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## [The Seven Arrows of our Christian Economy Arrow #4](#)

Welcome to OIC. We are glad you came. We are in the midst of a seven part message, called the Seven Arrows of our Christian economy. I need to remind you of my personal goal as your pastor and that is to help create an atmosphere where we are loved and we experience the love of God. In order to do that, I will do my very best to make sure we are Christ centered and Bible based. I have shown you the verses in Isaiah 49 about why we use the term “arrows”

Isaiah 49:2,3 2 He has made My mouth like a sharp sword, In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me; And He has also made Me a select arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver. 3 He said to Me, “You are My Servant, Israel, In Whom I will show My glory.”

The arrows represent the doctrine that Jesus gave us to live as a Christian. Today’s arrow is arrow #4. Thus far we have looked at the necessity and value of prayer, the need to have a church where we are encouraged and that our church should never judge each other unfairly. Today, arrow #4, we should be a church where we exercise biblical stewardship. Our support text today is Proverbs 3:1-10.

Proverbs 3:1-10 1 My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; 2 For length of days and years of life And peace they will add to you. 3 Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 So you will find favor and good repute In the sight of God and man. 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones. 9 Honor the LORD from your wealth And from the first of all your produce; 10 So your barns will be filled with plenty And your vats will overflow with new wine

### [Arrow #4 We should be a church where we exercise Biblical stewardship](#)

I know by now you are thinking he’s going to talk to us about money. Yes, of course, stewardship involves our wealth but it also involves so much more concerning our lives. I prefer to think of this message as the stewardship of life. So, today, I’ll share 3 aspects of our life where we can exercise Biblical stewardship. I might as well hit you with the hardest one first.

#### [#1 Exercise biblical stewardship with our treasure](#)

Proverbs 3:9,10 9 Honor the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; 10 So your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine.

All wealth doesn’t come in the form of money. When I was on pastoral staff in the Philippine islands, at our church we had 2 large cages on either side of the front door of the church building. One cage was for chickens and the other cage was for pigs. You see, the congregation there had almost no money so when they brought a tithe, they literally brought 10% of their farm animals. I’m sure if you have attended church for any period of time you have heard a message about tithing so consider this a gentle reminder of the need to support our local church. Malachi 3:8-10 explains it well.

Malachi 3:8-10 <sup>8</sup>“Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup>You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you!

<sup>10</sup>Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.

This is the only verse in Scripture that I know of where God challenges us to test Him. The storehouse He speaks of here is the church. We are to bring the tithe on Sunday, the first day. Why do we bring a tithe? So the church can be maintained, the tithe is 10% of our income. You might ask yourself “what’s in it for me?” and then I’ll say God has blessed you beyond your wildest dreams. We are children of the King. We have a mansion in heaven waiting for us on the streets that are paved with gold, where there is no pain, no sorrow, no grief. God has sent his Holy Spirit to be our teacher, our guide, our comforter. Wow. Is anyone here having any financial issues? I have a solution that I will guarantee will work. Would anyone like to hear it? This will ensure financial success and you will honor God and be faithful to His church by following these 3 simple numbers. Here they are. Get a pen and paper so you can write them down.

10 – 10 – 80

The first 10 is what I give to God. The second 10 is what I give to myself and the 3<sup>rd</sup> 80 is what it costs us to live on. I know far too many people who live on 99 and leave almost nothing for God. I’m reminded in Scripture that the root of all evil is the love of money.

**I Timothy 6:10** For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

I’m not sure it’s the actual love of money itself but rather what the money can do that causes the evil to emanate from us at times. I know this about money. It cannot add one single day to your life. Psalm 139:16 says God has already ordained the number of days of our lives. Here’s another verse concerning our wealth. Matthew 6:24 says we cannot serve God and wealth.

**Matthew 6:24** “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

You must decide which is more important. I know Nancy and I made dollars our last motivating factor for any decision we would ever make in our lives. Back when we were first married and both working, we decided we needed to buy our first home. Letting dollars motivate us mistakenly, we bought a 5 bedroom house for us and the cat. We had one bedroom, our little cat, whose name was Domino, had 4 bedrooms. God looked at us and must have said “are you kidding”. I’ll leave you one last verse concerning the stewardship of our treasure. It is found in Luke 12:34.

**Luke 12:34** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

## **#2 Exercise biblical stewardship of our time.**

**Colossians 4:5** Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

The great thing about time is that it is one place where we are all equal. We all have the same number of hours each week but how do we divide the use of those hours in order to please God? Here’s 3 ways I use my time.

## **A I use my time to study God's Word.**

**II Timothy 2:15** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

Some people might say, that's only for the pastor. Here's my philosophy. If it's good enough for the pastor, it's good enough for all of us. Here's another verse that helps me.

**I Peter 3:15** Instead, regard Christ as holy in your hearts. Whenever anyone asks you to speak of your hope, be ready to defend it.

I know some of you are saying to yourselves right now, you mean I have to be ready to tell people about Jesus???

## **B I use my time wisely to pray.**

**I Thessalonians 5:17** Pray without ceasing

Obviously God does not want us in our prayer closets 24 hours a day. We have to live our lives but I like to think as I'm walking through life that I have a constant communication with God. Some of that entails listening to Him in prayer. Some of that also entails praising God in prayer. Obviously some prayer is intercessory, where we pray for others. Of course, some prayer is when we're praying for our own concerns. I like what the Christian author Oswald Chambers said, he said pray with our eyes on God and not on our difficulties. We spoke about prayer a couple of weeks ago, so I'll just leave that thought with you.

## **C I use my time wisely to influence people.**

**Matthew 5:14-16** <sup>14</sup> "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; <sup>15</sup> nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

<sup>16</sup> Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

We can't just blend in. We can't be like chameleons trying to hide in the midst of our environment. God wants us to have an influence for Him. How else will others know about Jesus, our Lord and Savior? How else can we demonstrate the difference Jesus has made in our lives? God also calls us to be ambassadors for Him.

**II Corinthians 5:20** Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

So, in order to be good biblical stewards of our time, and I know those three things I gave you can't take all the time you need to raise your children, go to work, enjoy your family life, but if we can place those 3 in a situation where we are exercising biblical stewardship, I know God will be honored.

## **#3 Exercise biblical stewardship of our talents.**

Let's look at I Corinthians 4:1,2

**I Corinthians 4:1,2** <sup>1</sup> Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. <sup>2</sup> In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

Yes, God expects us to be trustworthy servants of all he has given us, including talents and abilities to do all kinds of things. Here's another verse from our support text today.

**Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.**

Sometimes we have convinced ourselves that we have no talent, no ability and we are insignificant members of God's Kingdom. What we are in effect doing is leaning on our own understanding and not giving God the credit due Him. God does not make mistakes. And you are not a mistake. If I had 1,000 yen each time someone told me they have no special ability or talent and that God cannot use them, then I would be the wealthiest man on earth. There are no insignificant people in the family of God. We can learn a lot from those verses about what God expects of us concerning our talents. God has entrusted us with those and expects us to make use of them as wise stewards.

**I Peter 4:10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**

This verse points out to us that all of us have some special gift appointed to us for ministry. We have spoken a lot about spiritual gifts here in this church. Please, discover what your gifts are and what special talents you may have and use them for the betterment of God's kingdom, especially here at OIC.

### **Conclusion**

Stewardship itself means simply that we are managing something that is really owned by someone else. Well, that someone is God. Everything we have including our next breath belongs to Him. I think sometimes we lose sight of this fact. Stewardship is such an individual thing but we as a church must put ourselves in God's eyes corporately and be accountable to God for how we use our time, treasure and talents as a church. That's why we have capable people who are taking charge of the offerings we bring. We have capable people who will help you in the instruction of God's Word and capable people who will find a place for your special talents. If our church is truly going to be as healthy as it can be, we all must be good stewards.

Prayer