

## Week 1 - Saturday

### “God’s Grace Shapes His Stewards”

**Scripture:** *“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned” (Romans 12:3).*



The Apostle Paul tells us that God’s divine nature has *“been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God...”* (Romans 1:20-21). We may know some things about God from creation, but it is impossible to know God truly in and of ourselves. To know God is a great gift of the grace of God. *“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit Who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God”* (1 Corinthians 2:12).

Because of God’s grace, we are enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit working through Word and Sacrament to know God as our Heavenly Father, Jesus as our Lord and Savior, and the Spirit as our Comforter. By grace, we know that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus and that God seeks a relationship with us. By grace, we know that God has adopted us as His children and called us to be His stewards of all that He entrusts to us.

Because we know that we have a God Who loves us, has adopted us as His children, and wants the best for us, we are energized to be about His work. Out of gratitude for who God is and what He has done and continues to do for us, we respond by using our lives and blessings in ways that give honor and praise to our Lord. Acknowledging God as our creator and sustainer of all things, we understand our role as God’s stewards. As God’s stewards, we seek to manage our time, talents, and money faithfully and according to His will, which we discover in His Word. We become God’s instruments through which He works to further His kingdom and help those in need. What a blessing and great honor it is that God has chosen us to be His stewards! May God continue to encourage and equip us to be His faithful stewards who have been shaped by His grace.

**Prayer:** Gracious and loving Father, You call me to be the caretaker of all that You entrust to me. Direct me to use my gifts faithfully and responsibly. May my faithful stewardship bear witness to the grace and love that You give me. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

# Stewardship



## Daily Devotions

*for the whole family!*

*Faithful Stewards of God’s Gifts*

## WEEK 1

*Stewards of God’s Varied Grace*  
*1 Peter 4:10*

**Sunday:**..... “Being a Faithful Steward”  
**Monday:**..... “Following God’s Direction”  
**Tuesday:** ..... “Strengthened by Grace”  
**Wednesday:** ..... “Jesus Is Most Important”  
**Thursday:** ..... “Being People of God”  
**Friday:** ..... “Serving God as Stewards”  
**Saturday:** ..... “God’s Grace Shapes His Stewards”

## Week 1 - Sunday “Being a Faithful Steward”

**Scripture:** “Moreover, it is required by stewards that they be found trustworthy” (1 Corinthians 4:2).

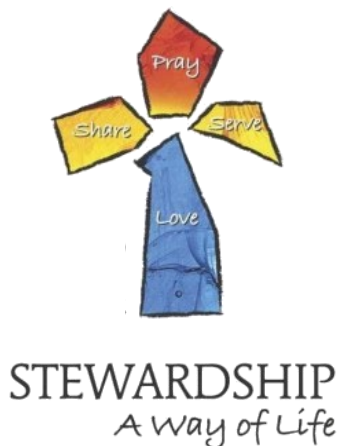
“It’s my life. I can do with it what I want.” We worked hard for what we have, and no one is going to tell us what to do with it. At least that is what our old self would have us believe. The truth is very different. God is the one Who entrusted us with everything we have. He is the rightful owner, we are merely stewards of it.

Stewardship is a relationship, not just activities and responsibilities. It recognizes God as the owner of all things - including our very lives. That means all choices concerning our money, possessions, time, family, relationships, and tasks are really spiritual decisions lived in response to our relationship to God. The more we get to know God, Who owns all things, the better we can manage life according to His will. That knowledge of Him and that relationship with Him develop by reading and studying His Word and receiving His Sacraments. Working through that Word and God’s Holy Sacraments, the Holy Spirit does His work of sanctification, changing us into the likeness of our Savior (2 Cor 3:12). We follow His ways rather than the world’s. We look at life differently and no longer live for ourselves but for Jesus, Who took our sins upon Himself so we can live as forgiven people and be His faithful stewards.

A faithful steward will learn to distinguish between needs and wants in order to live faithfully within the financial means entrusted to him. Frequently ask yourself, “Is this what God, Who has entrusted me with my resources, would want me to do with these resources so that my life might fulfill His will? In the end, we long to hear Him say, “*Well done, good and faithful [steward]. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master*” (Matthew 25:23).

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for calling me to be Your steward. Grant me faith so I can be a trustworthy steward. In Jesus’ precious name I pray. Amen.

## Week 1 - Monday “Following God’s Direction”



Do we really want to be stewards? No! By nature, we are independent, self-centered people. Our first impulse is that we want to be the owners. We want to have possession of things. We want to be in control, to be respected, and even to be envied. We are not born stewards. However, by His grace, God transforms us into stewards who seek to follow His ways rather than our own. With changed hearts, we embrace His love and plan for our lives. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, we surrender our desires and plans to serve Him.

God empowers us to put aside our need to be owners who are in control as we become His faithful stewards who seek to do His will. The love of Christ controls us. Transformed, we worship the Lord and live lives of faith, love, and obedience rather than living for ourselves.

As the Holy Spirit works in us through Word and Sacrament, transforming us into the image of Christ, we, in turn, will express more of His character. When we believe that God is present in our lives and trust in His power, we will, through faith, apply God’s teachings to our lives.

As God’s people, we can live unselfishly because of God’s giving. “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son...*” (John 3:16). The love of God empowers us to respond faithfully to His love and grace. We learn to love because God first loved us (1 John 4:19). We learn to give because God first gave to us. Being a faithful steward is love in action. As Dr. Stephen F. Olford, a 20th Century Christian leader, said,

Christ alone owns our eyes to view His world. He alone owns our hands to serve His will. He alone owns our feet to walk His way. He alone owns our minds to think His thoughts. He alone owns our hearts to love Him fervently. He alone owns our personalities to radiate His charm and glory. Failure to recognize this is a refusal to recognize His sovereignty.

**Prayer:** O Lord, I praise Your Name for creating the world and everything in it. I give You thanks for Your grace, love, and mercy. To You be the glory now and forever. In Jesus’ name. Amen.



## Week 1 - Thursday

### “Being the People of God”

**Scripture:** “By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).

The famous German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, warned the church that it had lost its mission of being disciples for Jesus. He referred to the problem as “cheap grace.” He described “cheap grace” as follows:

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Christ, living and incarnate.

Have  
Faith  
in  
GOD

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran pastor, believed that God’s people living in Germany in the late 1930s, did not understand what it meant to be disciples for Jesus. The people had forgotten who they were and who they were called to be. They stopped being salt and light to the world. Instead of following Jesus, they followed the ways of the world.

If Pastor Bonhoeffer lived today, we can only guess what he would think and say. Hopefully, he would see a resurgence in God’s people who are living out their calling to be disciples. Through faith, we understand the wonderful gift of grace that God has given to us through His Son, Jesus. While this grace is free, it is not cheap, because it cost Jesus His life. Because of His ultimate sacrifice, we have received grace that empowers us to live as disciples today and saving grace that assures us a life forever with Jesus.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, I know that I am sinful and have not managed Your gifts wisely. Forgive me, Lord, and help me to be a faithful steward. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

## Week 1 - Friday

### “Serving God as Stewards”

**Scripture:** “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Peter 4:10).

**Scripture:** “But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me” (1 Corinthians 15:10).

While traveling on a train, Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes misplaced his ticket. Watching him fumble through his belongings and pockets in frustration, the conductor tried to ease his mind. “Don’t worry about it, Mr. Holmes. I’m sure you have your ticket somewhere. If you don’t find it during the trip, just mail it in to the railroad when you reach your destination.” Appreciative of the conductor’s empathy, yet dismayed by his predicament, he looked the conductor in the eye and responded: “Young man, my problem is not finding my ticket. It’s to find out where in the world I’m going.”

As Christians, the question becomes, “Where does God want us to go?” Or better yet, “Where does God want us to go where He can best use us and where He can be praised?” God has a plan and purpose for each one of us. Our answers come from reading His Word and then through our prayers. Through faith and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we understand that we need to allow God to lead us and to depend on His strength. As the Apostle Paul wrote, “Now to Him Who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” (Ephesians 3:20).

When we follow God’s lead and depend on His power, we will, unlike Oliver Wendell Holmes, not be lost. As we place our faith and trust in Jesus, He can take control and lead us where He wants us to be.

**Prayer:** Dear gracious Heavenly Father, grant me the wisdom I need to determine Your will and purpose for my life and help me to follow where You lead me. I ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.



## Week 1 - Tuesday

### “Strengthened by Grace”

**Scripture:** “But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace” (Romans 11:6).



If you've done some carpentry, you've probably tried pulling out some very stubborn nails. The strength of a hammer may not be sufficient so you've had to bring in a pinch bar, that two- or three-foot metal rod with claws on the end. With the power from the pinch bar, you could wrench the nails out.



As helpless as we can be with just a hammer, we are even more helpless without God. As the pinch bar helps us with nails, God helps us in life. God enables us to understand that all we are, have, and do are the result of God's grace in Christ. God's grace not only brings us salvation: it trains "*us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and Godly lives in the present age*" (Titus 2:11-12). Knowing our lives are gifts from God's grace, we live our lives in gratitude for Who God is and what He has done for us. God's purpose becomes our purpose. Strengthened by grace, we seek to do God's will leading to productive and abundant lives.

Even though we are sinful and undeserving, God loves us and wants only the best for us. He wants us to call upon the "*strength of His might*" (Ephesians 6:10). Being in a relationship with God through His Son, Jesus, our lives have purpose, and we are changed from being self-centered, selfish people to people who serve God by loving and serving others.

With God's help, we are equipped and energized to do our best. The Apostle Paul tells us to "*put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator*" (Colossians 3:10). Being renewed by God grace, we live the Godly lives He calls us to live. We live new lives marked by the mysterious union with Jesus described by Paul in these words: "*It is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me*" (Galatians 2:20). God directs us to areas and activities He wants us to pursue. God takes ordinary people like us and does some extraordinary things through us. We become His hands, feet, and mouth. We just need to desire to be tools in God's hands.

**Prayer:** Dear Father, thank You for Your grace through Jesus. By Your grace, I know that I can be obedient and seek to please You. Give me the desire to live in such a way that Your purposes are my purposes. In the name of Jesus my Savior. Amen.

## Week 1 - Wednesday "Jesus is Most Important"

**Scripture:** "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind*" (Matthew 22:37).



In his book, *The Best Is Yet to Come*, John Kieschnick tells the story of Bob Buford. He writes, "Bob Buford owned a cable television company, and God richly blessed his business. Wealth and power, however, didn't fill the hole in Bob's life. He had a nagging sense of emptiness, so he went to a psychiatrist. Bob shared his dilemma, and the psychiatrist told him, 'Bob, I want you to go home and take out a piece of paper and a pen. Draw a box, and in that box write the words that describe the most important thing in your life.'

What do you suppose Bob wrote in His box? What would you write in your box? What is your highest priority in life?

?

Before we put our answers in the box, let's reflect on our thoughts in relation to Bob's emptiness. As Christians, we understand that wealth and power do not fill our emptiness nor give us the security and happiness that Bob was seeking. As our faith grows, we learn that true riches have nothing to do with money. We can have very little money and be very rich or be very wealthy and be impoverished. True riches have to do with a right relationship with Jesus Who, through His death and resurrection, brings us happiness, contentment, joy, love, peace, and life everlasting. Material possessions do not constitute real riches.

God had blessed Bob materially, but he was still feeling empty with no purpose. Through faith, we understand that what we need most is a relationship with Jesus Who is the only Person Whose love and forgiveness can give us all that we need. So, in response to the psychiatrist's question as to what is the most important thing in our life, our answer in the box is "Jesus!"

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, You have called us to be stewards by Your grace. You have entrusted us with the gifts of life and all of life's resources to use in accordance with Your will. May all that I do give You honor and glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.