



**Stewardship Emphasis:**

**Faithful Stewards of**

**God’s Grace**

**Week One: “Receiving and Using**

**God’s Gifts”**

**Week One: “We are Ambassadors for Christ”**

Our three-week stewardship emphasis, **Faithful Stewards of God’s Grace**, focuses primarily on one Bible verse. *“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace”* (1 Peter 4:10). What a wonderful privilege and honor that the Creator of the universe has bestowed upon us as He has made us stewards of His creation! All that we are and have been given are by the grace of God. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are equipped and motivated to be **Faithful Stewards of God’s Grace.** We pray that this stewardship emphasis will help you grow as a steward and deepen the relationship that you have with our heavenly Father. May we all hear the words, *“Well done, good and faithful servant”* (Matthew 25:23).

**Receiving God’s Gifts**

Through faith, we know that God is the giver of all good gifts. In the words of Apostle Paul, *“What do you have that you did not receive?”* (1 Corinthians 4:7). In spite of our sinful ways, God gives to us freely and generously. God gives us different gifts in all areas of life so that we may do His work. Not only is God the source of our blessings, He gives us motivation to develop them and opportunities to use them in His service. Whether we are given many or few gifts, we are to be thankful for what we receive and use them to extend His kingdom and in service to others.

Do you express your gratitude to God for your gifts? Being thankful is a prominent theme in God’s Word. Living with an attitude of gratitude helps us appreciate the gifts both physically and spiritually that we receive. As God’s people, we express our gratitude as we give thanks to God throughout the day. Our thanksgiving is demonstrated when we use our faith that God has given us to live in obedience to His Word. Our thankfulness is illustrated by the lifestyles that we lead. Our gratitude can be expressed at every level and in every activity of life. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians *“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God”* (1 Corinthians 10:31).

**Using God’s Gifts**

God wants us to be productive people. The Apostle Paul wrote, *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them”* (Ephesians 2:10). God wants people *“zealous for good works”* (Titus 2:14). He does not appreciate laziness, idleness, or fruitlessness. He calls us to bear fruit (John 15:16), to serve (Ephesians 6:7), to give (1 Corinthians 16:2), to love (Matthew 22:37-38), to witness (Acts 1:8), and to obey (John 14:23). God seeks people through whom He can work. Through our lips, He tells others of His life-saving Gospel; through our hands and feet, He brings love and care to the needy; and through our minds, hearts, and checkbooks, He financially supports the work of the Church

As Christians, we are called into ministry. Through faith, we become more than just spectators. We are God’s representatives who are called to serve, just as our Master, Jesus, ministered to the people of His time. *“For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you”* (John 13:15). Our ministries take place wherever we are.

As we look at our God-given gifts we may empathize with Moses, who told God many times that he was not qualified to do what God was asking (Exodus 4). In spite of Moses’ excuses, God had plans for him. God turned Moses’ “no” into a “yes.” When we have been asked to serve or help within the church, we may even have borrowed some of Moses’ excuses, such as, “I’m too busy,” “I’m not experienced,” “I’m too old,” “I’m too young,” “I’m not good enough,” “I could never do that,” or “Someone else is more capable than I am.”

Scripture is full of instances where God has used ordinary people like us to accomplish extraordinary things. He chose a stammering Moses to lead His people out of bondage, self-serving fishermen James and John to spread the Gospel, impulsive Peter’s confession upon which to build His Church, and an unhealthy Paul to be the first great missionary of the Christian Church. God uses imperfect people, those whom the world considers weak and flawed, to extend His Kingdom. We read about them in the Bible, and we are inspired by their examples. Like them, when we allow ourselves to be used by God in whatever way He chooses as He takes our meager talents and blesses them, we become examples for others.

We have also been charged by Him to use our gifts to serve others and bring them the love of Jesus*. “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace”* (1 Peter 4:10). We are not perfect, nor do we know all there is to know about God’s Word. Yet we, like Moses, James, John, Peter, and Paul, are privileged by God’s grace to participate in the work of His Kingdom.

**Tapping into God’s Strength**

Because of God’s grace, Paul writes, we “*can do all things through Him Who strengthens [us]”* (Philippians 4:13). When we abide in the Lord, we have the same strength Paul had to be fruitful. If the connection to Jesus is ever broken, our source of strength is severed. When we remain in Jesus, we share Christ’s power. *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer live I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me”* (Galatians 2:20). God created and blessed us so that we may make a difference in our churches, communities, and the world. God will always equip us for the tasks He gives us to do. With His help we will find ways our gifts can glorify Him, and we will each hear God’s words, *“Well done, good and faithful servant!”* (Matthew 25:21).

**Blessings on your Stewardship Journey!**



**Stewardship Emphasis:**

**Faithful Stewards**

**of God’s Grace**

**Week Two: “Serve One Another”**

**Week One: “We are Ambassadors for Christ”**



Our three-week stewardship emphasis, **Faithful Stewards of God’s Grace**, focuses primarily on one Bible verse. *“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace”* (1 Peter 4:10). What a wonderful privilege and honor that the Creator of the universe has bestowed upon us as He has made us stewards of His creation! All that we are and have been given are by the grace of God. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are equipped and motivated to be **Faithful Stewards of God’s Grace.** We pray that this stewardship emphasis will help you grow as a steward and deepen the relationship that you have with our heavenly Father. May we all hear the words, *“Well done, good and faithful servant”* (Matthew 25:23).

**“Serve One Another”**

As God’s people, we are urged to *“fix our eyes on Jesus”* (Hebrews 12:2 NIV). When we *“fix our eyes on Jesus,”* what will we see?

We see the Suffering Servant about Whom Isaiah wrote. The One Who has *“borne our griefs and carried our sorrows”;* the One Who was *“pierced for our transgressions...crushed for our iniquities…”* and byhis *“wounds we are healed”* (Isaiah 53:4, 5).

We see the Son of Man Who *“came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many”* (Matthew 20:28). This is the Son of Man Who preached and taught, Who healed the sick, confronted the wicked, and comforted the despairing. This is the Son of Man Who calls us to *“deny [ourselves] and take up [our crosses] and follow [Him]”* (Matthew 16:24).

We follow Him in paths of service. Just as Jesus did, we serve when it might be inconvenient or when the person needing our service is unlovable. Just as Jesus did, we put others first. Just as Jesus endured the cross *“for the joy that was set before Him”* (Hebrews 12:2), we, too, will find joy and fulfillment in serving in Jesus’ name.

As God’s people, we are called to love God with all of our hearts, souls, and minds and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). The key to our service is to live with an attitude that is God-centered. With God as our focus, we will want to love and serve Him and others. Unfortunately, because we are by nature self-centered, our interest is in serving ourselves instead of serving others. When we succumb to the temptation of putting ourselves first, we place ourselves in the center of life, and we become less interested and ultimately unaware of the needs of others. God’s grace turns us around. In Christ, He has put us first, so now we are freed to put others first.

**Being a Servant**

When our hearts are filled with God’s love, we find joy in serving. 1 John 4:19 tells us, *“We love because He first loved us.”* Because God loved us so much that He would give His son for us so we, too, can love. Just as Christ’s love for us led Him to labor for us throughout His passion, His death, and His victorious resurrection, so we, too, are prompted by our love for Him and others to be about serving. God’s love within us overflows to those around us. True service without love is impossible. Apart from God, we cannot truly love.

God expects that the love He lavishes on us will naturally flow out of us into others. Real love is expressed through action, first in labors of love to fellow believers and then to our neighbors. The Apostle Paul wrote, *“So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith”* (Galatians 6:10),

We need to examine ourselves to see whether or not we really are God’s servants. A servant is someone who submits his will to another, does not seek his own interests, but lives for his master. The concept of serving rather than being served is not a natural one. We have an inborn desire to be served ourselves and to have our own needs met rather than to see to the needs of others. It is our nature to want to be “number one.” God’s love transforms our mindset from wanting to please ourselves to a desire to serve others. Seeing others as our brothers and sisters in Christ helps us follow God’s command to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31).

Besides our selfish natures that put ourselves first, the world urges us to do the same. We are told that we should aspire to fame, power, and wealth, but rarely is there glory, spotlight, or fame for the servant. Worldly praise has no lasting value, but that is not what God’s servants aspire to, anyway. In living a life of service, we give of ourselves without striving for financial rewards or glory. Along with the Apostle Paul, we are not trying *“to please man, but to please God Who tests our hearts”* (1 Thessalonians 2:4). Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are freed from selfish interests and freed for Christian service.

We are urged to be imitators of Christ (Ephesians 5:1) Who lived a life of compassion for others. Being like Jesus, we will serve the hungry, handicapped, and helpless. We serve out of love for Christ and His people and, desiring to be worthy of His calling (Colossians 1:10), thoughts of self-exaltation or praise from men are absent.

Let us, by God’s grace, live the rest of our remaining lives as God’s servants.

**Blessings on your Stewardship Journey!**





**Stewardship Emphasis:**

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**Week Three: “Good Stewards of**

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**Week One: “We are Ambassadors for Christ”**

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**Good Stewards**

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 important, 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.

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.

God is the source and owner of all good things, and we are the stewards. God works through us to share His gifts. By the grace of God, we become His hands, feet, and mouth in the world. As stewards, we joyfully manage all that He entrusts to us according to His will.

By God’s grace, we, as stewards, are part of a lifetime journey of faith. The journey moves forward as our relationship with and our dependence on Christ grows. In our journey, God calls each of us to be faithful in our living, serving, witnessing, and giving. With God’s help, we can use our gifts in ways that honor the Lord.

**Walking the Walk**

As God’s stewards, we are not only to “talk the talk” but “walk the walk” as well. Through faith, we know that God entrusts us with time, abilities, and resources and that He empowers us to use them in service for others and to extend His kingdom. When we “walk the walk,” we not only continue talking but we put our talk into action. The Apostle John wrote, *“Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth”* (1 John 3:18). God’s love compels us to serve and bless others not only in words but also in deeds. The Apostle James tells us *“But be doers of the word…”* (James 1:22). As God’s stewards, we use all that He entrusts to us as instruments through which we show love to others. We “walk the walk” by using our time, talents, and money in service to others.

As God’s stewards, we seek opportunities to thank God for His love, forgiveness, and gifts by using our blessings in serving and giving to others. We are able and willing to help others because God’s love within us overflows through us to others. May God help us all “walk the walk” and be the stewards we are called to be.

**Understanding Grace**

Ephesians 2:8-9 clearly tells us that we are saved by grace through faith and not by works so that no can boast. Grace is a gift that God gives to us without merit. We receive it by faith. Many of us are familiar with an acronym of the word grace, “God’s riches at Christ’s expense.” Grace is costly. It is free to us, but it comes at the cost of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We receive all the treasures of the royalty of Jesus. We receive the access that Jesus has to the Father. We are a royal priesthood, a holy nation of people called by God according to his promises (1 Peter 2:9). This gift is given to you through the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross.

This wonderful gift of grace has been present in the world from the very beginning. In Genesis 1, *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”* There was nothing in this world that required him to do this work of creation. Grace is something that God does freely and with joy for us. Creation was an act of grace. Creation continues to be an act of grace as God provides.

God’s grace is to given to us as His stewards. His grace empowers us to fulfill all that He has called us to do. God’s grace is a power placed within our hearts to sustain and influence us. Grace is our enabling power. Grace enables us to do and to be what we cannot and cannot be if left to ourselves.

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