

Assignment Title: Reading Report 4

“Stewardship and the Kingdom of God” by Ron Walborn and Frank Chan

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This short book starts off by pointing out the weaknesses of the American church—specifically their reduction of Christianity to simple beliefs without calling Jesus followers out of this world and into radical allegiance to Him and His Kingdom.¹ As I read this, I audibly groaned in agreement and then promptly read the first page out loud to my co-workers. We had, just recently, been having conversations about the complacency and lack of passion in the American church and had even identified some of its effects in ourselves as products of those kinds of churches. The story of the poor man who gave \$25 to A.B. Simpson’s church invigorated me!² I want to be as kingdom-minded and wholly won over as him and I want to see those in my church doing the same! But, the question that this book didn’t quite fully cover as much as I would have liked was how to achieve that. How do we break out of being conformed by the culture and comfort and begin living radically for Jesus?

I loved that this book did not first dive into Biblical commands or directives regarding finances but instead defined stewardship through the lens of scripture. Stewardship is handling things on God’s behalf that only He truly owns.³ If I would have defined stewardship, I would have focused on responsible handling of things but would not have thought to include that fact that God is the true and rightful owner of all things. That makes such a difference when beginning the conversation on how we ought to utilize our finances and material possessions. I think this particularly fights against the way I was taught to give when growing up. If I received some money for doing chores, I was allowed to spend 30% of it, reminded to save 30%, and told that 30% of it belonged to the Lord. When the actual reality is that all the money (as well as my work ethic and talent and other non-material possessions) belonged to the Lord! Even the money

¹ Ron Walborn and Frank Chan. *Stewardship and the Kingdom of God*. (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Ron Walborn and Frank Chan, 2001), 1

² Ibid, 3

³ Ibid, 9

that wasn't specifically given to my church tithe should have hopefully been spent in a way that was honoring and glorying to Him!

“Unfortunately, this concept of stewardship may be more palatable when it remains a mere theological principle than when it becomes a call to practical Christian living. It is not difficult to accept Christian stewardship in the abstract, but we are slow to embrace it when it impinges upon tangible realities.”⁴ This quote struck me and I had to pause to spend some time considering if I was more comfortable with everything as belonging to God in theological theory than I was in practice. I definitely struggle to see my kids as God's first and to trust Him with their life. I also struggle to see my job in ministry as wholly His when it butts up against what I am willing to sacrifice—which reminds me of a quote from the beginning of the book which said, “We have produced disciples who do not mind taking up their cross, so long as it is not too heavy, fits into their schedule and does not conflict with their lifestyle.”⁵ After some reflection, I don't think my finances are the hardest thing for me to steward but my time, energy, and lifestyle are. I need to confess that and ask the Spirit to change my heart!

I really appreciated the way this book traced stewardship through scripture and applied it in a way that wasn't strictly about money or setting up rules to live by. The topic of stewardship is so applicable to so many areas of our lives and it truly does all boil down to our allegiance to Jesus and His kingdom. If we aren't discipling others (and being disciplined!) to see the Kingdom as of more value than this world, we will be fighting a losing battle when teaching believers to steward what they have well.

⁴ Walborn and Chan, *Stewardship and the Kingdom of God*, 13

⁵ Ibid, 1

Bibliography

Ron Walborn and Frank Chan. *Stewardship and the Kingdom of God*. (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Ron Walborn and Frank Chan, 2001).

With integrity, I have read this book (circle one):

Thoroughly and Entirely 100__%

Quickly but Completely_____%

Thoroughly but NOT Entirely_____%

Quickly and NOT Completely_____%

Not at all

Signed: __Veronica Torgerson__