

Who do you belong to?



Belonging to God.

Now if you are a professing Christian there should be no argument about the fact that you belong to God.

He not only created you but he bought you back from the slave-market of sin.

Romans 12:1-2.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and

approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.



Belonging to God.

Romans 14:7-8.

For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Acts 27:23-24.

Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.'

The Lord is not ashamed of owning us.

Isaiah 46:4.

Even to your old age and grey hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

Belonging to God.

Malachi 3:13-18.

You have spoken arrogantly against me, says the Lord. Yet you ask, What have we said against you? You have said, It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the Lord Almighty? But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it.

The Faithful Remnant Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honoured his name. On the day when I act, says the Lord Almighty, they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

KJV v 17 And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels;

Created in God's image.

Matthew 22:15-22.

Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians.

“Teacher,” they said, “we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.

You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?”

But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?” “Caesar's,” they replied.

Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.”

When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.



Genesis 1:26-27.

Then God said, Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.



Belonging to God.

God knows that we belong to him, but we need that truth to become a reality in our everyday lives and not just our professed theology.

Isaiah 44:1-5.

“But now listen, Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen. This is what the Lord says he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you:

Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground;

I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams.

Some will say, ‘I belong to the Lord’; others will call themselves by the name of Jacob; still others will write on their hand, ‘The Lord’s,’ and will take the name Israel.

Are you taking personal responsibility and care for another's person property or financial affairs?

An important element of stewardship is the idea of money and our bodies belonging to God. By recognizing that God is even God of our wealth, a good steward would always tithe, so that they may be food in God's storehouse. The idea of giving tithe, stretches as far back as the time of Abraham.

It is a sign showing that we acknowledge God's Lordship over us even our wallets, but above all it's a sign that says we love God more than our money. That we recognise that even if we need the 10% of our salary, we give it to the Lord because we trust that God is our provider.

Hebrews 13: 5 says “keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have because God has said never will I leave you; never will I forsake you”.



Four important principles about stewardship we must understand.

1. The principle of ownership.

Psalm 24:1. *The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*

In the beginning of Genesis, God creates everything and puts Adam in the Garden to work it and to take care of it. It is clear that man was created to work and that work is the stewardship of all of the creation that God has given him. This is the fundamental principle of biblical stewardship. God owns everything, we are simply managers or administrators acting on his behalf.

Therefore, stewardship expresses our obedience regarding the administration of everything God has placed under our control, which is all encompassing. Stewardship is the commitment of one's self and possessions to God's service, recognizing that we do not have the right of control over our property or ourselves.

Echoing **Deuteronomy 8:17**, we might say:

My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.

But **Deuteronomy 8:18** counsels us to think otherwise:

Remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.

Belonging to God.

2. The principle of responsibility.

Although God gives us “*all things richly to enjoy*,” nothing is ours. Nothing really belongs to us. God owns everything; we’re responsible for how we treat it and what we do with it.

While we complain about our rights here on earth, the Bible constantly asks, What about your responsibilities?

Owners have rights; stewards have responsibilities.

We are called as God’s stewards to manage that which belongs to God. While God has graciously entrusted us with the care, development, and enjoyment of everything he owns as his stewards, we are responsible to manage his holdings well and according to his desires and purposes.

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3. The principle of accountability.

A steward is one who manages the possessions of another. We are all stewards of the resources, abilities and opportunities that God has entrusted to our care, and one day each one of us will be called to give an account for how we have managed what the Master has given us.

This is the maxim taught by the Parable of the Talents. God has entrusted authority over the creation to us and we are not allowed to rule over it as we see fit. We are called to exercise our dominion under the watchful eye of the Creator managing his creation in accord with the principles he has established.

Like the servants in the Parable of the Talents, we will be called to give an account of how we have administered everything we have been given, including our time, money, abilities, information, wisdom, relationships, and authority.

We will all give account to the rightful owner as to how well we managed the things he has entrusted to us.

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4. The principle of reward.

In **Colossians 3:23-24** Paul writes:

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

The Bible shows us in the parables of the Kingdom that faithful stewards who do the master's will with the master's resources can expect to be rewarded incompletely in this life, but fully in the next. We all should long to hear the master say what he exclaims in

Matthew 25:21:

Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!

As Christians in the 21st century, we need to embrace this larger biblical view of stewardship; it connects everything we do with what God is doing in the world.

Belonging to God.

What is your favourite car?

About 10 years ago on my way to the UK I was waiting for a flight in Dubai airport and as I was walking around the airport I saw 2 cars that were been raffled, one was a Masserati and the other was a Ferrari. It is the closest I have been to a Ferrari and I had more than a fleeting dream of driving one.



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If someone let you look after their Ferrari for 3 months while they went over seas and asked you to take it for a drive every day, how would you handle it?



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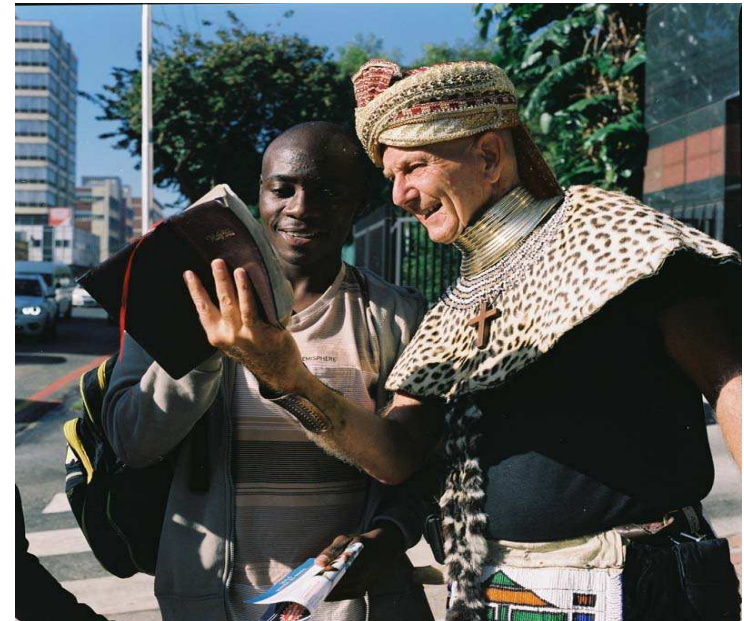
If your answer is that you would take extra special care of it.

I would ask you why and this may be the type of answer you would give me.

It is a very expensive car and it did not belong to you and that you were just looking after it, then I want to remind you that you are not your own, you are God's, and that means that your body, your talents your possessions, your money and your time are not yours, they belong to God and you have been put in charge of managing them. In God's eyes you are more valuable than all the riches in the world.

Most of us know Ziggi well enough to know that he is sold out for the Lord.

He would not idolize his car, yet it is always spotless and well cared for as were the 2 other cars he had prior to the one he has now. What he has, has been given to him by the Lord and he appreciates it and take special care of it.



Belonging to God.

I phoned Ziggi yesterday to ask him to send me a picture of his car so that I could display it today.

He told me that the doorman of the Sheritan hotel told him that his car is cleaner than the State President's car and the other dignitaries and he answered the doorman that it has to be because he uses it to transport the “King of Kings”



Belonging to God.



Belonging to God.



Belonging to God.

Luke 16:10-15.

“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.

So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?

And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?

“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts.

What people value highly is detestable in God’s sight.

The Parable of the Husbandman.

Matthew 21:33-41.

Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. They will respect my son, he said. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance. So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants? He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, they replied, and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.

The Parable of the Husbandman.

There are 6 main characters in this parable:

1. the land-owner — God,
2. the vineyard — Israel,
3. the tenants/farmers — the Jewish religious leadership,
4. the landowner's servants — the prophets who remained obedient and preached God's word to the people of Israel,
5. the son — Jesus, and
6. the other tenants — the Gentiles.

This parable is an indictment on all the modern day religious leaders who use the Church ie: the Body of Christ, to enrich themselves and live lavish life-styles rather than use the funds to reach the lost.



How well do you take care of your body?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price.

Therefore honour God with your bodies.



How well do you take care of your body?

What right do we have to ruin our health and even shorten our lifespan, not to mention the weakened testimony that goes hand in hand with bad habits like smoking, drinking and gluttony and the drugs that many consume with and without prescriptions.



How well do you manage your time?

There is a resource you have that is far more valuable than gold or diamonds and that is time.

You can never turn the clock back and you have less time today than you had yesterday, did you spend it wisely?



"People often complain about lack of time when the lack of direction is the real problem." Zig Ziglar

Belonging to God.

As you read this article one of your most valuable assets is slipping away. This asset is shared equally every day by rich and poor alike. And once it is lost, it is impossible to regain.

This priceless commodity is *time*! Time is a precious asset, especially for those living at the end of the age. To the world, the phrase “redeeming the time” could mean the following:

driving 65 mph in a 35 mph zone;
skipping breakfast; cosmetic surgery;
turning one's grey hair to brown to
recapture a youthful look;
or sleeping 14 hours straight to recover
from a lost weekend.

But to those in God's Church, it has an entirely different meaning—with significant consequences.

The apostle Paul admonished the first-century Church to “redeem the time.” This same admonition needs to be heeded by Christians living in the final era!



Belonging to God.

How many of us have put off overcoming or facing personal problems, wasted time in frivolous pursuits, neglected our relationship with God, or took lightly our calling as His elect, relegating it to less than top priority?

Many have not sought the kingdom of God as their most important goal!

Christians have missed numerous opportunities to grow! Most have succumbed to a misuse of time.

But this problem does have solutions, and we must begin working on them today.

What does it mean to redeem the time?

The book of Ephesians contains the admonition: “*Redeeming the time, because the days are evil*” (**Eph. 5:16**). The word “redeeming” in the Greek can mean “to buy up, ransom, or rescue from loss.” We need to *rescue from loss* the time that remains in our life. We can only redeem today and plan to redeem tomorrow, for yesterday is gone! We alone are responsible for using what God has given to each of us



Belonging to the Church.

**Not only do we belong to God but we belong to the Church
(The Body of Christ)**

Romans 12:3-8.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

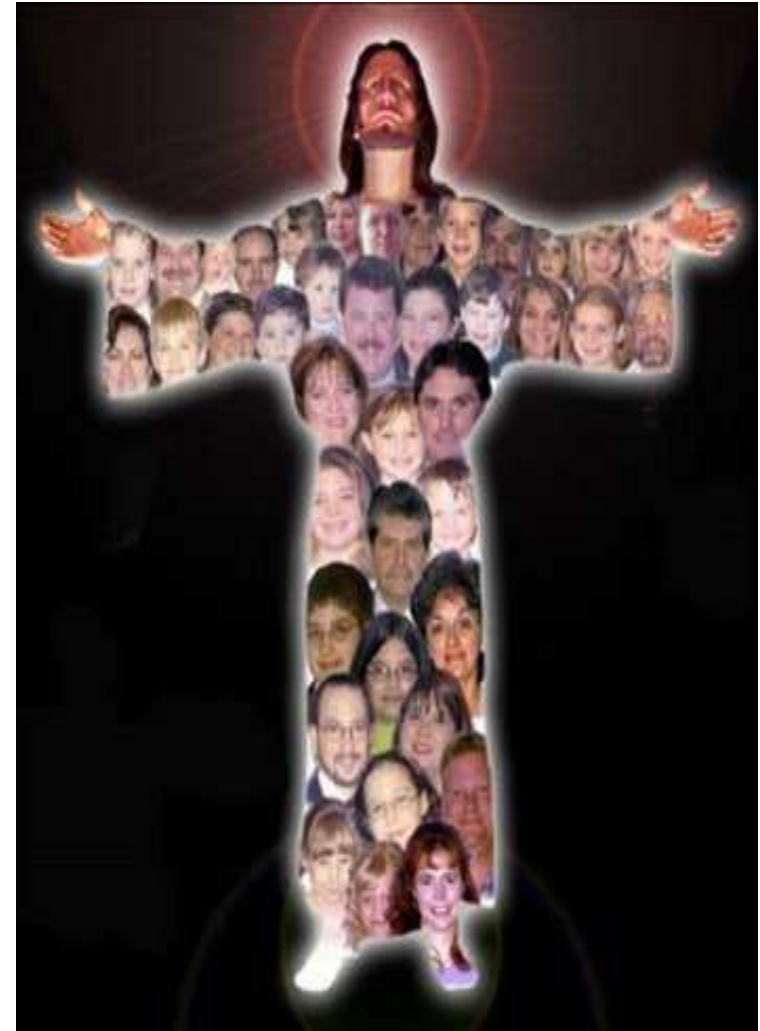
Belonging to the Church.

1 Peter 4:8-11.

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God.

If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.



Belonging to the Church.

1 Corinthians 12:12-20.

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

Belonging to the Church.

1 Corinthians 12:21-27.

The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.



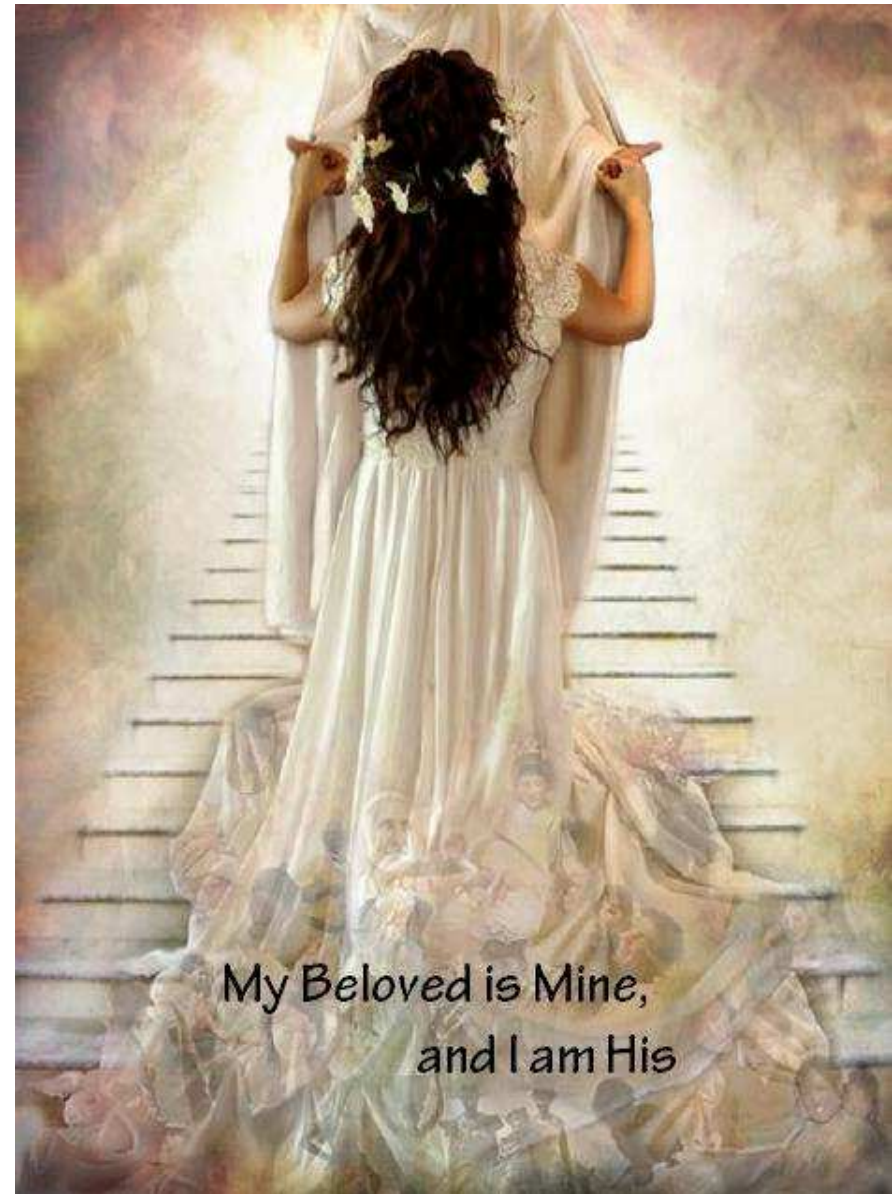
Belonging to our spouse.

1 Corinthians 7:4.

The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife.

Song of Solomon 2:16.

My beloved is mine and I am his.



My Beloved is Mine,
and I am His

Belonging to God.

There are only 2 choices for us as humans:

To be a servant of God or a servant of sin with Satan as our master.

Romans 6:16-18.

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

I
BELONG
TO
JESUS

You were made
by GOD and for GOD
and until you understand
that, life will never
make sense.

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