

Brother Steward

Climbing Higher

In a unique way, the author Max Lucado offers an interesting perspective regarding the life of Christians and the branches of a tree. According to his tree analogy, most Christians sit comfortably on low-lying thick branches. Life for Christians next to the trunk of the tree is steady and predictable. There are higher branches, but they appear risky and a lot less comfortable. In our humanity, we desire to stay where it is safe and easy. We become branch-sitters.

Again considering the analogy of the tree, we can say that Jesus calls each of us to climb higher in our prayer life, in our worship, in reading his Word, and in our generosity. As we climb, the branches will be thinner and less steady, but Christ will support us. The world tells us to stay put on our secure big branches, but the one who loves us is quietly nudging us to go higher. Jesus wants us to depend on and trust in him. He promises that he will never leave us.

One climb that we may resist the most is in the area of giving. The average Christian household gives approximately 2.7 percent of their income to their church, so most of us are sitting securely on some rather low branches. Our heavenly Father wants us to climb higher in the area of our giving. *“On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made”* (1 Corinthians 16:2). We are to climb so that we regularly give a portion of our income. As we climb in our giving, we show our gratitude and thanksgiving for all of God’s blessings. When we climb toward the branch that says “tithes” and go beyond that branch to the one marked “sacrificial giving,” we hear God’s Words, *“Well done, good and faithful servants”* (Matthew 25:21).

Our prayer is that Christians will take God at his Word, his promise to take care of us and provide for our needs and follow the Holy Spirit as he leads us to higher and higher branches. After all, God knows better than anyone the cost of hanging on a tree.

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Do You Know Your “T”s?

Q: What are Time, Talents, and Treasure?

A: Gifts from God to us.

Q: What is Stewardship?

A: Using God’s gifts wisely in good works.

Q: How can I do this?

*A: By using your **Time** and **Talents** to help those in need. Volunteer your talent to serve others through the church and community.*

*Use your **Treasure** to supporting the church and the less fortunate.*

Q: Where did Stewardship come from?

A: Scripture: 1 Peter 4:10 “As each of us has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”

Q: Who are Stewards?

A: Every parishioner!

Q: Will there be a pass or fail grade for this “T” test?

A: Only God knows!

God Bless.



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Stewardship and Gift-giving

At our Christmas Party, I asked three Brothers what gifts they got. One said a pretzel. The next said a hammer and a nail. The third said a Roman Coin. Puzzled, they asked me why?

I said they were symbols of God's gifts to all of us of time, talent and treasure.

"Explain please," they said. "Well, the pretzel was invented years ago by a Monk who crisscrossed two pieces of dough like hands in prayer and baked them. It symbolizes Time spent in prayer. The hammer and nail represents the second gift from God to us of Talent. Take up your tools and help people by building shelters, fixing problems of homeless and helpless. And the third, a Roman Coin, is a reminder from Scripture to 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.' And that meant to support your church and ministries."

So, time talent, and treasure are God's gifts to all of us along with the responsibility to use them for his mission. And that's the essence of stewardship. Then they asked, what gift did I get? I answered, "the talent of imagination, and the ability to write about it and convince people to be good stewards." That being said, I asked them to pass the pretzels.

God bless you!

