

ENJOY A WHOLE QUARTER of Stewardship



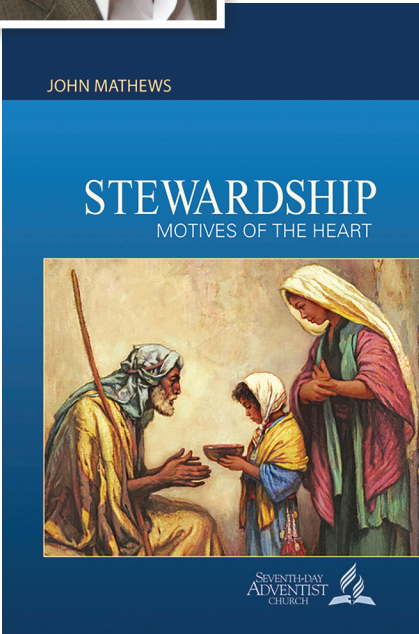
John Mathews, NAD Stewardship Director and author of the new Sabbath School quarterly writes

Money has always been a problem for God's people, and modern consumerism isn't helping. However, we do not have to succumb to its power. The Sabbath School Quarterly for the first quarter of 2018 is about the management of our possessions, about our relationship with money, and about the ways we relate to God as the

Owner of all we have.

To start with, stewardship is not a bad word. I once heard Dave Ramsey say, that he spent a lot of money buying www.stewardship.com for the specific purpose of redefining it. Here is my definition; "Stewardship is the management of our tangible and intangible possessions for God's glory." How are you doing in a world of financial chaos where people chase possessions and wealth, considering it to be what life is all about.

In *Stewardship, Motives of the Heart*, our journey gives this topic another look. The quarterly along with the companion book, deals with how we are to face the allure and satisfaction possessions of this



NOTE: This is the first Sabbath School stewardship quarterly since the 1970s.

world offers us. We must put materialism in its place in light of eternity. Our identity must be wrapped up in Jesus, not in our possessions. The outcome will be living a life of contentment. Jesus will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:23 NIV).

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The STEWPOT

A POTPOURRI OF PRACTICAL IDEAS to help you become a better steward

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HELP! *Is It* CHRISTMAS AGAIN?

BY GORDON BOTTING DRPH, CHES, CFC

This issue of the Stewpot is based on the following article by Emily Yoffe.

Yoffe, Emily. "Why I Hate the Holidays." Reader's Digest, Dec. 2004, pp. 84-89.

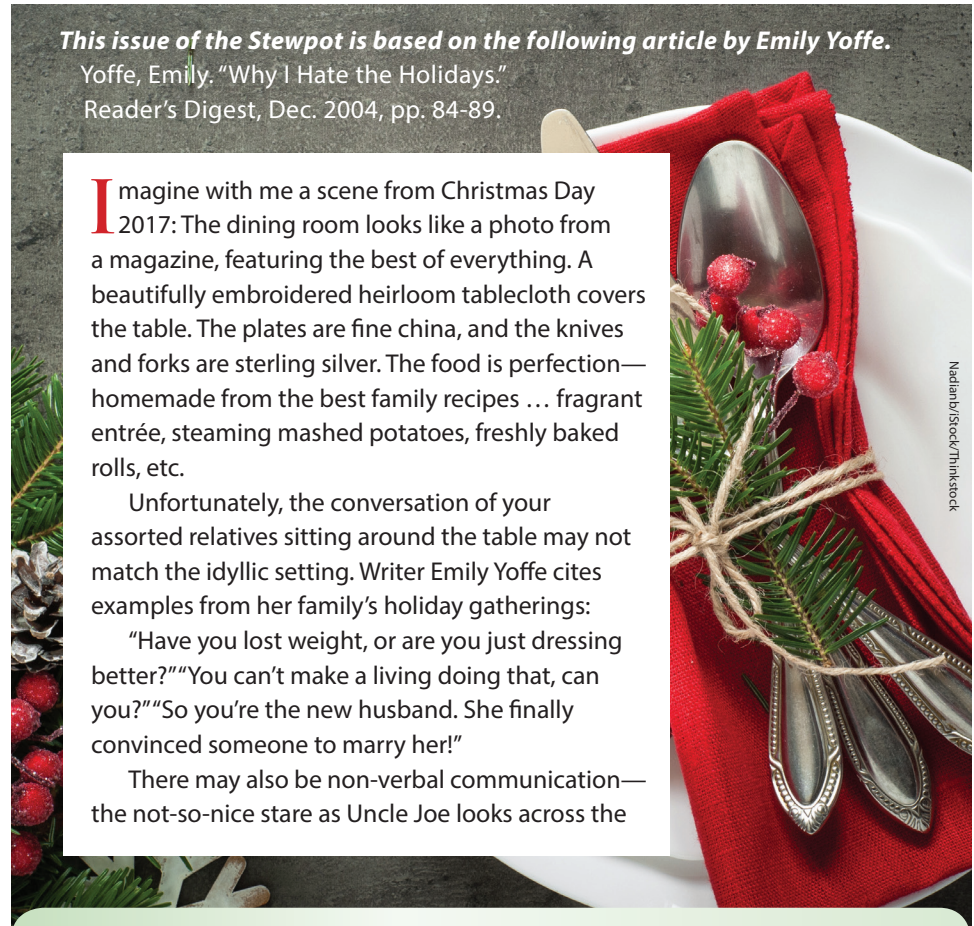
I imagine with me a scene from Christmas Day 2017: The dining room looks like a photo from a magazine, featuring the best of everything. A beautifully embroidered heirloom tablecloth covers the table. The plates are fine china, and the knives and forks are sterling silver. The food is perfection—homemade from the best family recipes ... fragrant entrée, steaming mashed potatoes, freshly baked rolls, etc.

Unfortunately, the conversation of your assorted relatives sitting around the table may not match the idyllic setting. Writer Emily Yoffe cites examples from her family's holiday gatherings:

"Have you lost weight, or are you just dressing better?" "You can't make a living doing that, can you?" "So you're the new husband. She finally convinced someone to marry her!"

There may also be non-verbal communication—the not-so-nice stare as Uncle Joe looks across the

STEWARDSHIP is a total lifestyle. It involves our health, time, talents, environment, relationships, spirituality, and finances.



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Top Christmas wishes —

- ✓ Two words: batteries included
- ✓ A string of lights that works
- ✓ The kids say, “Let’s sleep in this year!”
- ✓ Gifts ordered on December 23 arrive on time

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table at his nephew and thinks, “Five years ago, I lent him

\$2,000, and he promised to pay it back in two.”

Add to this tense mix some religious and political differences between family members. Sound fun?

I hope that this scene is not part of your family Christmas dinner! However, if you approach your holidays with an annual sense of dread, Yoffe has a few tips—which she gathered from a number of relationship experts—that may help you cope:

Use Good Manners – Even with Your Family

Often the conversation goes back to old stories that at least one member wants to forget—permanently. It may be a tale about

Johnnie who spilled the gravy all over Grandfather’s Christmas suit (10 years ago)! Or it may be about a teenager who brought home a high school girlfriend with really bad manners (in 1995)!

What do you do when relatives insist on bringing up embarrassing or unpleasant stories? Hard as it is, do your best to be tolerant and polite. P.M. Forni, author of the book *Choosing Civility*, suggests that you say the following to the offending relative: “I treasure the opportunities to see you at these gatherings, but if you refrain from telling me X, every time we see one another, I would be so grateful.” Some people think that good manners are only for outsiders, but if you use them at home, Forni says, “you will strengthen social bonds, show people that you love them, model good behavior for the

youngest, and keep the levels of hostility down.”

Set Clear Expectations

At every get together there is at least one relative that is always late, sometimes not by a few minutes but by hours. No host should have to watch as the food gets cold and the entrée dies out. Barbara Pachter, author of *The Power of Positive Confrontation*, says that families should clearly state the time up front, well in advance: “We’re starting dinner at 3:30. I’d like you to be there. If you can’t, we’ll start without you.” As they say: end of story!

Avoid Favoritism

Occasionally, and often without malice, grandparents and relatives sometimes play favorites with their grandchildren, nieces, or nephews, either by quality or quantity in giving gifts. If that has happened before, the host or one of the parents needs to gently point out that all the children need to be treated the same, and that includes stepchildren. (Purchase a few extra gifts to have on hand to even things out—just in case.)

Keep Your Own Traditions

Although you have a family of your own, you may feel that you have to follow the traditions

of your parents or grandparents. You don’t! You can keep relationships intact by replacing traditions that don’t work with ones that do. Rather than crowd the whole family into mom’s small home, why not stay in a motel, or have mom come to your house? If the after-dinner conversation is unpleasant, find new ways to be together, such as playing a board game or watching a movie.

Don’t Play Mind Games

Refuse to get caught up in passive-aggressive mind games. If your mother gives you clothes that are too small in order to make a point about your weight, just say “thank you” and exchange them, or tell mom politely that you prefer not to receive clothes as gifts. Conversely, be careful how you make others feel. If your sister can’t cook, don’t ask her to make a dish for dinner just to watch her squirm. Ask her to bring the drinks or purchase a pie.

This year, determine to choose more joy and laughter and less stress and hassle by remembering the **real reason for the season—the birth of our Savior.**



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