

What's God's and What's Mine?

A television commercial advertised a weight loss product. The company's slogan: "It's your life; treat it right."

A newspaper columnist/counselor tells an enquirer: "It's your life." Am I my own? Do I belong to myself? Until this question is correctly and decisively settled, there can be no serious stewardship. God makes it clear he *created* us and he *sustains* us. He also makes it clear he *owns* us. He has never relinquished that ownership and he never will. In reality, he can't.

I once saw a former fashion model interviewed on television. This is how she saw things at the height of her secular career: "It's my life, it's my beauty, it's my time, it's my money. I live the way I want to." And she did. In a hospital, she was pronounced clinically dead from a drug overdose. But God brought her back to life and she surrendered herself to Christ. Today, she says: "It's his life, his beauty, his time, his talents, his money." *And she has never been happier!*

Everything I am and have is from God, to be lived and used for him, not for me, because I have never been my own and never will be.

My body – ordinary or beautiful – is not mine. I voluntarily surrender this body to him not as a dead offering but as a living sacrifice – an action that is necessary, if I am going to serve the Lord properly. (See Romans 12:1.)

My soul and spirit are the Lord's. The same is true of my mind – dull or bright.

My thinking, working and earning powers come from the Lord. My talents and skills are his. *All the abilities I have - whether inherent at birth, bestowed at conversion, learned and cultivated – are God-given.*

When the Lord gave Moses detailed instructions about building the tabernacle in the wilderness, he said: "...I have filled him [Bezalel] with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts – to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship....Also I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you" (Exodus 31:3-6). (See also Deuteronomy 8:17-18.) *"For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?"* (I Corinthians 4:7).

This is inherited original sin: treating as our own what was entrusted to us by the Lord. Only eternal life is an outright gift; earthly life is a sacred trust, carrying with it responsibility and accountability.

Managing one's Christian life is not limited to *The Triple-Ts: Treasure, Talent & Time*. Anything that requires *accountability* puts it in the category of responsible stewardship. Not one area of my life is exempt from scriptural stewardship, because I am God's ransomed possession – body, soul and spirit. He purchased me with a specific purpose in mind.

And, he didn't buy back from Satan just part of me. He bought all of me. There isn't any

part of me that isn't his. Not even one percent of me belongs to me. He is my absolute owner. To quote Apostle Paul: "*You are not your own; you were bought at a price.*" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). "*He [God] ...set his seal of ownership on us ...*" (2 Corinthians 1:21,22).

In a local restaurant I asked a woman who seemed to be in charge, "Are you the owner?" She answered with a smile: "No, I'm just the manager." I am thinking and acting closest to the truth, when I think of myself as "just the manager" of myself, of all that I am and all that I have. ◇◇