

Stewardship and Vocational Integrity

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Introduction

In the Middle Ages, the word “stewardship” was seen for the first time in the English language, and its meaning was related to the job description, i.e., of a manager at a large household. Over the years, the use of this word became common, and the positive meaning of responsible management became attached to it. The word “integrity” is used to describe a personality characteristic. It means the honesty and trustworthiness of an individual, and it is often linked to the professional behavior of individuals. It is important to fully understand the meaning of these two words for successfully applying them to daily life decision-making and management of personal talent (Merriam-Webster, 2021). This reflective essay aims to explore the previous personal assumptions about stewardship and vocational integrity along with the current development of views in light of chapters 1 and 5 of “Courage and Calling.” The essay further explains the impact of this new understanding on daily decision-making and the management of personal talents, time, and financial resources.

Previous Assumptions and Reflection

Before reading these chapters, I did not think much about the true meaning of stewardship and vocational integrity, especially related to the Bible. For me, the word “stewardship” meant being in service, i.e., managing and supervising something assigned to one’s care. Similarly, I thought of vocational integrity as being true to your profession and displaying pure behavior to the career promise that we take. For me, it simply meant following the rules of the workplace and behaving professionally. However, my idea has changed now after reading these chapters and reflecting on their addition to my personal life. I no longer rely on my previous idea about these concepts and now understand that stewardship in terms of management means the managing of resources that God has given us.

After reading the book chapters, many questions came to my mind, and I started to reflect. These questions were about my true calling and the best way to reach it. There are different forms of calls from God that explain vocation. The general call is often linked to a higher purpose, such as the call to follow Jesus and be a true Christian. The specific call invites people to a vocation that is best for them. This is God’s chosen mission for that person in this world. The third is the call to our instant tasks i.e., any day-to-day work that one has to do. When we know that all these calls represent vocation and are chosen for us by God, we can perform wise stewardship and vocational integrity. This has helped me to understand that instead of separating the material vocation from the call of God or our vocation as Christians, these must be combined. This combination is important because part of being a Christian

is to accept the unique and specific call for us. Therefore, vocation is greater than the concept of a job; it is the completion of God's priorities that He has chosen for us in this world.

Relating stewardship and vocational integrity to biblical views also helped me understand that by viewing vocation as God's call, we can take care of our souls. Each day there is so much stress at the workplace that makes us upset; however, with this new view, I believe that vocational integrity can be maintained by understanding the true purpose chosen for us. Also, stewardship means that we use the resources that God has given us and do not waste them. The most important of these resources is the talent that we have been given. After reading the chapters, I reflected on how people, including me, put these talents to use. Do we fully use our potential? Are we taking care of the talents God has given us? I believe that we not only neglect our true potential but also we are very negative every day. We do not understand that this talent has a purpose and it supports our chosen vocation. Similar is the case regarding time and financial resources. Instead of managing our time and finances in developing our pure gift, we take our occupations as jobs that take up so much of our time that we have no time to do the work of God. My view about this idea has changed, and I now believe that we can carry out God's work by considering our vocation as our holy call, the purpose of our life, and being an intelligent steward of God-given resources. I also believe that just like performing the vocation truthfully is God's work, taking rest from that work for some time is also important to maintain vocational holiness. This too, is an act of faith that can enable us to slow down in this fast world (Smith, 2011).

Conclusion

Stewardship and vocational integrity are important concepts that must be understood from the teachings of the Bible. We mustn't separate religious duties from our daily work. It is important to understand that our daily work, as well as our vocation, are chosen for us by God. Also, we do not have the authority to use resources that we have, but these are God-given and must be sensibly managed to promote His work. I believe that implementing this newly learned concept in my daily life and professional practice will help me to maintain some vocational integrity and also help me in becoming a wise steward.

References

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Smith, G. T. (2011). *Courage and Calling: Embracing Your God-Given Potential*. InterVarsity Press.