

THE STEWARDSHIP PAPERS

Putting the House in Order

I asked the Lord for strength today...to get a ton of work done around the house...but, as usual, I didn't get quite what I expected.

"Mom, I don't have any clothes to wear!" yelled a voice from some upper room.

"Why not?! I washed them!" I yelled back.

"There's none in my drawer," the voice persisted.

"I washed them, sorted them, and folded them. Didn't you put them away?" I asked in a now calm voice.

Silence...

"If they're not in your drawer, whose fault is it?"

"Ya mean I have to go all the way to the basement to find them?" came a whine.

"Ah-huh."

"But I can never find anything there..."

"Why not?"

"It's all a mess."

"So clean it up."

"But it's not fair! I didn't make the mess."

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“So, what’s fair?...Did I make the mess? Should I clean it up?...I started you out with things neat and tidy. Maybe you didn’t make the mess, but because of something you didn’t do...namely, put your clothes away...the mess occurred.”

I suppose I could have gone down to the basement and cleaned it up myself. It certainly would have taken less time, been a neater job, and caused a lot less hassle...but, somehow, I don’t think that would have been fair to the child, in the long run. What the Lord gave me was more than I’d asked for...the strength to teach my children the responsibilities for their actions...and their “inactions.” And it takes more strength and more patience to let a child learn these things. Maybe that’s why I can’t complain to God for the mess the world’s in; for,

“If [we] then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to [our] children,...”

[Luke 11:13]

how much more patience and strength it must take to be God.

(July 24, 1980)