

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT BEFORE THE TIME OF TROUBLE



GOD FIRST
ADVENTIST STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

Property Management Before the Time of Trouble

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GROUP ACTIVITY

Property Management Before the Time of Trouble

(Study based on *Counsels on Stewardship*, pages 58-60; 40, 49)

Purpose: To develop values related to property management and investment during the time of the end.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Leader and secretary:** Each group must choose a leader, who will conduct the discussion, and a secretary, who will report the conclusions.
2. **Read the inspired texts:** Before any other work, each group must read all the assigned texts (one paragraph per participant).
3. The **Group Activity** is provided at the end of the text in the “Growing Together” section.
4. **Answers are based on the texts:** The group must find the answer(s) based primarily on the inspired text provided, and not only from opinions, unless there is an open question, with specific instruction to discuss personal opinions.
5. **Group opinion:** In case of open questions (no right or wrong answers), the group should discuss which opinion(s) would better express the thought of the group (not only that of the leader).
6. **Timeliness:** The group should spend no more than five (5) minutes on each question, and secretaries must take no more than one (1) minute to answer publicly.
7. **Paragraph zero:** Be aware that some pages may begin with paragraph zero (0), which is the continuation of the last paragraph of the previous page.

All the following quotes are taken from Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship*.

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God calls upon those who have possessions in lands and houses, to sell, and to invest the money where it will be supplying the great want in the missionary field. When once they have experienced the real satisfaction that comes from thus doing, they will keep the channel open, and the means the Lord entrusts to them will be constantly flowing into the treasury, that souls may be converted. These souls will, in their turn, practice the same self-denial, economy, and simplicity, for Christ's sake, that they, too, may bring their offerings to God. Through these talents, wisely invested, still other souls may be converted; and thus the work goes on, showing that the gifts of God are appreciated. The Giver is acknowledged, and glory redounds to Him through the faithfulness of His stewards. —p. 58.1.

When we make these earnest appeals in behalf of the cause of God, and present the financial wants of our missions, conscientious souls who believe the truth are deeply stirred. Like the poor widow, whom Christ commended, who gave her two mites into the treasury, they give, in their poverty, to the utmost of their ability. Such often deprive themselves even of the apparent necessities of life; while there are men and women who, possessing houses and lands, cling to their earthly treasure with selfish tenacity, and do not have faith enough in the message and in God to put their means into His work. To these last are especially applicable the words of Christ, "Sell that ye have, and give alms."—p. 58.2.

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Expect Individual Guidance

There are poor men and women who are writing to me for advice as to whether they shall sell their homes, and give the proceeds to the cause. They say the appeals for means stir their souls, and they want to do something for the Master who has done everything for them. I would say to such, "It may not be your duty to sell your little homes just now; but go to God for yourselves; the Lord will certainly hear your earnest prayers for wisdom to understand your duty."—p. 59.1.

Possessions to Decrease Rather Than Increase

It is now that our brethren should be cutting down their possessions instead of increasing

them. We are about to move to a better country, even a heavenly. Then let us not be dwellers upon the earth, but be getting things into as compact a compass as possible. —p. 59.2.

The time is coming when we cannot sell at any price. The decree will soon go forth prohibiting men to buy or sell of any man save he that hath the mark of the beast.—p. 59.3.

Preparation for Time of Trouble

Houses and lands will be of no use to the saints in the time of trouble, for they will then have to flee before infuriated mobs, and at that time their possessions cannot be disposed of to advance the cause of present truth. I was shown that it is the will of God that the saints should cut loose from every encumbrance before the time of trouble comes, and make a covenant with God through sacrifice. If they have their property on the altar, and earnestly inquire of God for duty, He will teach them when to dispose of these things. Then they will be free in the time of trouble, and have no clogs to weigh them down. —p. 59.4.

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I saw that if any held on to their property, and did not inquire of the Lord as to their duty, He would not make duty known, and they would be permitted to keep their property, and in the time of trouble it would come up before them like a mountain to crush them, and they would try to dispose of it, but would not be able. I heard some mourn like this: “The cause was languishing, God’s people were starving for the truth, and we made no effort to supply the lack; now our property is useless. O that we had let it go, and laid up treasure in heaven!”—p. 60.1.

I saw that a sacrifice did not increase, but it decreased and was consumed. I also saw that God had not required all of His people to dispose of their property at the same time, but if they desired to be taught, He would teach them, in a time of need, when to sell and how much to sell. Some have been required to dispose of their property in times past to sustain the advent cause, while others have been permitted to keep theirs until a time of need. Then, as the cause needs it, their duty is to sell.—p. 60.2.

No Cord to Bind to Earth

The work of God is to become more extensive, and if His people follow His counsel, there will not be much means in their possession to be consumed in the final conflagration. All will have laid up their treasure where moth and rust cannot corrupt; and the heart will not have a cord

to bind it to earth.—p. 60.3.

Would you make your property secure? Place it in the hand that bears the nail prints of the crucifixion. Retain all in your possession, and it will be to your eternal loss. Give it to God, and from that moment it bears His inscription. It is sealed with His immutability. Would you enjoy your substance? Then use it to bless the suffering. Would you increase your possessions? “Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.—p. 49.2.

Cheerful Liberality in the Closing Work

In the last extremity, before this work shall close, thousands will be cheerfully laid upon the altar. Men and women will feel it a blessed privilege to share in the work of preparing souls to stand in the great day of God, and they will give hundreds as readily as dollars are given now.—p. 40.2.

For Further Study

- “Paul’s Commendation of the Macedonian Church for Their Liberality,” [The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 350, 351](#)
- “Liberality of the Early Church,” [The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 335-345](#)
- “ ‘Freely Ye Have Received, Freely Give,’ ” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, pp. 49-60](#)
- “God Could Have Sent Means From Heaven to Carry on Work,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 174](#)
- “Help for Mission Fields,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, pp. 445-453](#)
- “The Light of Truth Is Shining Upon the Cabinet of Kings,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 8, p. 40](#)
- “Work in the Cities Will Result in Increased Support of Our Cause,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, pp. 100, 101](#)
- “The Breadth of God’s Work,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, pp. 440, 441](#)
- “ ‘Do Not Plead for Retrenchment in Gospel Work,’ ” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, pp. 55, 56](#)
- “Self-Denial in Behalf of Missions, and Its Effect on the Character,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, p. 297](#)
- “Our General Still Says, ‘Advance. Enter New Territory,’ ” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, pp. 28, 29](#)
- “The Whole Earth to Be Illuminated With Glory of Truth,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, pp. 23, 24](#)
- “The Church Was Organized for Missionary Purposes,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, p. 29](#)
- “Comparatively Few Called to Ministry, but Multitudes to Cooperate in Financial Support,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 148](#)
- “Prosperity of Home Work Depends on Reflex Influence of Foreign Work,” [Gospel Workers, pp. 464-470](#)
- “A Wise Distribution of Means,” [Gospel Workers, pp. 454-457](#)
- “Provision to Be Made for Poor Among God’s People,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, pp. 269-272](#)
- “In God’s Providence Widows, Orphans, and Afflicted Persons Permitted, to Prove God’s People and Develop Their Character,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 511](#)
- “Many Urge an Equal Share of Possessions; This Is Not God’s Purpose,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 552](#)
- “The Office of Misfortune and Adversity,” [Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 287](#)
- “Lessons From the Benevolence Enjoined Upon Ancient Israel,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, pp. 467, 468](#); [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, p. 598](#); [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 220](#); [Education, p. 44](#); [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 404](#)
- “Jewish Gifts for Tabernacle and Temple,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, vol. 77, 78](#)
- “A More Urgent Necessity Today,” [Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 526-529](#)
- “Never Greater Need Than Now,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 732, 733](#)
- “The First Fruits to Be Given to God,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, pp. 384, 385](#)
- “Perfection of Character Cannot Be Attained Without Self-Sacrifice,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 53](#)
- “The Night Cometh; a Great Work to Be Done,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 464, 465](#)
- “ ‘Do We Fully Believe That We Are to Carry the Word of God to All the World?’ ” [Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pp. 98, 399](#)
- “A Signal Honor to Cooperate With God,” [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 464](#)

Growing Together

1. Sylvia, a single mother, struggling to survive with her two children, asks you if she should sell her only home and give the proceed to the cause. She says that she was touched by the appeals and wants to do something great for her Master. Based on spiritual principles, what would be your answer? (See CS 59.1)

2. Sarah and Michael are owners of some properties and a well-known business, which provides their income. Sarah believes that now is already the time for them to cut down their possessions and slow down their pace, learning to live with fewer resources but enjoying more peace (and each other). But they come to consult with you because Michael, on the other hand, plans to acquire and invest more and more, so that they may be well provided during their retirement days ahead. How would you advise them? (See CS 59.2 and 3).

3. John is moved by the truth that “houses and lands will be of no use to the saints in the time of trouble” because “they will then have to flee before infuriated mobs.” He is an honest Christian and wants to dispose of his possessions to advance the cause, while he is still able to do so. What, in your opinion, are some of the prerequisites for God to

show John the right time to sell his designated property? (See CS 59.4 and 60.2)

4. Samantha, a committed Christian, inherited a lot of properties from her parents and is not inquiring of the Lord about her duty. She is planning to keep them all. She heard someone saying that too many properties will be a terrible burden during the time of trouble, even for committed Christians like her, but she doesn't understand why? May you help her? (See CS 60.1).

5. Sandra is very much impressed by the idea that for those who desire to be taught, the Lord Himself will teach them *when* to sell and *how* much to sell of their properties (CS 60.2). After thinking about it for many days, she asks you how to recognize or listen to God's voice and become available to receive guidance from His Spirit. What would you suggest to her?

6. With your group, think about some possible last-day scenarios in which property or resource loss may be the unavoidable result (CS 49.1 and 2).

7. Marcel, a businessman and a fellow member in your local church, is looking for spiritual guidance for his estate's financial management. Based on spiritual principles, how would you help him discover the best way to (CS 49.2):

a. Make his property secure: _____

b. Enjoy his substance: _____

c. Increase his possessions: _____

8. Just before this work shall close, "in the last extremity... thousands will be cheerfully laid upon the altar" to prepare souls to be ready for Jesus' second coming (CS 40.2). Joana is very concerned about the eternal life of her children, so she would like to prepare them to participate in that big movement that will fund the last effort of preaching the message. What would you suggest she do?



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