

Stewardship: *n. the faithful management of what belongs to another; the ongoing evidence of whose you believe you are — proven not by what you own, but by how you handle what isn't yours.*

WEEK 1: Whose Is It Anyway?

Taught by Pastor Cole Jones

SERIES — I AM A GOOD STEWARD

You've fought the enemy for 60 weeks. Have you surrendered control for even one?

KEY TERMS

Steward — one entrusted to manage what belongs to someone else; not the owner.

Control — the attempt to manage outcomes God never handed you the authority to manage.

Faith (*Hebrews 11:1*) — the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faithfulness — consistency to the model.

PART ONE

Let's Talk About It

Before we open the text, be honest with the group. Every answer here is a live illustration of tonight's problem.

ON CONTROL

- ☐ Do you feel like it won't get done unless you do it?
- ☐ Have you ever felt like if it's not the way you would do it, you can't follow it?
- ☐ Do you struggle to hand something off even when you know someone else could do it well?
- ☐ Have you ever kept working on something past the point you should've stopped, just because you didn't trust anyone else to finish it?
- ☐ Do you feel anxious when you're not the one making the final call?
- ☐ Have you ever "let go" of something on the outside but kept managing it in your head?
- ☐ Do you find yourself re-doing what someone else already did, just your way?
- ☐ Have you ever said "I trust God" out loud while still gripping the steering wheel?

ON PERFORMANCE & PRODUCTION

- ☐ Do you feel guilty resting, even when there's nothing urgent left to do?
- ☐ Do you feel like you have to earn the right to be loved or valued?
- ☐ Have you ever felt like slowing down means falling behind — even in your walk with God?
- ☐ Do you feel like God is only pleased with you when you're producing something for Him?

PASTOR COLE'S DEFINITION OF STEWARDSHIP

“How You Handle God's Stuff.”

Why is trust so hard?

PART TWO

The Bid & The Block

Stewardship doesn't start with money. It starts in a garden, with a question about who's really in charge.

The Bid — *Genesis 3:1–7*

Why we chase control: the desire to be self-defining, self-sufficient, the source of our own "good." This is the root of every stewardship failure — money, time, relationships, body — because it's not really about the thing. It's about who's ultimately in charge of the thing. "You will be like God" is still the pitch behind

GENESIS 3:1–13 · AMP

¹Now the serpent was more crafty (subtle, skilled in deceit) than any living creature of the field which the Lord God had made. And the serpent (Satan) said to the woman, “Can it really be that God has said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’” ²And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the

every pursuit of money, status, and relationship we chase to feel in control of our own worth.

The Block — *Genesis 3:9–13*

Why we stay stuck: blame keeps ownership — the posture, not the possession — from ever transferring back to God. No accountability, no repentance, no correction, no movement toward the design He has for us. As long as the cause is always "out there," the correction never lands "in here."

trees of the garden,³ except the fruit from the tree which is in the middle of the garden. God said, ‘You shall not eat from it nor touch it, otherwise you will die.’”⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You certainly will not die! ⁵For God knows that on the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened [that is, you will have greater awareness], and you will be like God, knowing [the difference between] good and evil.” ⁶And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was delightful to look at, and a tree to be desired in order to make one wise and insightful, she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of the two of them were opened [that is, their awareness increased], and they knew that they were naked; and they fastened fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

⁸And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool [afternoon breeze] of the day, so the man and his wife hid and kept themselves hidden from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the Lord God called to Adam, and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰He said, “I heard the sound of You [walking] in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.” ¹¹God said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten [fruit] from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹²And the man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me—she gave me [fruit] from the tree, and I ate it.” ¹³Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” And the woman said, “The serpent beguiled and deceived me, and I ate [from the forbidden tree].”

PART
THREE

What's the Standard

Two Latin terms that hold the identity/action tension at the center of stewardship.

Imago Dei — *"Image of God"*

Rooted in Genesis 1:26–27. The doctrine that human beings are made in God's image and likeness, bearing His imprint in a way no other created thing does. It is the basis of human dignity, value, and identity — not something earned or performed, but something given at creation. It is *who we are*.

Imitatio Dei — *"Imitation of God"*

Rooted in texts like Leviticus 11:44 ("Be holy, for I am holy") and Ephesians 5:1 ("be imitators of God"). The call to reflect God's character in action — His mercy, justice, holiness, faithfulness — in how we actually live. It is *how we live it out*.

Performance culture confuses the two. It tries to earn Imago Dei through Imitatio Dei — to produce its way into an identity instead of resting in the one already given, and then living out of it.

*You are not starting from zero tonight.
You are learning whose it was the whole time.*