**Faithful Stewards of God’s Grace**

Bible Study: **Week 1: “Receiving and Using God’s Gifts”**

*“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as*

*good stewards of God’s varied grace”* (1 Peter 4:10).

**Opening prayer**: Dear good and gracious heavenly Father, thank You for Your amazing generosity toward us. Help us to be always thankful for all that that we receive from Your hand. We thank You for the gift of life and the life to come with Jesus. We pray that you will empower us to be faithful stewards of all that You entrust to us. Please bless this study that we are about to begin. In Jesus’ precious and holy name, we pray. Amen.

**Introduction:**

The first words of the Bible are *“In the beginning God…”* That’s how everything begins—with God. God created all things, and He gives us all things. All of life is a gift from God. *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above”* (James 1:17). We are the recipients of all of God’s gifts and blessings, and we are stewards of everything He entrusts to us. He owns, and we manage.

Receiving lies at the heart of what it means to be human. Fundamentally, we are needy beings: dependent on God for our existence and all the good gifts of creation, and dependent on one another for community, relationship, sustenance, and so much more.

In the words of Rev. Billy Graham, “God has given us two hands, one to give with and the other to receive with.” Everything we receive comes from God’s hand, and we can never run out of things for which to thank Him. God joyfully gives us all we “need to support this body and life” (Luther’s Explanation to the First Article of the Creed) and Heaven besides. Along with all the physical and material gifts He gives us, God also offers us spiritual gifts: forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation through His Son. We who pride ourselves on our independence, on our self-sufficiency, find that these once presumed positive traits keep us from knowing God, from relying on Him, and from joyfully, freely receiving all He wants to give us.

1. Read 1 Chronicles 29:1-19. What do these verses say to you about receiving?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 4:7. What is the verse telling you?
3. What do you receive from God that should make you most thankful? (John 3:16; Romans 10:17; Ephesians 1:7; 2 Corinthians 9:8).
4. Read Matthew 7:11. God wants to give you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. The world lacks any true understanding of God. Read 1 Corinthians 2:12-16. By His grace, what does God do for believers?
6. All that you are and have you have received from God. Read the following verses and identify what blessings and gifts they are referencing:

* Genesis 1:27
* Psalm 90:12
* Hebrews 12:2
* 1 John 4:19

1. Read Ecclesiastes 5:18-19. What gift does God want you to have?
2. God gives His people their blessings at the right time or season. Read Psalm 104:27 and Psalm 145:15. What does God provide? When?
3. What does Philippians 4:19 tell you?
4. What does 1 Peter 4:10 say about the use of your gifts?
5. God wants you to use your blessings to further His kingdom and to serve others. How can a person who has managed his/her money responsibly and builds up a surplus be useful to God?
6. “The world asks, ‘What does a man own?' Christ asks, ‘How does he use it?’” (Andrew Murray). Explain.

**Prayer**: Dear heavenly Father, thank You for the opportunity to study Your Word. We praise and thank You because You give to us so freely. Help us to live with an attitude of gratitude. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Bible Study: **Week 2: “Serve One Another”**

*“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as*

*good stewards of God’s varied grace”* (1 Peter 4:10).

**Opening Prayer**: Dear Lord, You have entrusted us with the gifts of life and life’s resources. We ask for an attitude of selflessness so we are willing to use our time, talents, and money to serve and help others. Grant us all loving and serving hearts. May our faithful stewardship bear witness to Jesus’ grace and love in our lives. Amen.

**Introduction:**

Heartfelt service unto the Lord is an integral part of our stewardship. We serve the Lord by serving others (Matthew 25:40). Jesus tells us that when we help those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, and homeless, we are serving Him*.* Paul exhorts us, *“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men”* (Ephesians 6:7 NIV).

Jesus did not come to be served but to serve (Matthew 20:28). Just prior to His death on the Cross, Jesus gathered His disciples for the Last Supper. When the disciples were gathered around the table, *“[Jesus] laid aside His outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around His waist. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around Him”* (John 13:4-5). After Jesus finished washing the disciples’ feet, He said, *“If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do just as I have done to you”* (John 13:14-15).

Jesus’ directive could not be much clearer. We know He was not talking just to the disciples but to us. What Jesus did will always be our example and our encouragement to serve others. Regardless of who we are or what we have accomplished, God calls us to serve. Satan will try to deceive us by telling us that we are too busy or too important, but that should never be the case. *“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). The instruction is clear that we are to render service and not sit in idleness.

By grace, we are able to understand that it is God’s love that motivates us to be servers rather than takers. Our desire to love and serve our neighbors is our response to the Lord’s love for us. We love because He loved us first (1 John 4:19). To love is to serve; service is the natural outcome of love. Love is what gives us the energy and desire to serve. When our hearts are filled with love and gratitude for Who God is and what He has done for us, we serve with joy. By grace, our eyes and hearts are opened so that we are made aware of the needs of others.

1. Richard Foster wrote, “Nothing disciplines the inordinate desires of the flesh like service, and nothing transforms the desires of the flesh like serving in hiddenness. The flesh whines against service but screams against hidden service. It strains and pulls for honor and recognition.” What are some key points from this quote?
2. What does Matthew 28:20 promise that will equip you to serve others?
3. According to 2 Corinthians 9:13 what is the ultimate result of your service?
4. Read Hebrews 11:6. What is needed for your serving to be pleasing to God?
5. Read Philippians 2:5-8. How did Jesus show His servant humility?
6. Read John 13:12-17 again. What did Jesus ask/command His disciples and all people to do? What happens to those who follow His instructions?
7. Read the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. What acts of service did the Good Samaritan provide? What made his service especially noteworthy? (See also Luke 17:11-19 and John 4:7-9).
8. How can you become a person who willingly serves others? (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:13, 4:13).
9. Read Matthew 25:31-46. What were Jesus’ criteria as He separated the sheep from the goats?
10. What excuses do you and others commonly use for not serving in the church?
11. What does 1 Peter 4:10 say about your need to be in service? Identify its three parts.
12. How does Mark 12:30-31 motivate you to serve?

**Prayer:** Lord, grant us hearts to serve others. Help use to use our time, talents, and treasures to serve those in need. Open our eyes and hearts for opportunities to serve others and use us as Your instruments of love, mercy, and grace. In Jesus’ precious name we pray. Amen.

Bible Study: **Week 3: “Good Stewards of God’s Grace”**

*“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as*

*good stewards of God’s varied grace”* (1 Peter 4:10).

**Opening Prayer**: Dear heavenly Father, we belong to You. You have called us to be stewards by Your grace. All that we have comes from You, our families, friends, health, and our possessions. Help us to manage them faithfully. We ask for Your blessings on this study. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

By God’s grace, He honors us with the privilege to be stewards of His creation. *“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell in it”* (Psalm 24:1). Because God is the owner and we are the managers, we are responsible and accountable to God for what we do with all that He entrusts to us. Once we acknowledge our identity and purpose as stewards, we will view our stewardship as active and involved participation rather than a passive caretaker role. *“Now may the God of peace…equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen”* (Hebrews 13:20-21).

God chose to accomplish His plan on earth through us. We are His hands, feet, and mouth. Even though He has the power to do all He wants without us, He chooses to work through us. God continually calls us to offer ourselves to Him and His work. He wants us to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Him (Matthew 16:24). Through each of us, He wants to impact the Church and the world. By ourselves we are helpless, but, with God’s grace and strength, we can be effective workers in His kingdom. Through Scripture, God has revealed His plan of our partnership with Him to serve and reach all people with His “Good News.” God makes us His participants in His purpose *“to seek and to save the lost”* (Luke 19:10).

1. What does it mean to be a steward? God’s steward?
2. What do the following verses have to say about God’s ownership?

* Genesis 1:1
* Deuteronomy 10:14
* Psalm 24:1; 50:10-12
* Colossians 1:16-17

1. What are some other words that could be used to describe a steward?
2. How does God change you into a faithful steward whose purpose is to do God’s will? (Romans 12:3-8, 2 Corinthian 5:17-19).
3. Read 2 Corinthians 9:8; Titus 2:11-14. What will grace do for you?
4. Read 1 Peter 4:10. What does the theme verse for this emphasis tell you about your responsibility as a steward?
5. Read John 15:5; 2 Corinthians 12:9. What made the Apostle Paul such a faithful steward of the Gospel?
6. Rev. James Ryle, founder of Truth Works Ministry, wrote, “Grace is the empowering presence of God enabling you to be who He created you to be, and to do what He has called you to do.” It has been written that “God’s grace gives us the desire and the power to do His will.” What do these two quotes mean for your life?
7. Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7. What did the Macedonians do and how were they able to do it?

**Prayer:** Dear good and gracious heavenly Father, we thank You for the privilege and honor to be Your stewards. Grant us faith that will enable us to be God-pleasing stewards. By Your grace, help us to commit our time, talents, and money to do Your will. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.