

## Stewarding God's Word

What's the most precious thing God has given us? Jesus, the Holy Spirit? The blood of Jesus? I think His Word is way up there too, because John 1 says, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* Here, **"the Word" (Greek: Logos) refers to Jesus Christ.** John 1:14 makes the identification explicit: *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."* We cannot separate Jesus from His Word. The key stewardship question is, "What are you doing with the Word He gave to you?" How you relate to the Word will determine your trajectory in the Kingdom.

**God's Word is an entrustment. The question is not merely, "What has God said?" but "What have I done with what God has said?"** God's Word does not merely communicate; God's Word accomplishes. At creation: *Genesis 1:3 "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."* And: *Isaiah 55:10–11 "...so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire..."* This reminds us that God's Word carries divine intention and power. **The Creative Word — God's Word That Produces.**

**Stewardship principle: Never treat casually something God has sent to accomplish a purpose.**

We are not only called to receive God's Word; we are entrusted with it. And different expressions of the Word require different forms of stewardship. Paul describes himself as one who had been "entrusted with the gospel" (1Thessalonians 2:4). Timothy is commanded to "guard the good deposit" entrusted to him (2 Timothy 1:14). In this message we will examine the different dimensions of what is described as God's word in scripture and assess ourselves with regards to how well we are stewarding it. **Ultimately, Obedience is one of the highest forms of honour we can give God's Word.**

### 1. The Written Word — Scripture

This is God's revealed, written Word and the ultimate standard against which every other claimed word from God must be tested.

#### Key Scriptures:

*2 Timothy 3:16–17 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness..."*

*Colossians 3:16 "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom..."*

*Psalms 119:105 "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."*

*Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword..."*

*James 1:22 "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."*

Jesus makes obedience central: *John 14:23 "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching."*

#### How do we steward it?

- Study it.
- Interpret it accurately.
- Obey it.

- Teach it faithfully.
- Refuse to distort it.
- Pass it on to others.

We can pass it on in many ways:

- Teach our children.
- Disciple others.
- Mentor leaders.
- Document what God has taught us.
- Build systems that transmit truth beyond our lifetime.

**Stewardship principle:**

**You haven't fully stewarded truth if it dies with you.**

**Stewardship principle:**

**Don't merely possess the Bible; correctly handle it.**

**2 Timothy 2:15** *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved... who correctly handles the word of truth.”*

### **Principles of Interpretation**

**Context** — Never interpret a verse in isolation. Read what comes before and after.

**Author** — Who wrote it, and what was the author trying to communicate?

**Audience** — Who were the original hearers/readers?

**Genre** — Is it history, poetry, prophecy, wisdom, Gospel, epistle, apocalyptic, etc.?

**Language** — Pay attention to words, grammar, figures of speech, and repeated terms.

**Culture** — Understand the historical, social, and cultural setting.

**Scripture interprets Scripture** — Use clearer passages to help understand more difficult ones.

**Whole-Bible consistency** — An interpretation should fit the broader teaching of Scripture, not contradict it.

**Descriptive vs Prescriptive** — Ask whether the passage describes what happened or commands what should happen.

**Original meaning before application** — First ask, **“What did it mean then?”** before asking, **“What does it mean for us now?”**

**Christ and the Gospel** — Read individual passages within the Bible's larger redemptive story centred on Christ.

**Application follows interpretation** — Don't make the Bible say what you want it to say; allow its meaning to shape your response.

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## 2. The Doctrinal Word — Truth to Be Taught

God's Word comes to us as sound doctrine: truth concerning God, salvation, humanity, holiness, the Church, eternity and Christian living. The main Greek word translated “doctrine” or “teaching” is διδασκαλία (*didaskalia*), from διδάσκω (*didaskō*), meaning “to teach.” A closely related word is διδαχή (*didachē*), meaning “teaching” or “instruction.” **We don't establish doctrine by finding a verse that supports what we believe. We establish doctrine by allowing the whole of Scripture to determine what we believe.**

The Bible itself distinguishes between foundational doctrine and teaching that takes believers toward maturity. *Hebrews 6:1–2 “Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.”*

The passage identifies **six foundational teachings**:

1. **Repentance from dead works**
2. **Faith toward God**
3. **Instruction about baptisms/cleansing rites**
4. **Laying on of hands**
5. **Resurrection of the dead**
6. **Eternal judgment**

*Hebrews 5:12-14 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

Paul repeatedly charges leaders to protect sound doctrine.

**Titus 2:1** “You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine.”

**1 Timothy 4:16** “Watch your life and doctrine closely.”

**Titus 1:9** “He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught...”

## THE SEVENFOLD TEST OF DOCTRINE

1. **Scripture** — Is it explicitly grounded in the biblical text?
2. **Jesus** — Did Christ teach it or establish its underlying principle?

Does it centre appropriately on Christ and the gospel? Jesus rebuked people who knew Scripture yet failed to recognise that Scripture pointed ultimately toward Him: ***John 5:39–40. “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”***

A powerful principle here is: **The purpose of Scripture is not merely information but revelation that leads us to Christ.** Jesus was addressing people who diligently studied the Word yet missed the Person to whom the Word pointed. This doesn't mean every doctrine must explicitly mention Jesus. It means no Christian doctrine should ultimately contradict the person, work, teaching or gospel of Christ. I saw this with extremes of prosperity teaching where it was now “touching the cross” as people said they had to do sacrifices for breakthrough.

3. **Apostles** — Is it confirmed or explained in apostolic teaching (Epistles)?
4. **Early Church** — Is it demonstrated appropriately in Acts?
5. **Context** — Does the interpretation respect what the passage actually means?
6. **Corroboration** — Is there sufficient biblical witness rather than one isolated proof-text?

**Has the interpretation required us to ignore other Scriptures?** This is an excellent diagnostic question. **False doctrine often isn't created by what someone quotes, but by what they have to ignore in order to maintain their interpretation.** So ask: **What Scriptures would someone use to challenge my interpretation, and can my doctrine honestly account for them?** Sound doctrine shouldn't be afraid of difficult texts.

7. **Consistency** — Does it harmonise with the whole counsel and redemptive story of Scripture?

For example: A. **Passover → Christ's sacrifice → apostolic explanation → Lord's Supper.**

B. **Old Covenant promises → Jesus' teaching about the Spirit → Pentecost → apostolic teaching on life in the Spirit.**

### **How do we steward doctrine?**

- Teach accurately.
- Avoid fashionable distortions.
- Distinguish biblical truth from personal opinion.
- Correct error.
- Pass sound doctrine to the next generation.

*Deuteronomy 6:6–7 “These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children...”*

*2 Timothy 2:2 “And the things you have heard me say... entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”*

**God → Paul → Timothy → reliable people → others**

**Part of stewarding doctrine faithfully is knowing which doctrines to die for, which doctrines to debate graciously, and which matters to give people freedom over.**

**Maturity is not only knowing what you believe; it is knowing how much weight the Bible places on what you believe.**

**Stewardship principle:**

**Truth must not be diluted simply because error is more popular.**

### **3. The Preached Word — The Word Proclaimed**

There is the Word that has been studied and then the Word that must be **proclaimed**. We are stewards of the word we proclaim. We are accountable for how we preach the Word.

*2 Timothy 4:2 “Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage...”*

*Romans 10:14 “And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”*

*1 Corinthians 2:4–5 describes proclamation accompanied by the Spirit's power.*

**How do we steward it?**

- Prepare diligently.
- Preach what God has actually said.
- Resist manipulating audiences.
- Point to Christ not yourself or someone else.
- Preach in order to give and not take.
- Don't preach merely what people want to hear.
- Speak with courage and love.
- Depend upon the Holy Spirit.

**Stewardship principle:**

**The preacher is a messenger, not the owner of the message.**

### **4. The Gospel — Good News Entrusted to Us**

The gospel is a particular expression of God's Word: the message concerning Christ, His death and resurrection, salvation and reconciliation with God.

*1 Corinthians 15:1–4 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.<sup>2</sup> By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.<sup>3</sup> For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,<sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

This is one of the clearest biblical summaries of the core content of the gospel. **Christ died for our sins → He was buried → He was raised → all according to the Scriptures.**

Paul summarizes the gospel around Christ's death, burial and resurrection.

*Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation...”*

*1 Thessalonians 2:4 “We speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel.”*

**2 Corinthians 5:19–20** God has “**committed to us the message of reconciliation**”, making us Christ's ambassadors.

**What are you doing with the Good News you received?**

**How do we steward the gospel?**

- Understand it.
- Live consistently with it.
- Preserve its integrity.
- Share it. Don't keep it to yourself.
- Don't be ashamed of it.

**Stewardship principle:**

**The gospel was entrusted to us so that we could be conduits of it for the world.**

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## **5. The Prophetic Word — What God Speaks for a Situation**

*2 Peter 1:20–21 “For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”*

Scripture also describes prophetic words given through the Holy Spirit for strengthening, encouragement, comfort, warning and direction.

*1 Corinthians 14:3 “But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort.”*

*1 Timothy 1:18 “Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well...”*

This is particularly powerful for stewarding prophecy. Timothy was not merely supposed to remember what had been spoken; he was to wage warfare in accordance with it.

But prophecy must also be tested.

*1 Thessalonians 5:20–21 “Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good.”*

*1 Corinthians 14:29 “Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said.”*

### **How do we steward prophetic words?**

- Record them.
- Test them against Scripture.
- Discern them.
- Pray over them.
- Wage warfare according to them.
- Act where obedience is required.
- Wait where timing is required.
- Don't manipulate circumstances to manufacture fulfilment.

### **Stewardship principle:**

**A prophetic word is not merely something to celebrate; it may be something to contend for.**

## **6. The Promised Word — God's Promises to Be Believed**

Scripture contains promises that call for faith, patience and perseverance.

*Hebrews 6:12 “...imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.”*

*2 Corinthians 1:20 “For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ.”*

*Hebrews 10:23 “Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.”*

### **How do we steward promises?**

- Know them.
- Understand their context.
- Know the conditions of the promise.
- Believe God's character.
- Pray according to them.
- Remain patient.
- Refuse to abandon faith because fulfilment is delayed.

### **Stewardship principle:**

**Promises require the stewardship of faith and patience.**

## **7. The Revealed Word — Illumination and Understanding**

There are moments when something already contained in Scripture becomes **personally illuminated** by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus opened the disciples' understanding of Scripture:

*Luke 24:45 "Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures."*

*Paul prays:*

*Ephesians 1:17–18 "...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ... may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation..."*

### **How do we steward revelation?**

- Write it down.
- Meditate on it.
- Test it against Scripture.
- Ask what response it requires.
- Don't turn personal illumination into universal doctrine without biblical warrant.

*Psalms 25:14 "The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them."*

**Revelation is an invitation to intimacy, but it is also an entrustment. If God confides in you, you must learn how to steward what He reveals to you.**

**God's secrets are not merely revealed to the curious; they are entrusted to those who fear Him.**

*1 Corinthians 4:1–2 1 "This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. 2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."*

In the NKJV it uses the word "Stewards". *1 "Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and **stewards of the mysteries of God**. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful."*

### **Stewardship principle:**

**When God gives you light, you become responsible for what you can now see.**

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## **8. God's Word of Counsel — God's Truth Spoken to Another Person**

God's Word can be ministered through encouragement, counsel, exhortation admonition and teaching between believers.

*Colossians 3:16 "...teach and admonish one another with all wisdom..."*

*1 Thessalonians 5:11 "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up..."*

Ephesians 4:29 calls us to speak what is useful for building others up according to their needs.

### **How do we steward it?**



- Speak truth in love.
- Discern timing.
- Consider the person's needs.
- Don't use truth to control people.
- Speak to build rather than merely display knowledge.

Here is an example:

**“Thabo, I know you’re discouraged because you didn’t get the promotion, and I can understand why you feel overlooked. But I want to encourage you not to allow this disappointment to define your worth or make you bitter. Scripture says, ‘Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding’ (Proverbs 3:5). You may not understand what God is doing right now, but you can still trust Him. Keep serving with excellence, guard your heart, and don’t make a permanent decision because of a temporary disappointment. I’m praying that God gives you wisdom about your next step. And if you want, I’ll walk through it with you.”**

That illustrates several dimensions of **God's Word of counsel** at once:

- **Encouragement:** “Don't allow this disappointment to define you.”
- **Scripture:** God's Word becomes the foundation rather than merely personal opinion.
- **Exhortation:** “Keep serving with excellence.”
- **Admonition:** “Guard your heart...”
- **Wisdom/application:** “Don't make a permanent decision because of a temporary disappointment.”
- **Support:** “I'll walk through it with you.”

Biblical counsel is not simply telling someone what you think they should do. It is bringing the truth and wisdom of God's Word to bear on the reality of their situation. **When God gives you a word for someone else, can you deliver the right truth, in the right spirit, at the right time, for the right purpose?**

**Stewardship principle:**

**A true word delivered without wisdom can still cause unnecessary damage.**

## **Conclusion**

**Every Word from God creates a stewardship responsibility.**

If He **teaches** you something — live it.

If He **corrects** you — change.

If He **commands** you — obey.

If He **promises** something — believe.

If He **prophesies** something — contend for it.

If He **reveals** something — steward the revelation.

If He gives you **wisdom** — apply it.

If He gives you **the gospel** — share it.

If He gives you **a testimony** — tell it.

If He gives you **truth** — pass it to another generation.

And if He entrusts you with **Scripture** — handle it faithfully.