A 17-year-old just completed his high school basketball career. It is a bittersweet moment for a young man like him. As the final horn sounded, the tears came. The words of a chapter in his life’s book came to an end. There will be, Lord willing, other chapters. But this one that started in the second grade has consumed a large portion of his life so far. When that ends, it brings tears. If you were in high school sports or other activities, you know what this young man feels.

But, in addition to the tears, an experience like this also brings retrospection. You start to look back. Sure, there are the moments of glory that cannot be relived and those crushing moments of failure that cannot be undone. But this moment of introspection also reveals a very strong stewardship lesson. I guess this is the danger of being the “stewardship guy” and the parent of a high school athlete!

The lesson of quiet stewardship

What is that stewardship lesson? It is the lesson of quiet stewardship. This young man was not a star player. He was not a starter. In fact, in his two-year varsity career, he was only trusted with six minutes of playing time in a game that wasn’t already decided. On the bench in his usual spot, he brought energy and support to his team. But there just never seemed to be any opportunity for him. As a parent, this was hard to watch. There were moments of frustration and anger. From us, not from him. He just went about teaching his old man a huge stewardship lesson. He worked. He practiced hard. Late at night, he would get up shot after shot. Why would a young man put in so much effort that might not ever be recognized or rewarded?

He did it because that was his stewardship. God had given him abilities and opportunities for him to steward. He put in the work because that is what was given for him to do. He wasn’t given the star role. He wasn’t given the starter role. He was a young, healthy, gifted man who did his level best with what was given. His teammates...
Maximizing our stewardship

This pattern looks a bit like what that young basketball player did. He sought out opportunities to maximize the trust. This maximization of the trust was about the team and not him. As those who have been created and redeemed for the task of stewardship, maximizing our faithful stewardship as individuals is really about the Gospel and not us. The ultimate goal of the steward is faithful stewardship of the Gospel. The way that we utilize and maximize the “First Article” created things which the Lord entrust to us has a direct bearing on the work of the Gospel. It funds it, energizes it, expands it and supports its. But all our work as stewards is not about us. It is always about Jesus and the Good News He brings.

This work is done behind the scenes. It is never about a “set it and forget it” approach. It takes effort and investment. The stewardship trust is maximized every time a husband and wife talk and pray about their offering, not just once a year for the gathering of commitments, but every week. This work is done when people step up into roles of faithful service, often well out of public view, so that ministries like Sunday school, VBS, visitation and care ministries can be carried out. It is quietly and consistently seizing the many opportunities to care for the physical and emotional needs of the community in which the congregation serves as an outpost for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This faithful work of the steward very often goes unnoticed by the masses. But it is noticed by those who are directly touched by its results!