Stewardship

“An Understanding of the Heart that Everything we have is a Gift from God that we are to use to Help Others.”

The Abel Family Legacy
Honoring God Through Charitable Giving & Investing
Welcome to all family members present this day, and to future generations that will be blessed by the understanding and living out of a **stewardship** way of life!

God frees us when we truly understand in our hearts that we own nothing and that everything is a gift from Him that we are to be good stewards (caretakers) of. This truth is the abundant life and is life-giving. No amount of money can buy this freedom.

Thank you, Lord, for allowing us to share the truths You have revealed in Your Word, and for the grace to live them each day. Passing this wisdom on to our children, grandchildren, and future generations is the greatest gift we can entrust to them. “Please God, bless them with wisdom, guide them with Your Spirit, enlighten them with Your truths, and protect them from the enemy of our souls.”

The principle of stewardship is for everyone, whether they have little or much.

We are starting a new family tradition which entails both a financial gift to all children over the age of 18, and the formation of an **Abel Family Legacy Foundation**.

The financial gift we are giving at Christmas time is from both of us to each of you. Just as in the “Parable of the Talents,” the talents were different in their amount, but given freely. As good stewards (caretakers) of this gift, we would like to teach you how to honor God through charitable giving and investing, in both yourselves and others. Throughout the year, we will have gatherings that will include both charitable giving opportunities as well as instruction on investments. These meetings will be meant to help you today and leave a legacy for your family in the future.

At Thanksgiving time next year, the family will gather to give thanks to God for all He has done in multiplying these gifts and sharing stories of how God was honored though your efforts. This will both help and encourage family members to be good stewards of all of God’s gifts as well as enable us to designate some of you to be members of the **Abel Family Legacy Foundation** Board. The board will designate funds throughout the year in order to help others.

Why do we believe this? We believe in multiplication and reproduction (obviously, look at the number of us!) We believe that as we invest in you, you will in turn invest in others. This practice allows us to expand our giving through you.
Matthew 22:34-40

34When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, 35 and one of them [a scholar of the law] tested him by asking. 36 “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” 37 He said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38 This is the greatest and the first commandment. 39 The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

• Our daily response to God’s unceasing invitation to love must be first in our heart, our soul, our mind, and with all our strength – FIRST in our life. It is through this primary, ever deepening (both personal and intimate) relationship with God, the Father, God the Son, Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit (our Trinitarian God) that all other relationships are nurtured.

• This is how we can love our neighbors, even our enemies, as ourselves. For we receive God’s love for us as His children first. Our obedience to God’s commandments is our fleshing out our love for Him.

2~Genesis 4:1-16

1 The man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, saying, “I have produced a male child with the help of the LORD.” 2 Next she gave birth to his brother Abel. Abel became a herder of flocks, and Cain a tiller of the ground. 3 In the course of time Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the fruit of the ground, 4 while Abel, for his part, brought the fatty portion of the firstlings of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry and dejected. 6 Then the Lord said to Cain: “Why are you angry? Why are you dejected? 7 If you act rightly, you will be accepted; but if not, sin lies in wait at the door: its urge is for you, yet you can rule over it.” 8 Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let us go out in the field.” When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. 9 Then the Lord asked Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” He answered, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” 10 God then said: “What have you done? Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground! 11 Now you are banned from the ground that opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. 12 If you till the ground, it shall no longer give you its produce. You shall become a constant wanderer on the earth.” 13 Cain said to the Lord: “My punishment is too great to bear. 14 Look, you have now banished me from the ground. I must avoid you and be a constant wanderer on the earth. Anyone may kill me at sight.” 15 “Not so!” the Lord said to him. “If anyone kills Cain, Cain shall be avenged seven times.” So the Lord put a mark on Cain, so that no one would kill him at sight. 16 Cain then left the Lord’s presence and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

• God is the giver of all good gifts, especially the gift of our children.

All good giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no alteration or shadow caused by change. — James 1:17

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• No matter your occupation or income, put God FIRST in your giving, honoring Him first. A tithe (10%) is a biblical starting point. Give God the best. You cannot out-give God.

But seek first the kingdom [of God] and His righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. — Matthew 6:33

• Do not give to God out of obligation or what’s left over. Honor Him first with the “First Fruits” as a cheerful giver, recognizing in your heart and mind that the gift you give back to God was God’s gift to you. 

Nehemiah 10:35-37

35 We, priests, Levites, and people, have determined by lot concerning the procurement of wood: it is to be brought to the house of our God by each of our ancestral houses at stated times each year, to be burnt on the altar of the Lord, our God, as the law prescribes. 36 We have agreed to bring each year to the house of the Lord the first fruits of our fields and of our fruit trees, of every kind: also, as is prescribed in the law, to bring to the house of our God, to the priests who serve in the house of our God, the firstborn of our children and our animals, including the firstborn of our flocks and herds. — Nehemiah 10:35-37

• Not putting God first in your life opens a portal for which the enemy of our soul is allowed to pump in his poison of anger, jealousy, pride, lies, etc. All of which are grave sins that rob the abundant life God wants us to have. When we fail to give God His portion (10%), Satan is permitted to collect, whether in repairs, medical bills, loss of funds, job etc.

• Our choice to honor God will bring forth God’s blessing or the opposite, self-inflicted consequences. If we fail to honor Him, we may just get the bitter fruit of having our own way.

But my people did not listen to my words; Israel would not submit to me. — Psalm 81:12

• God’s love is always constant, abundant, and unceasing equal to each of us. Our giving back to Him is the response of our heart to His invitation. We cannot earn His love. It is without blemish or partiality. It cannot change no matter what.

Matthew 6:19-21, 24

19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be. 24 “No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [money and the things of this world].”

• Telling God that we love Him with our lips, but failing to demonstrate that love with our actions, is living a lie.

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. 24 He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like.

James 1:23-24

• Ask yourself this question: Based on my actions, to whom or what does my heart belong?

For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be. — Matthew 6:21
Malachi 3:8-12

8Can anyone rob God? But you are robbing me! And you say, “How have we robbed you?” Of tithes and contributions! 9You are indeed accursed, for you, the whole nation, rob me. 10Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, That there may be food in my house. Put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, And see if I do not open the floodgates of heaven for you, and pour down upon you blessing without measure! 11I will rebuke the locust for you so that it will not destroy your crops, And the vine in the field will not be barren, says the LORD of hosts. 12All the nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land, says the LORD of hosts.

- God is really serious about His command regarding the giving of our tithes and offerings. It is truly robbing from God when we do not put Him first with a tithe of ALL that He has entrusted to us. This especially pertains to the gift of our time, talent and treasure.
- The blessings that God pours down on us are those which money cannot buy and the world cannot fulfill. The fruit God gives are the gifts of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. All of which nourish the spiritual life and our union with God. This makes for a chain reaction that trickles down in and through our lives.

22In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. — Galatians 5:22-23a

Luke 6:38

“Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

- You cannot out-give God. Giving a tithe of all of the gifts God has entrusted to us is a starting point as God stretches us to give more. He continually brings opportunities to give into our lives. “You only get to keep what you give away.”

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

6Consider this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work. 9As it is written: “He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” 10The one who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11You are being enriched in every way for all generosity, which through us produces thanksgiving to God, 12for the administration of this public service is not only supplying the needs of the holy ones but is also overflowing in many acts of thanksgiving to God. 13Through the evidence of this service, you are glorifying God for your obedient confession of the gospel of Christ and the generosity of your contribution to them and to all others, while in prayer on your behalf they long for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. 14Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

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• The harvest of our righteousness is the fruit (the souls) of those who experience salvation in Christ through our obedience of sowing God’s seeds of unconditional love.

• Our joyful generosity is a reflection of our intimate relationship with God, producing us a heart of thanksgiving as we recognize that ALL good gifts start with God.

• Supporting (financially and prayerfully) others who have gifts of service in the Body of Christ is living out the Gospel message.

• Thank God every morning when you awaken for the opportunity to serve Him through your service to others.

*They are renewed each morning—great is your faithfulness!* — Lamentations 3:23

• The measure you sow, with the gift of your time, will be measured back to you.

*Because the one who sows for his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows for the spirit will reap eternal life from the spirit.* — Galatians 6:8

• Be a cheerful giver as giving unto the Lord.

*For I know your eagerness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia has been ready since last year; and your zeal has stirred up most of them.* — 2 Corinthians 9:2

• God is our source for EVERYTHING. Ask Him to help you in ALL matters, including the matter of giving, and He will answer.

*But if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and he will be given it.* — James 1:5

• When you receive accolades or appreciation from the use of your gift, graciously receive it as unto the Lord. Never reject a person’s “verbal bouquet” but rather receive it as from the Lord.

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Matthew 7:24-27

24“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. 25The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. 26And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. 27The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined.”

• Love is a call to action. Faith alone is dead, works alone are dead (*James*) However faith working through love (*Galatians*) is our Christian life. By this we en-flesh the Word of God.

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• No matter the calamity or tragedy in our lives, we can walk through them all with God’s grace when we truly build our lives on the foundation of Christ.

3Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. — Romans 5:3-5

• If Christ is not the solid ground on which our family is built, we are doomed to fall apart and lose our unity. “The family that prays together, stays together”

8~Proverbs 3:9-10

9Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruit of all your produce; 10Then will your barns be filled with plenty, with new wine your vats will overflow.

• It is imperative that we give to God the FIRST fruits of our income and not what is left over. This is a test to see if God is truly first in our lives.

• The “plenty” spoken of is a broad term. His love is immeasurable in human terms and will be a constant overflow from our lives to those that God brings into our path each day.

9~Mark 12:41-44

41He sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. 42A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents. 43Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, “Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. 44For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."

• It is not the size or amount of the gift — it is the intention of the heart. Recall the “Widows’ Mite”.

• Not equal giving, but equal sacrifice depicts the economy of God.

   But Samuel said: “Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obedience to the Lord’s command? Obedience is better than sacrifice, to listen, better than the fat of rams. — 1 Samuel 15:22


18An official asked him this question, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 19Jesus answered him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. 20You know the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother.’” 21And he replied, “All of these I have observed from my youth.” 22When Jesus heard this he said to him, “There is still one thing left for you: sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in (continued on next page)
heaven. Then come, follow me.” 23 But when he heard this he became quite sad, for he was very rich. 24 Jesus looked at him [now sad] and said, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! 25 For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” 26 Those who heard this said, “Then who can be saved?” 27 And he said, “What is impossible for human beings is possible for God.” 28 Then Peter said, “We have given up our possessions and followed you.” 29 He said to them, “Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God 30 who will not receive [back] an overabundant return in this present age and eternal life in the age to come.”

- The treasures we store up in heaven consists of all the ordinary things we do with extraordinary love.
  But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. — Matthew 6:20
- Works of love are “the offerings” we get to take with us into heaven.
- What the rich man failed to realize is that everything is a gift from God entrusted to us to help others. This is the true meaning of stewardship. When we grasp that we own nothing and that ALL belongs to God sets us FREE. God may literally ask us to sell everything and give it away to the poor as St. Francis of Assisi did. Or He may call us to be caretakers (stewards) of His property in order to bring Him honor, glory, and praise during our “watch” over all His gifts and benefits.
- ALL things are possible in God, with God, and through God. God encourages us to ask, seek, and to knock, always surrendered to His will. It is only through God and His free gift of salvation, that anyone can be saved. Receive the gift of His Son and be saved.
  Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. — Matthew 7:7
- God’s fingerprints are ALWAYS an exchange of gifts. The more we give, the more we experience the over-abundant return from God.

Matthew 25:14-30

14 “It will be as when a man who was going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them. 15 To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one—to each according to his ability. Then he went away. Immediately the one who received five talents went and traded with them, and made another five. 16 Likewise, the one who received two made another two. 18 But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master’s money. 19 After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them. 20 The one who had received five talents came forward bringing the additional five. He said, ‘Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five more.’ 21 His master said to him, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.’ 22 [Then] the one who had received two talents also came forward and said, ‘Master, you gave me two talents. See, I have made two more.’ 23 His master said to him, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. (continued on next page)
Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.’

Then the one who had received the one talent came forward and said, ‘Master, I knew you were a demanding person, harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter; so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground. Here it is back.’

His master said to him in reply, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter? Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return? Now then! Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten.

For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.’

• God entrusts each of His children with varying gifts (talents) and resources which we are to use for Him. As stewards, we use these gifts to help others.

• “Me, myself, and I” is the cycle of death. On the other hand, “A stewardship way” of life is life-giving and has eternal rewards.

• Fear is faith in the wrong kingdom. It is a tool that keeps us from the highest and best plans for our lives.

• There is a consequence for not using our God-given talents to accomplish His purposes.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 6:23

• Start today to honor God by investing your talents and substance. This also includes giving the gift of finances. At the end of our life’s journey, we hope to hear “well done, good and faithful servant”.

His master said to him, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.’ — Matthew 25:23

• The person who buried his talents did not truly know God’s abundance or he would have invested his talents, not buried them.

Luke 12:47b

Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.

• Did you know that you are far wealthier than 90% of the earth’s population? God has entrusted you with much. Be a cheerful giver and allow God to stretch you to give more each year until perhaps the day will come when you reach a reverse tithe... giving away 90% and keeping 10% for your true needs.

• Ask yourself this question before you spend; Is this a “need” or a “want”.

You covet but do not possess. You kill and envy but you cannot obtain; you fight and wage war. You do not possess because you do not ask. You ask but do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. — James 4:2-3
Matthew 25:31-46

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome. naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

• The difference between goats and sheep is that sheep need a shepherd to survive. Their total trust, sometimes blind trust, is in the shepherd. If we are sheep, we know the Shepherd’s voice because we hear it daily in our reading and meditating on His Word. Goats do what they want, go where they want, meandering and wandering about. They do not listen to the shepherd’s voice because they are independent, stubborn, and self-centered. Which might you be?

• Love is a call to action. While here on earth, we are invited to be doers of the Word. We share His love by feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming strangers, clothing the naked, caring for the ill, and visiting those in prison.

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained by the world. — James 1:27

• No Bible, No breakfast. No Bible, no bed. Start today by putting God first.

John 10:10

A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

• It is in, with, and through Jesus Christ that our salvation takes place. Our ever-deepening, intimate relationship with Him allows us to experience moments of heaven on earth (heavenly kisses). (continued on next page)
These are moments when God reveals His precious love for us through another or chooses to use us to share His love to someone in need.

- Do not allow the enemy to rob, steal, or destroy the true joy which only our relationship with God can yield.

- Jesus came and gave His life for every one of us so that we may have life and enjoy it to the fullest.

- Say “yes” today and welcome Him into your heart as your Lord and your Saviour. Live your “yes” each day through His Holy Spirit.

- Faith and works is the fruit of our “yes” which results in a grateful heart.

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God desires to live in us, through us, and with us. The following is the priority order of a well balanced life:

1. **God.** God must be first. Through this relationship, all other relationships flourish. Don’t fit God into your busy schedule, build your schedule around God.

2. **Spouse.** Our spouse must be next because he or she is our number one vocation. If we get this right, we are ready to handle our next big priority.

3. **Children.** Our children must be third because they are God’s children which He has entrusted to us. The generational impact of our God-centered lives as we invest and train our children will have a worldwide ripple effect. They will be equipped to impact their world as we love, nurture, guide and disciple them.

4. **Mission Opportunities** (e.g., extended family members, the community, the work place, and the church). We are called to enflesh the Word of God, living the Gospel message of Jesus Christ at all times and in all places. This is our “Great Commission” (co-mission), to build the Kingdom of God by ministering to others.

5. **Self.** Yes! Self is important because we must strive to keep our “temples” healthy and fit. What we input is what we will output. Ask the Holy Spirit daily to help you remain strong, suited for battle as soldiers for Christ. Enjoy your life.

*A joyful heart is good medicine. — Proverbs 17:22*
Do a quick check on your life’s priorities based on how you invest or spend the gift of time.

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Based on the “Invest It” or “Spend It” accounting where does your treasure lie? What is the desire of your heart? Possessions end up possessing us, robbing us of the opportunity to be fully possessed by God. “Give” your life away.

If you are “Out of Order,” get in “Right Order”. Talk to God about your needs, your failures and your problems. Ask Him to be in the driver’s seat of your life.

The PAST is in God’s mercy
To go there only causes despair

The FUTURE is in God’s providence
To go there causes you to play god

The PRESENT is God's GIFT
to be lived in LOVE