

# StewardCAST

A monthly e-newsletter of LCMS Stewardship Ministry

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## HOME: *Where Stewardship Begins*



were created in the image of God for the purpose of stewardship of creation for the Creator's purposes. Adam and Eve, male and female, were created in that image to be a reflection of the Creator within creation. This highlights the incarnational nature of stewardship. But it also locates stewardship in its most fundamental place: the home!

Look closely at the way the Lord sets up stewardship within the home: "And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (GEN. 1:28). The subduing and dominion follows the injunction to be fruitful and multiply. That is the family. Husband and wife carrying out the procreative task, raising up those who will carry out stewardship of creation. This was God's plan for stewards. One dares not simply reduce this stewardship to the granting of physical life to the next generations of stewards. It also carries with it the admonition to reflect faithful stewardship of all of life and life's resources in such a way that the subsequent generations reflect the Creator and the stewards that have come before them.

### Fatherhood and stewardship

Last month, Hallmark and many others pointed us to a day called Father's Day. This is a reminder that we need more than one Sunday in June to take seriously the formation of stewards in the home. There is

**T**here is ample anecdotal evidence that the prime source for stewardship education and formation is the home. The most faithful stewards of all of life and life's resources for God's purposes will tell of how parents and grandparents modeled faithful stewardship for them in formative years. This stewardship influence within home and family even outpaces the influence of pastors and congregational steward leaders. The converse is also true. Those stewards who are less than faithful or even have an open aversion to faithful stewardship will recount their negative formation. Family members who grumble

when the pastor "preached about money" or pastors reluctant to bring up the topic for fear of making people upset, are often the source of the malformed stewardship of their children and parishioners. Please understand that this is not an attempt to deify the good stewardship leaders or shame the less than faithful ones, but to highlight a very key factor in the formation of stewards. It all starts at home.

### It starts at home

This is made clear in the "words of institution" of the office of steward. Genesis 1:26-28 highlights the reality that human beings

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ample evidence that when fathers take their vocation as spiritual head of the household seriously and faithfully, the next generation is more likely to exhibit a faithful response. It has been said that children will often confess their mother’s faith, but they will do it in the pattern shown by the father. A father-steward that takes the “do as I say, not as I do” approach often sets their children up for future failure as stewards of not only resources, but also the greatest treasure entrusted to humanity: the Gospel! But when a father models faithful stewardship of the Gospel by being in worship, regular study of God’s Word and leading family devotion and prayers, children will see the reflection of God in their father. Then through the Word shared, they will also reflect their Heavenly Father through their greater stewardship.

A Scriptural example of a failed father/steward is King David. As shocking as this assertion may seem, David illustrates what happens when a father doesn’t attend primarily to the stewardship of his household. While it is true that King David was a great king in Israel, when we evaluate his family, we see all the cracks, wrinkles and warts present in the “man after God’s own heart.” Absalom and Adonijah are examples. Absalom staged a coup that had its roots in a sexual assault by Amnon of his sister Tamar (2 SAMUEL 13). The failed father overlooked the family crisis and it gave rise to both a murder and an insurrection. Adonijah followed in the imperfect reflection of ambition reflected in David to the point where he put himself forward to claim the kingdom in the later days of David’s reign. Both failures led to the necessity of the death of David’s sons to

quell the rebellion in their hearts and lives, one at the hands of Joab and the other at those of Solomon. These familial tragedies make one wonder about how a father’s quest for greatness, even greatness as one after God’s own heart, can take a toll on the stewardship of the family.

### The servant leader

Pastors and steward leaders need to take seriously the need for raising up faithful stewards, especially those who will become fathers. This is critical especially in the modern world that often devalues the need for fatherhood and masculinity. The model of father/steward is not a lord of the house. It is a servant leader who sacrifices for and leads those entrusted to his care. Fathers who have regular connection to Word and Sacrament and make the necessary sacrifices to ensure that their family has regular connection to Word and Sacrament will then be able to reflect the heart of God that is revealed in Jesus Christ. Fathers who seek to forgive as they have been forgiven will have a greater opportunity to have children who will also be faithful stewards of the treasure that is the forgiveness of sins.

Steward leaders, this is not rocket science. Making the investment in the formation of homes that steward the Gospel of Jesus Christ faithfully and daily will have the greatest stewardship results. This will also lead to generations seeing the need for regular support for the local congregation both financially and in service. Take time every month to plan how the pastor and steward leaders can invest in their fathers. It will most certainly bring an increase in return in the near term and generationally.