

## Samples of Everyday Stewardship

I like to compare our lives to an iceberg. What is below the water line is the inward reality. What shows at the top is our everyday lifestyle. These two are solidly connected and stable – as long as the former vastly outweighs the latter. A balanced lifestyle based on God’s kingdom rests on unchanging biblical principles that apply anywhere.

I’ve found these foundational principles hugely helpful since college:

- *Affirm God’s ownership*: “The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it” (Ps 24:1). All that we are or have is a gracious gift from the Almighty.
- *Grasp genuine godliness*: What greater quest could there be than becoming like Jesus (1 Ti 6:6-11)? Practicing obedience in response to his incredible love, we find God transforming us.
- *Discover simplicity of focus*: As God-focused living replaces our wrong focus or lack of focus, our Father frees us from anxieties while providing necessities (Mt 6:19-34).

As he did with the disciples, Jesus trains us to trust him in small things before handing us even bigger opportunities. In my case, such stretches came with a summer mission project, and later a newborn’s health challenges. The outcomes include (according to 1 Ti 6:6-19):

- **contentment**: We learn the difference between need and desire, what someone has called a “theology of enough.”
- **enjoyment**: God has already provided for us richly, no matter how we compare with those we think rich. His gifts are enriched by thanksgiving.
- **generosity**: Rather than holding on too tightly to what God has provided, we delight in deploying them for his purposes.
- **real life**: Through his passion, Jesus has welcomed us into his surprising kingdom. We won’t miss out on the most important things as we stick with him.

Living in God’s kingdom impacts our relationships, career choices, goals, consumption patterns and everything else. Seek out transparent models of kingdom living, and you can become one. Those I’ve most appreciated have influenced me to ask myself:

- Why not make and use a simple budget? Will I seek help writing it and keeping to it?
- How can I challenge myself to increasingly radical and joyful generosity?
- What disciplines can help me eliminate impulse spending?
- What’s my strategy for avoiding – or escaping – the trap of consumer debt?
- Will a housing choice reflect God’s purpose in my community? Or limit my generosity?
- How does my relationship to my “daily bread” show God’s care for me and for others?
- Why buy new when used works fine? Do I really need what most assume is a necessity?
- What forms of entertainment consume significant resources as well as time?
- Are my ongoing financial commitments executed faithfully and efficiently (e.g., via direct deposit or free electronic fund transfer)?
- Who will I ask to walk alongside me and keep me accountable to my commitments?

As we weigh the future ramifications of our options, our heart and attitude are important. We reap what we sow. Oriented by weighty realities, the shape of God’s calling becomes visible like the waterline edges of an iceberg. Instead of melting into our surroundings, may Jesus use us to renew and transform the communities and individuals he calls us to serve in his name.

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