

# Stewardship

*"July is Freedom Month!"*

July 4, 1776 was a memorable day in the history of the United States of America. On that day, the founding fathers of our nation declared their independence from England and English rule. Each year we pause to remember the freedoms we enjoy and give thanks for all those brave men and women from 1776 to this date who have risked their lives for the sake of freedom and independence. We enjoy the freedom of religion, of gathering in public, of oppression from the government or any other agency. We have the freedom of electing our national, state, and local leaders into office as our leaders. In November, we will have the opportunity to exercise that freedom one more time. It is our privilege and duty to vote whenever we have the opportunity. History teaches us that national apathy has destroyed numerous empires and America can also flounder and fail if we citizens do not exercise our freedoms in a responsible way.



Not only are we citizens of probably the greatest nation in the history of mankind, but we are also citizens of the Kingdom of God! Because of that citizenship, we enjoy countless freedoms and blessings, like the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. These freedoms and blessings come to us at a great cost--not on our part, but on the part of our gracious Savior Jesus who offered Himself up to death as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Even though we can never adequately express our thanks to Jesus, we can by the power of the Holy Spirit live each day more and more like the children of God. In Colossians 3:12-17, we find a list of virtues that are appropriate for us as God's children.



God's children are stewards or managers of the many blessings that God has bestowed upon us. Stewardship is not meant to be an oppressive response to God's grace and goodness, but rather a joyful response. In our church we have defined stewardship this way: *"Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes."* What a beautiful definition for our Christian stewardship!

Because Christ has redeemed us to be the children of God and heirs of salvation, we have the privilege and responsibility to give evidence of this precious freedom through our words and actions. Jesus changes everything in our lives (relationships, use of money, time, talents, and so much more) so that we practice our stewardship not in order to gain salvation, but rather as a free and joyous response because of what God has already done for us through the sacrifice of Jesus and the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

What a joy to freely and joyfully practice Christian stewardship not because we **have to** but because we **get to**! Enjoy your freedom as a citizen of the United States of America and a citizen of the kingdom of God and let your life show it!