STEWARD LEADERSHIP AND PAUL

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Stewardship is often viewed through popular approaches primarily as a financial attitude. However, the entirety of Scripture places stewardship in the domain of whole-life leadership. Stewardship is examined by tracing stewardship through the Biblical perspective with a primary focus on the Pauline tradition. Further analysis of steward leadership is provided through a literature review. Finally, practical applications are provided for implementing steward leadership by Christian leaders.

I. INTRODUCTION

In a sin fallen world, frameworks such as Agency Theory, depict individuals as being consumed with self-interest (Neubaum, Thomas, Dibrell, & Craig, 2017; Hernandez, 2012). The implications of such an outlook concludes leaders need restraints and controls to keep from using an organization for selfish ambitions (Craig, Dibrell, Neubaum, & Thomas, 2011). Alternate leadership theories are built on a different assumption that a trace of goodness exists in humanity (Rodin, 2010). Even stewardship theory is presented by some scholars as a positive outlook on humanities capability to lead (Hernandez, 2012). Rodin (2010) however, argued that stewardship instead is built on the basis that although humanity is blighted by sin, the concept of a steward leader as a holistic approach. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (KJV). Steward leadership is examined in this article as an approach to the Apostle Paul and is further presented as a whole-life approach to modern leaders.

II. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF STEWARD LEADERSHIP

The holistic nature of stewardship finds its roots as a desirable virtue and central element of the Christian faith (Moody, 2014). Understanding this foundation is important for the individual attempting to personify the qualities of a steward. The ancient world of Paul was accustomed to the concept of stewardship and it is no wonder that it is found in the New Testament. The concept of stewardship is also presented in the Old Testament. The steward leader footprint in Scripture is exhibited in Table 1. The table displays the substantial emphasis of stewarding activities in Paul's writings. To define stewardship, both the Old and New Testaments are studied in their use of the word. Finally, Paul's approach to stewardship and the Christian life are investigated.

Table 1:

Scripture References of Stewardship Concepts

Examples of Stewardship	Reference
Stewardship by Individuals	Gen. 2:15, 39:4-6; Dan. 6:1-3
Stewardship by Groups	Lev. 22:9; 1 Sam. 2:15; Acts 6:1-6
Stewardship of Homes	Gen. 43:16; 2 Sam. 16:1, 19:17; Est. 1:8
Stewardship in Parable Form	Mt. 12: 36, 25:14-30; Lk. 12:48, 16:1-2, 19:12-27
Stewardship in Pauline Tradition	Rom. 14:12; 1 Cor. 4:1-2, 6:18-20, 9:17; 2 Cor. 11:28; Eph. 3:2; Gal. 1:15-16; 1 Th. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:11, 3:13, 4:14-15; 2 Tim. 1:14; Tt. 1:3, 7
Stewardship in General Epistles	1 Pet. 4:4-5, 10-11

Biblical stewardship begins with the creation of world and the concept of ownership (Wright, 2004). In Genesis 1:28, God's command is recorded for humanity to "have dominion." The Hebrew word, *radah,* conveys a level of authority or ability to rule over (Swanson, 2015). However, this authority is given by one with authority to another that did not have authority. The command to rule over and not abuse or destroy the creation shows a giving over of something to another in trust (Williams, 2004). This partnership between deity and humanity marks the beginning usage of stewarding in Scripture.

However, a further analysis of the Old and New Testament Scriptures is needed before a definition of steward leadership is given. Out of several Hebrew words, one is primarily translated into steward, *bayith*, meaning to be over a house. There are several nuances to this word where an individual could be over a business, a son over his father's belonging, or as a slave with oversight of other slaves. Joseph is a prime example of a steward in the Old Testament. Genesis 39:4-6 recounts Joseph's appointment over Potiphar's house, and in 41:38-57 the later appointment of Joseph as the Pharaoh's steward of Egypt where He was in charge of everything except when Pharoah was on his throne.

The New Testament Greek continues this practice of stewardship as a concept. The two key Greek words are *epitropos* and *oikonomos*. The concept of being trusted

to care or take responsibility for another's possessions is found in *epitropos*. The more widely used word, *oikonomos* contains the delegated responsibility to dispense and manage. This word is Paul's primary term. Therefore, Paul's usage of steward is most likely placed against the Greco-Roman life and pre-existing usage of the term in Jewish and other pagan religions (Reumann, 1958).

Further evidence for this common usage of steward terminology to denote Paul and other apostles' position in the plan of salvation is evidenced in 1 Corinthians 4:1-2: Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. Paul begins this chapter with a summary of the apostle's place in God's plan of salvation. Ephesians 3:2 notes that the gospel of grace was handed over to the apostles. In Paul's message to Corinth, he shared that the apostles were entrusted with the mysteries of God (Schenck, 2006). Against the backdrop of highly touted government officials and other prestigious leaders, the apostles were stewards, servants with great responsibility. The irony between leaders as followers is amplified in Paul's usage of *oikonomos* to refer to himself and the apostles (Holmer, 1955). We begin to see the teaching that God has made every believer a trusted steward of the gospel and all that entails (Prime, 2005).

III. IMPLICATIONS OF THE BIBLICAL STEWARD

Biblically speaking, stewardship is a concentrated emphasis for a holistic life in the believer: kingdom generosity, commitment to the simple life, creation care, and more (Tizon, 2016). Steward leadership is the understanding that everything a person has in their possession is not their own but God's. Everything from finances, time, talent, relationships, and responsibilities fall under the umbrella of stewardship (Bell, 2014). This accountability before God is significant for the apostle Paul and the entirety of Scripture. The psalmist stated, "The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness of thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1). In another place, it is written, "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is" (Deuteronomy 10:14). The steward's perspective is that God owns everything (Wilson, 2016). Humanity is given dominion over creation to hold it in trust of the true owner (Wilson, 2016).

Wilson (2016) also noted a series of organizational accountability relationships, however, in the end of all things, everyone is accountable to God. The Biblical basis of such a line of thought is found Matthew 12:36 which states, "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Paul echoes this sentiment in Romans 14:12 also shared the reminder, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Scripture is clear in stating that the Lord is the master of everyone (Jamison, Fausset, & Brown, 1997).

Jesus is quoted in Matthew 6:24 saying, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Paul laments over many believers who damaged their faith because of selfish desire for monetary gain in his first letter to Timothy, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1

Timothy 6:10). The steward's motivation is intrinsic rather than extrinsic and centers on personal growth, self-actualization, achievement, and affiliation (Wilson, 2016). The lens of stewardship from a Scripture viewpoint is that our love for God is the ultimate force for motivation, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Stewards hold in trust the possession of another. The first gift that stewards are given is intimacy with God (Rodin, 2010). The Hebrew writer encouraged, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). Christian stewards understand the filial identity that they possess through a relationship with God. As Scripture stated, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1) and "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15). Stewards must cultivate their intimacy with God by seeking Him through a devotional lifestyle.

Self-confidence or confidence in God sets the boundaries of the steward's relationship with self. Once an individual is certain of their relationship with God, their confidence in God replaces their self-confidence (Rodin, 2010). Paul stated, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). Our calling and life are gifts from God and we should seek to give God glory and praise for the ability and life to fulfill our calling in him.

Scripture teaches us that showing love for God is the greatest commandment, but the second commandment is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mark 12:31). Rodin (2010) noted that the steward takes care of others by being present in the lives of others. Also, it is important to view others the same way God views them, valuable and made in the image of God (Rodin, 2010). The Christian tradition has placed high value on humanity. Steward leaders will seek the well-being of others with a sense of personal responsibility to them.

In the final relationship, Rodin (2010) wrote that the steward will find the most difficult challenge. Creation represents our time, talents, and other possessions. The temptation is to feel like one is in control of possessions rather than the responsibility to nourish creation to glorify God (Rodin, 2010). The Bible begins with an understanding that humanity is to subdue the earth, have dominion over it, to dress and keep it (Genesis 1:28; 2:15). The steward leader understands that creation is created for God's glory and in trying to control creation one becomes controlled by it.

IV. STEWARDSHIP'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Brinckerhoff (2012) provided a simple definition of a steward as, "someone who manages someone else's resources." Crudely noted is that in stewardship theory, even in the highest leadership position, ownership is never truly invested in a person. Hernandez (2012) noted the positive organizational development for collaborative relationships and trust through the stewardship perspective. Stewardship focuses on relationships between individuals and the entire organizations (Davis, Schoorman, & Donaldson, 1997). As such, scholars are increasing their focus on their research on stewardship (Kuppelwieser, 2011). Theorists have added several key contributions to

leadership theory through the stewardship perspective: social contracts, motivational support, and moral courage are a few of these contributions.

Relational and contextual support in stewardship are viewed as social contracts (Hernandez, 2008). Social contracts are the invisible notions that leaders will serve in the best interests of the organization and followers (Hernandez, 2008). Schlabach (2017) noted that the social contract develops from on the self-regulation from authentic leadership theories and a sense of professionalism a collectively regulated shared values. Trust, however, is summarizing value between the steward leader and follower (Hernandez, 2008). Where a practitioner of stewardship leads, coherence to the organizational mission increases (Hernandez, 2008).

The steward leader approach is also linked with providing intrinsic motivational support rather than extrinsic motivation (Hernandez, 2008). Hernandez (2008) further noted that leaders promote intrinsic motivation by utilizing relationships where followers gain a positive outlook of self. Through participation and further collaboration with followers, leaders encourage others to be more creative and innovative (Sagnak, 2016). Stewardship's given influence on intrinsic motivation also shows how steward leaders foster an environment where followers are driven to take responsibility for their actions (Hernandez, 2008).

As social actors, followers act independently in making hard-decisions and taking responsibility (Hernandez, 2008). However, through stewardship behavior followers are positively influenced to have moral courage in difficult circumstances (Hernandez, 2008). Integrity is a needed quality for moral courage to form (Groessl, 2017). Awareness of personal values is another component of moral courage (Hernandez, 2008). Steward leaders are cognizant of these needs and seek to draw them out through organizational relationships. This relational aspect also implies a strong ethical bent to steward leadership (Gini & Green, 2014). Ethical stewardship is of significantly of greater value than other governance models (Caldwell, Hayes, Karri, & Bernal, 2008).

Steward Leadership and Servant Leadership

Rodin (2010) argued that Servant Leadership theory, framed by Greenleaf, is a favorite amongst Christians traditions. Servant leaders view stewardship then as a financial component. Parris and Peachy (2013) identified seven tenable and verifiable values of Servant leadership: (1) being teachable; (2) showing concern for others; (3) demonstrating discipline (4) seeking the greatest good for the organization; (5) showing mercy in actions and beliefs with all people; (6) meeting the needs of followers and the organization; and (7) creating a place where peace grows within the organization. Though similar, Rodin (2010) argued that Steward Leadership begins from a distinct philosophical and theological position. Ultimately, the fundamental difference lies in spectrum of a person's relationship with God and how they view God's sovereignty over creation.

Choi (2014) nuanced Christians as leading servants with a spiritual focus. This distinction between servants and leading servants is captured in the steward leadership approach. It is noted that servant leadership faces the challenge of promoting the organizational efficiency because of a strong people focus (Udani & Lorenzo-Molo, 2013). However, those researchers also argued that organizational efficiency increases through a people first approach instead of an organizational approach (Udani & Lorenzo-Molo, 2013). Still, it is posited that steward leadership balances the differences

between people and organization. For Christian leaders, there is a responsibility to the people around them and the organizations they lead.

Steward leadership addresses the deficiencies in other leadership Christian perspective. Servant leadership is undeniably the most common theory that is encountered. However, servant leadership does not fill in all the required gaps of daily leadership and management tasks. For example, at times it seems incredibly difficult to keep a servant mindset when doing paperwork. Or, in holding followers accountable for their actions. Yet, the perspective of a steward holding the organization in trust gives even mundane tasks a more purposeful meaning.

V. TOWARD A THEORY OF BIBLICAL STEWARD LEADERSHIP

Pascoe (2013) noted that Paul seemed to go to great lengths to teach the leaders place in the churches. He asserted that the leaders place was to serve the community as the servant or steward of God (Pascoe, 2013). As such, Paul spoke directly and indirectly with the concept of the steward in mind. Table 2 focuses on several of the key writings in Pauline literature, along with the distinct qualities noted about the character or work of the steward. The qualities displayed in the table form the basic concept of Paul's espoused stewardship. A theory of a Pauline steward leadership is shown in Figure 1.

Table 2:

Paul's Key Writings About Being a Steward

Reference	Qualities of the Steward
1 Cor. 4:1-2	Mysteries of God
	Faithfulness
2 Cor. 11:28	Daily care of the Churches
1 Th. 2:4	Trusted with the Gospel
	Accountability to God
1 Tim. 1:11	Trusted with the Gospel
2 Tim. 1:14	Trusted with a good thing
Titus 1:3	Trusted with the Word

Figure 1:

Theoretical Concept of a Pauline Steward Leadership

Accountability

      Primarily to the Christian steward, as mentioned before by Wilson (2016), the steward is accountable to God. Paul also penned in Romans 14:12 that everyone will give an account to God. The steward leader is responsible to God first in area of responsibility. Luke, a companion of Paul, wrote that whoever has been committed much will also be accountable to the same (Luke 12:48). The trajectory of Scripture on the steward is that of responsibility with God as the owner and one who holds His stewards accountable for all that He has given to them to hold in trust.

Faithfulness

      The steward leader is accountable to God for how they handle the responsibilities given to them in trust. Stewards are to be found faithful in carrying out their tasks (1 Cor. 4:2). Paul reminded Timothy to stir up the gift that was given to him (2 Tim. 1:6). Faithfulness to the task was a key indicator to the effectiveness of bishops and deacons (1 Tim. 3:4-5, 13). Stewards who are faithful in fulfilling their responsibilities are rewarded by God (1 Cor. 9:17).

The Gospel

Paul uses three other descriptions for the Gospel: (1) Mysteries of God, (2) a Good Thing, and (3) the Word. Holmer (1955) noted that the mysteries of God refer to justification by faith. The Gospel, as Paul defined in Romans 1:16 is the power of God unto salvation unto all that believe. The steward of God is entrusted with the task of sharing the Gospel and defend its purity (Phil. 1:15-18).

The Church

The steward leader is also tasked in the Pauline concept with the care of the churches (2 Cor. 11:28). This may include the formation and confirmation of the churches. The daily administration of sacraments and other duties of Christian leaders are part of their responsibility. Paul even goes so far as to share his tasks by ordaining other leaders and entrusting them with the same Gospel given to him (2 Tim. 2:1-2; Titus 1:5).

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, steward leadership is asserted as Pauline approach to leadership. The steward leadership theory contributes to valuable knowledge to leadership studies. Steward leadership theory is a Biblically based model and provides Christian followers understanding of their place in God's creation, their organizations, relationships, and self. In comparison with other leadership theories, steward leadership offers philosophical distinctions from other popular theories. Steward leadership is an attractive and practical model for leadership, especially for those in Christian leadership or other nonprofits.

About the Author

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