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Dispensing God's Blessings

BY SUSAN E. MURRAY

The Bible defines stewardship as the act of serving God by carrying out a kind of household administration—the dispensing of God's riches to His family, meaning all those who have become His children through faith in the Lord Jesus (John 1:12–13). To be a good steward means we must learn to be faithful to our assignment.

One of the ways we are to be faithful in our stewardship is to focus on the coming of Jesus while caring for the precious lives entrusted to us. I found it interesting to note that the Greek word for stewardship found in I Corinthians 4:1 is of the same root as the words economy or dispensation. It means a dispensing steward, a household administrator, or one who dispenses the household supply to its members. This isn't about giving material things to our children; it is about revealing Christ through our actions and attitudes and our study of the scriptures. And it is not about "us" being "good parents," it is about revealing the truths of Christ as the Savior and of His eminent return. What a privilege and challenge!

My neighbor, Jeanette, who is in her late 70s, shared a memory of her grandparents with me the other day. She recounted how she loved going to her grandparents' home, and they stopped by often. Upon arriving with her mother, often they found her grandparents sitting across the dining room table from one another, each with a Bible and hymnal before them. Each shared a verse of scripture and then the other chose a hymn which they sang

together. It wasn't that they shared just one scripture and one hymn as a routine; they read, shared and sang for some time. Jeanette loved being in their presence. She loved the sense of peace that surrounded that experience and relies on those same hymns today. Her grandparents were good stewards.

In ancient times wealthy families had stewards who were responsible to care for the dispensing of the means of life—food, clothing and other necessities. Wealthy families often had an abundant supply of these necessities in storage, and it was the responsibility of a steward to dispense this supply to the members of the family. Our Father is exceedingly rich. He has a vast storehouse of goods which He intends to dispense to His children, but this requires a faithful steward.

Parenting is not just guiding our children by teaching, and it's not about giving them things. It is not about us. It is a divine commission, to tell the truth about an abundant God and His abiding love and goodness.

Susan Murray is an associate professor of family studies who teaches behavioral science and social work at Andrews University. She is a certified family life educator and a licensed marriage and family therapist.

