**mercies** that are new every morning..."

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NASB) *Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² **fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith....***

++ This is a picture of **direction**, not merely of *confession* and cleansing. **correction**. Repentance requires a change of direction. Repentance = conviction + confession + a change in direction. To change tomorrow we must disrupt today.

++ Compared to **confession** you might say **repentance** is deeper, more thorough going, and longer lasting. Repentance requires confronting what we don't want to be or do and embracing a change of direction. Like confession, repentance is relational. Confession is about correction and cleansing. While repentance passes through confession, it continues to call and empower us to a deeper walk with God. Jesus authors and finishes our faith (v.2). Repentance is ongoing, deep, and powerfully relational. Repentance is not just cleansing us from our sins; it is cultivating a more personal and intimate walk with God.