

Steward Life

LESSON 41



STORY

Darryl was delighted with the three new trees he had planted in the yard.

“These trees will add significant value to my property when they get bigger, with their cooling shade on the back of the house in the heat of the day and the protection from wind storms from the southwest,” he thought.

Darryl had made a significant investment in buying more mature trees. Each one was already ten feet tall. Each was tied down to allow the roots to set.

A week later a strong storm blowing in from the southwest snapped all three trees in half.

“Sorry to see your bad luck,” a neighbor said. The neighbor’s trees, just about the same size, had made it through the storm with only a few lost leaves.

“Why did your trees survive and mine snapped off?” Darryl asked.

“Remember a few years ago when I planted these trees? They were little saplings. Remember how

the wind storms over the years often bent them almost to the ground? Those storms seasoned the trees. The stress on them made them stronger as they grew—able to withstand the winds. Your trees came from a sheltered tree farm at the nursery. The big trees at the edge of the nursery absorbed the stress so your trees’ trunks developed weaker wood. The first big stress snapped them in two.”

INSIGHT OUT

Have you ever thought of stress as one of God’s blessings? Scripture tells us that

certain kinds of stress serve to bring out the best in us (Jeremiah 9:7; Zechariah 13:9; Malachi 3:2-3; 1 Corinthians 3:13-15; 1 Peter 1:6-7). To grow up or continue to live in a stress-free environment may make us like the trees that suffered severe damage at the first significant stress. The person who lives the StewardLife knows that “good” stress and its challenges can foster patience, endurance and creativity.

EXERCISE

Think about the stress in your life. Identify what stress motivates you to be better and what stress serves to wear you down. Can you perceive the difference? Look with stewardship eyes for a way to view more of the stress in your life as a blessing from God to improve your endurance, to enhance your creativity in problem-solving and to increase your resistance to debilitating stress.



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