



The Journey to Becoming a Steward Leader

ABHE Forum 2026

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Seven Treks on the Journey

Trek #1 - Preparation: A Tale of Two Kingdoms

Trek #2 - Knowing and Following the Owner

Trek #3 - Stewarding our Relationship with God

Trek #4 - Stewarding our Identity

Trek #5 - Stewarding our Relationships

Trek #6 - Stewarding our Resources

Trek #7 - Creating our Battle Plan

Devotional Thought

Are we so busy doing our work for Jesus that we leave no room for him to do his work in us?

"The point is this: I saw more clearly than ever, that the *first great and primary business* to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. *The first thing* to be concerned about was not, how much I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished. For I might seek to set the truth before the unconverted, I might seek to benefit believers, I might seek to relieve the distressed, I might in other ways seek to behave myself as it becomes a child of God in this world; and yet, not being happy in the Lord, and not being nourished and strengthened in my inner man day by day, all this might not be attended to in a right spirit." – George Müller

Why a Steward Leader?

The primary distinctive: From a focus on what I need to do...to whom I need to become

Starts with a personal journey and transforms into a leadership journey

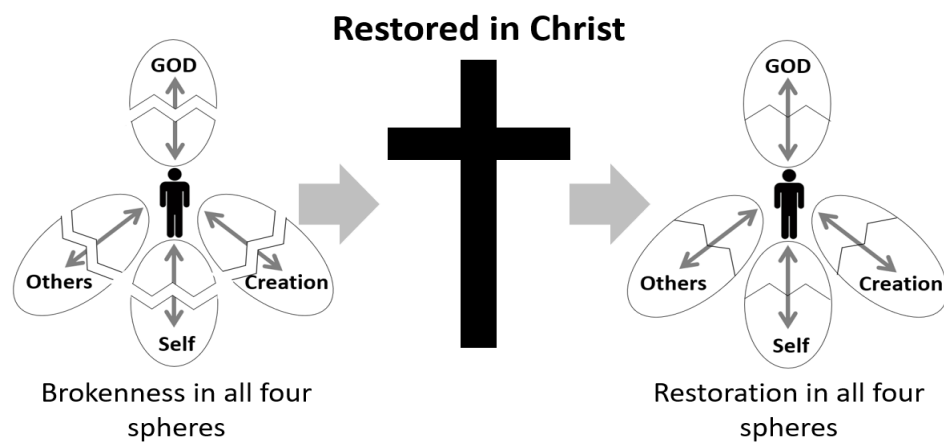
A steward leader is a faithful steward who is called to lead

Getting there requires a life-long journey. Welcome!

Trek #1:

Preparing for the Journey – A Tale of Two Kingdoms

- Every Leader's Battle
- Created to be One-Kingdom People
- Sin brought brokenness in all four relationships
- We have been given back our calling to be One-Kingdom people
- It is a **gift** we must steward!



- The temptation is to reenact the sin of Eden and grasp at building our own second kingdom alongside God's
- The Reward for Our Second Kingdom Building
- Who is Leading You

As leaders we face this battle every day

- **Steward or Owner**
- **Surrender or Control**
- **Trust or Self Reliance**
- **Freedom or Bondage**

It's not who you are leading, but who is leading you that matters!

We are all on the journey of becoming more faithful stewards

- Where are you on that journey?
- Where is God leading you to trust Him more?
- Do you live less as an owner and more as a steward each day?
- Have you surrendered everything to God in all four spheres of your life?

Breakout Assignment

Trek #2: Knowing and Following the Owner

It's All His!

Steward leaders ***understand that their lives are not their own.***

- They are stewards of every area of life and resist the temptations to play the role of owner.
- They see God as the true Owner, listen for His leading and respond with joyful obedience.
- Do you believe that everything belongs to God as the rightful owner?
- Even of our own life? Every day? Every decision? Every need? Every conflict? Every unknown? Every victory? Every failure? Everything?

How do We Define Success?

How you define success drives everything you do!

Two Views of Success

We Succeed By What We Do

- Output-Based Success – What We Do
- Three Problems with Output-Based Success
 1. You can achieve all these things and still not experience the ‘abundant life’ God created you to live.
 2. Leaders fail more because of a problem with integrity and character than a lack of performance.
 3. The Bible teaches us that the abundant life is more a matter of who we are than what we do.

We Succeed By Who We Are (and who we are becoming)

Faithfulness Driven Success

- What does God want from you?
- How does God measure success in your life and leadership?
- From Production to Faithfulness
- Change our perspective from “Well Done” to “Well Pleased”

Breakout Assignment

Trek #3: Going Deeper in our Intimacy with Christ

Steward leaders ***seek intimacy with God as their highest calling.***

- What is it that the Owner wants us to do with all that is His?
- *Knowing the will of the Owner is the most important thing we will every do as leaders!*
- *How your you define or describe intimacy with Christ?*
- *When and where do you sense this most often and most powerfully?*
- The enemy knows this and hates it.
- John 10:10 – how is he succeeding in your life as a leader?

- What are the things we are allowing the enemy to use against us that rob us of intimacy with Christ?

Breakout Assignment

Trek #4: Finding Security in Your Identity

Steward leaders are ***secure in their identities in Jesus Christ***

What are the sources that you allow to shape your identity?

- Owner leaders
 - Tie their identity to their job, their title, their authority
 - Success in their work = success as a person; no room for failure
 - Need to be recognized, applauded and honored
 - Intimidated by others who are smarter than them, need to be needed, planned helplessness
- Steward leaders
 - Stand firm on the certainty of who they are in Jesus Christ and reject the temptation to desire affirmation or applause from any other source.
 - This positions them to absorb criticism and deflect praise.
 - They champion others and celebrate when others are successful
 - They are not intimidated by the wisdom of others, they inspire it

From this comparison, do you operate more as an owner leader or steward leader?

Are there any owner leader tendencies that you need to confess?

Breakout Assignment

Trek #5: Recognizing Others as Fellow Travelers

Steward leaders ***see those with whom they lead and serve as fellow pilgrims.***

- Owner leaders see others as means to their own ends
 - Learned helplessness and the need to be needed
 - Absorb praise and deflect criticism
 - Our people need to succeed so that our college succeeds because I need to succeed – my identity is at stake
 - A Tale of two spirals
 - Downward: Ownership =>False Identity=>See Others as Means to my own Kingdom Building
- Steward leaders are set free to see others as ends in themselves
 - They shun the temptation to use others to further their own agendas.
 - Consequently, they encourage the personal and spiritual growth of those they lead and with whom they serve.
 - Set free to absorb criticism and deflect praise

- A Tale of two spirals - Upward
 - Steward =>Secure Identity=>See Others as Ends to be Stewarded for God's Glory

Breakout Assignment

Trek #6: The Abundance Road

Steward leaders *regard all resources as gifts from the hands of an Abundant God*

Who is our Provider?

Owner leaders fall to the temptation to be our own provider. When we see ourselves as the true provider and not God, we will be thrown back into the mode of self-reliance, which results in our leadership becoming our work, done our way, and for our glory.

Steward leaders acknowledge God as their sole and abundant Provider. By trusting in God's provision, steward leaders believe that what God provides is always enough.

Where is our Security?

Owner leaders fall prey to a misplaced security. The challenge here is ultimately one of trust. If we truly trust God to be our provider, then the fullness of our security in the world must be placed in him and his role as our provider.

Steward leaders seek always to find their security in God alone. They trust in him and his provision and reject the sense of responsibility to do what only God can do.

Abundance or Scarcity?

Owner leaders see their work through the lens of scarcity and not abundance. The enemy uses a scarcity mindset to breed in us a whole array of bondages, including envy

(others have more), fear (what if I lose what I have), drivenness (having more is the answer to my problem), and our misunderstood idea of success.

Steward leaders focus on what they have, what God has provided and desire to be good stewards of all of it. They believe that God is faithful and has provided enough.

Breakout Assignment

Trek #7: Entering the Battle

Steward leaders ***recognize the spiritual battle they are in as they strive to lead as faithful stewards in a world of people playing the role of master.***

- They speak the truth, which sets people free from bondage so they may experience abundant life.
- Is the idea of spiritual warfare familiar to you? Why or why not?

Steward leaders ***have learned that victory starts with surrender.***

- They set aside the temptation of self-reliance and take on the mantle of a leader of no reputation.
- Only after surrendering can a steward lead effectively.
- Does the idea of ‘surrender to Christ’ make sense to you?
- How is God leading you to practice this surrender?

MY STEWARD LEADER BATTLE PLAN

My Five Commitments as a Steward Leader

My Commitment to One-Kingdom Living

Discipline: I will pray each day to die to the need and desire to control, step off my throne and rise again as a free and faithful steward

My Commitment to Intimacy with God

Discipline: I will pray each day that God would reveal to me the next deeper step he is calling me to take in my relationship with him, and grant me the courage and faith to take it.

My Commitment to Self-Image in Christ:

Discipline: I will begin each day affirming the balance God seeks in my self-image and pray not to be pulled in either direction. I will surrender my identity in my job back to God each day, refuse to play the owner, and take on the mantle of the steward of my position.

My Commitment to Presence with my Neighbor

Discipline: I will begin each day with a prayer that God would enable you to see your neighbors and co-workers as he sees them. I will ask for the heart to join them on their journey and be used by God to bless, encourage and challenge them in ways that are in line with His will for them.

My Commitment to Steward of Creation:

Discipline: I will begin each morning submitting my time, talents and resources to God's work. I will pray for the heart and vision to lead a lifestyle that reflects a love and care for God's creation.

THE STEWARD LEADER PRAYER

Lord forgive my rush to perform that has distanced me from true intimacy with you;

*Lord forgive the imbalance that I have allowed to take hold in my understanding of
who I am in you;*

Lord forgive my use of relationships for my own means;

Lord forgive my poor use of time and my lack of care for your wonderful creation;

Grant me a heart that daily hungers and thirsts for authentic intimacy with you;

Help me see myself as you see me and give me deep contentment with that view;

Grant me a passion to love my neighbor and a willing heart to be present with them;

*Grant me the wisdom to use my time, talents and resources to build your kingdom,
and the heart of a true steward of your beautiful creation.*

In the name of the one who sets us free, Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Resources for Further Reading and Engagement

Pre-sales of my newest book are available:

ENOUGH

Finding Deep Contentment in an Anxious and Fearful World

Published April 2026

Order it and other books at: www.kingdomlifepublishing.com

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