

## Becoming Stewards: The 4 “B’s” of [Non]Stewardship

What does stewardship mean at the intersection of Black Friday and Christ the King Sunday? Conspicuous consumption and Christian discipleship? Can they go hand in hand, side by side, as though Christ’s disciples can be something else besides being stewards? Is there something beside stewardship? Let’s think about the third “B” of becoming stewards:

### The Third ‘B’ of Becoming Stewards: Beside

The Bible says, *“Thus says the Lord: I am the only God, beside me there is no other.”* In Islam, this doctrine of the uniqueness of God is expressed by the saying, *“God is One God and God has no consort.”* Stewards can never be confused with consorts: the steward is infinitely subordinate to the creator of the universe! As the New Testament reading for Christ the King Sunday says: *“Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth”* (Rev. 1:4-5). A steward is always a servant—even when the Master sets the steward over other stewards! Even the kings of the earth are servants of the ruler of kings, Christ the King: they too are stewards who have an account to submit of their stewardship of power, authority, and the common good.

The steward is always servant of the King of Kings; but the King of Kings is always beside the steward, looking over our shoulder so to speak. This is a seriously important claim: Christ the King is looking over my shoulder on Black Friday! Realizing that Jesus is beside us is part of becoming stewards in an economy driven by conspicuous consumption; realizing that we are becoming stewards puts the brakes on the drive to become conspicuous consumers. There is “something” beside stewardship, something “alongside” being stewards: worship. The verses just cited from Revelation 1 hint at worship; the following verse 6 says it outright: *“To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom of priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”* (Rev 1:6-7).

Let us pray: Christ the King, establish your sovereignty over our shopping habits and consumption patterns through regular worship. Stay beside us to protect us from the temptations of conspicuous consumption, that we might become stewards not only of our goods and services, but also of the mystery of faith. Amen