



Jesus ... Single Like Me: Leadership by Stewardship  
by Kris Swiatocho

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*EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is part of the Jesus . . . Single Like Me series.*

*Jesus lived his life as a single adult till his death. Because he lived his life as a single adult, he understands every aspect of what you and I are experiencing today. This series examines the "singleness" of Christ in relation to our singleness with the hope you will be encouraged to walk this journey you have been given. A journey that not only leads to the cross for our salvation but to his resurrection for our future.*

I grew up with a mom who had OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder), well in my mind, about cleaning and keeping things straight in the house. I told her when she dies I am going to put a bottle of Pine Sol in one hand and some Ajax in the other in her casket (LOL).

As far back as I can remember, I was told to keep my room tidy.

"Kristine, Kristine."

"Yes, Mom."

"Did you make up your bed?"

"Uh, yes."

"Did you shut all the drawers to your dresser?"

"Hmmm, yes."

"Did you hang up your clothes?"

"Yes!"

"Did you . . .?"

"Yes, Mom, yes, I cleaned my room."

And then she would come behind me and realize that her level of what clean and tidy was was not my level. She would start to tuck and smooth out, straighten and fold till it was perfect in her eyes. I remember there were times when I would purposely not clean my room just to see her come behind me to do it instead, because I knew she would.

What was wrong with her? Why was she so clean and neat? Why did every knickknack have a place? Why did the laundry have to be folded just this way? Why did the fork have to go on the left side? Why, why? And why did we have to repaint the deck each year, clean the yard, take down the drapes to wash and all those windows? Why?

Well, what looked like a mental issue to me (because I struggle with laziness) was in fact my mom being a good steward of what God had given her. You see my mom grew up extremely poor. She is number 10 of 12 kids. She grew up working on a farm, getting up in the dark before school to work tobacco, cotton, or whatever was ready for harvest. She only



owned one pair of shoes and wasn't allowed to wear them when it got warm. She lived in an old broken down house with floorboards that had gaps large enough to see the ground below. She didn't have indoor plumbing or electricity till she was 16. Life was hard. But one thing my mom remembered was their house was clean. That even though they were very poor, they took care of what they had. They took care of what God had given them.

So when my mom grew up and got married, she was finally able to get her own home. She was amazed at all the modern conveniences we take for granted. For the first time a real tub, a bed that had no former owners and curtain rods, yes, curtain rods. She grew up hanging curtains on strings, so everything became a treasure to her. She found herself cleaning, folding, wiping and polishing everything to take care of it. God had given her this new home with new stuff. She never wanted to take it for granted. She wanted to take care of it. She knew if she took care of it, it would last longer. She knew if she took care of it, she would be able to share it with others. She knew her home was the beginning of the ministry God had given her. She knew how to be a good steward.

Jesus, Single Like Me gives us a great example of the importance of stewardship not only as an individual but also as a leader. As we lead in our ministries, we are being watched by others on how we take care of what God has given us. Why would anyone take our advice or guidance if we are in fact, not living what we teach? One successful component of leadership is stewardship. Not only of the things we possess like our clothes and cars (even though temporary) but also in the people and ministries God has given us to lead.

In Mathew 25:14-30, when Jesus talks about his second coming, he emphasizes that only faithful stewards will be prepared for his return. He shares with us about the master who entrusted his servants with various amounts of his wealth. We learn what each man did with his portion revealing how much each trusted their master and how much each believed he would return.

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.' His master replied, '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!' The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.' His master replied, '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!' Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. Take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For those who have will be given more, and they will have an abundance. As for those who do not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'” (Matt. 25:14-30).

Jesus, Single Like Me Teaches:

1. The Lord entrusts us with whatever according to our ability.

God gives us things, resources, talents, spiritual gifts, spouses, children, etc., based on the ability we have to handle



what we have been given. I have often told folks that I will probably never be a wealthy person as I don't seem to manage money well. Sure, I am a good steward of what I presently have, however I know the ability it takes to manage large amounts of income, to invest wisely, to not allow it to control you. Some folks are just better at it than me. Some folks have learned better how to listen to the Holy Spirit guide them to do the work of the Lord. And as a result, they have been given more to manage and steward.

The "master" in these verses, like our Lord, knows what to give each of us in this life because he knows each of us. He knows how we will spend our money, our time and our resources for him. He gives based on how we take care of what we have now. God isn't going to give us a huge singles ministry if we can't manage the three leaders he put us over now. God isn't going to give you a bigger house when the one you are in is falling apart due to you not taking care of it. And God isn't going to give you a spouse when you can't seem to stay faithful to your boyfriend/girlfriend. What God gives us now are the building blocks for the next step of responsibility. It's not what we have in comparison to the next person or next ministry; it's what we are doing with what we have now.

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey” (Matt. 25:14-15).

## 2. The Lord expects us to use our abilities now for the Kingdom.

So you know you have a gift of administration or mercy or you know God has open doors to work with the elderly or special needs folks. You know he has showed you how these gifts could be used in your singles or other ministry. Then why haven't you started working? What are you waiting for? The key here is not what your gift is but using it when God asks you to. So many of us are waiting for something to do for God, when God has already showed us over and over places to serve. The problem is we want to serve in our power, in our talents in which we are comfortable versus in the power of the Holy Spirit. Just be available where you are and God will give you something to do. Ask God today how to use your gifts and talents through his Holy Spirit to lead and serve others.

“The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more” (Matt. 25:16-17).

## 3. The Lord teaches us to not hoard the resources he gives us to lead with.

It's so easy to lead our ministries where we are the only ones leading. Dealing with people can be hard. Sometimes they don't show up. Sometimes they don't follow through. Sometimes they don't do things the way we would. As a result, it's easier to just do things ourselves. But when we hoard our leadership, our time it takes to teach others, we are robbing folks of the blessings God has for them. We are robbing them of the work he has given them. We are actually setting up the ministry to fail.

For ministry to be successful you have to learn to delegate, to teach others how to lead, to give away the ministry. Investing in others by sowing into them with your time, talents and energy has great returns. You may not always see the returns but nevertheless they are there. If you hold your knowledge, your experience, your gifts to yourself, then you are like this man who dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. Yeah, maybe it appears it was stored for safe keeping but that is not what God has told us to do. Remember, God owns it all whether you sow it or bury it. It's not about the money, the gifts, the talents or the resources. It's how we use it to advance God's kingdom. What has God given you and how are you using it? Has he given you a car that you could be helping carry people to church in? How about a home to have a Bible study in? How about skills in planning events or leading prayer for your singles ministry? Yes, it might be a step outside your comfort zone or it might cost you something, but isn't the price he paid on the cross worth more than your stuff, your time, and your resources?



“But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money” (Matt. 25:18).

4. The Lord rewards us with more responsibility, more ministry when we are faithful with a little.

It's an honor for God to entrust us with more responsibility. As you serve in leadership, as you are faithful, God is watching. He sees you give of yourself, relying on the Holy Spirit to guide. He sees you sow into others' lives by trusting in him. He has seen you step out of your comfort zone to do things only he could do through you. And as a reward, he has given you more to do. Now some may say they didn't want any more to do, that their plate was full already. Please understand, more responsibility doesn't necessarily mean more to do. As a leader, if you are delegating properly, building the team that leads your ministry, the work should become easier. You should be able to step away at times, allowing your team to run things. We get tired and worn out because we don't teach others, we don't train or give the ministry away. So get excited when God gives you more to do because you have proven you are faithful servant and he is pleased.

“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’ His master replied, ‘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!’ The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’ His master replied, ‘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!’” (Matt. 25:19-23).

5. Sometimes good intentions fail.

I know we all get scared when we lead. It's hard to trust God in all that he has given us—from our ministries to our homes, to our families to our stuff. We want to serve, we want to do it his way, we want to trust, but, but, but ... God says there is no but. We are not on this earth to hoard what he has given us to USE, not own, USE for ourselves or even for him. All things were made for God and use for the advancement of his kingdom. From our jobs to our cars to voices to our relationships, all are for his purpose. God isn't interested in excuses of what you didn't do with what he gave you, even if you thought it was to help him. This doesn't mean that even if we do sow that we will always get to see the fruit. But we have to trust God and have his affirmation in what we are doing that it IS making a difference. We have to be obedient, trusting him completely. Having a singles ministry that is the same size year to year with the same people is like the man who buried the treasure to protect it. Our ministries need to see growth not just in numbers of people but in the maturity of the people. How by your example are they seeing you use the resources God has given you to advance the kingdom?

“Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you’” (Matt. 25:24-25).

6. Ignorance is no excuse.

It's up to us as leaders to do the research, search out training, read books, surf the Web to find additional resources. We know that God can grow ministry in places we have never seen or been to. We know what he is capable of. If so, then why are we living in that truth? Why aren't we believing he can do anything, specifically through us and the use of the resources he has given us. Leading where we simply give orders is not leading. “You wicked, lazy servant,” his master replied. In other words, “Get off your butt and start leading, start teaching, and start being a good steward of the gifts you have been given.”

Remember, too, that when we go before the Lord, he isn't going to ask you what you did with someone else's gifts nor what you did with something you didn't have. He is going to ask you what you did with what you were given. Are you prepared? Are you ready for Christ's return?



“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest’” (Matt. 25:26-27).

7. If you don't lead by being a good steward, God will take your ministry away.

Some of you need your ministries taken away as you are doing more harm than good. If you need help, ask for it. If you are in over your head, then slow down, start over, etc. Do what it takes to get things back on track. If you continue to lead in name only without doing what is required by God, he will take your ministry away and give it to someone else. Discipleship is serious to God. We have such a small time on this earth. We are in a race to reach as many souls for Christ as possible.

“Take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For those who have will be given more, and they will have an abundance. As for those who do not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 25:28-30).

Well my mom, even into her golden years, stills loves a clean, tidy house. I can't tell you how many Bible studies, cookouts, picnics, dinners, lunches parties, and so on that she has had over the years. She and my dad spent thousands and thousands of dollars on food. She has taken in strangers, family, friends and neighbors. She has watched her grandkids as well as other's grandkids. She has even been a hospital of sorts, taking care of my dad till he passed away. Her talents, her gifts started at hospitality and mercy and took her way out of her comfort zone to leadership and discipleship. From the money God gave her to the clothes she gave to someone who had none, from the time she took to really listen to others to the use of her phone for long-distance Bible studies, my mom has understood stewardship. Because in order to be a good leader, you have to be a good steward. Hey, I smell Pine Sol! Is my mom here?

Application:

1. What are some areas of stewardship besides money and stuff?
2. How have you taken care of what God has entrusted to you?
3. Where do you need to improve and/or make changes?
4. How can you be an example to others as a good steward?

Kris Swiatocho is the President and Director of TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries and FromHisHands.com Ministries. Kris has served in ministry in various capacities for the last 20 years. An accomplished trainer and mentor, Kris has a heart to reach and grow leaders so they will in turn reach and grow others. She is currently working on her third Bible study, From the Manger to the Cross: The Men in Jesus' Life. Her second Bible study, From the Manger to the Cross: The Women in Jesus' Life, was published last fall and is available on her websites. Her first book, Singles and Relationships: A 31-Day Experiment, was co-authored with Dick Purnell of Single Life Resources.

TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries helps churches, pastors and single adult leaders evaluate, develop and support their single adult ministries through high-energy speaking engagements, results-oriented consulting and training and leadership development conferences and seminars. Click here to request a FREE "How to Start a Single Adult Ministry" guide.

FromHisHands.com Ministries is Kris's speaking ministry. If you've ever heard her speak, you know that Kris is the kind of speaker who keeps the crowd captivated, shares great information and motivates people to make a difference in the



lives of those around them! She speaks to all church audiences on everything from "first impression" ministry to women's topics to singles and young adults. She can speak on a Sunday morning, at a woman's retreat or for a single adults conference. Bring Kris to your church today!

**Singles and Relationships by Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell**

Many singles are Christians who wonder if God will ever bring a mate their way or if they should just stop focusing on a future with a marriage partner and live the single life to the fullest. Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell offer solid biblical answers for singles in this newest title in Dick's popular 31-Day Experiment Bible study.