

Live a God-Pleasing Life!

What Is Stewardship?

Stewardship is faith in action. It is an expression of our personal relationship with Jesus. Because God has created, forgiven, and redeemed us, we show our gratitude to him by faithfully following, obeying, and serving him. We acknowledge that God is the owner of all things and that we are called to manage faithfully and responsibly all that he entrusts to us. God renews our minds and changes our hearts; he changes us from self-centered people to those who want to please him. Because of God's presence in our lives, we become stewards in both attitude and action.

God-pleasing stewards are committed and devoted to the Lord and live to glorify him.



God Enables His Stewards

Stewards living a God-pleasing life are managers of God's creation. By ourselves, we are helpless to carry out his will. By ourselves, we are not God-pleasing stewards. By ourselves, we cannot bear the fruit that he tells us to bear.

The Holy Spirit working in us through Word and Sacrament transforms us into the image of Christ and enables us to be and do all that God had in mind for us to be and do when he created us. We are transformed from selfish, inward-looking people into stewards who respond to God's grace in all aspects of life.

Knowing that all we have belongs to God, we hold his gifts to us loosely, willing to use them, share them, give them as God wills. We are willing, as St. Paul points out, *"to offer [our] bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God . . . [as a] spiritual act of worship"* (Romans 12:1).

Faith Is the Foundation

"Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Reading the accounts of the heroic stewards of the Bible, we notice that they were people with human frailties just as we are. The secret to their accomplishments isn't really a secret at all. They knew their strength did not lie in themselves but in their God who is always faithful. God's favor did not rest on them because of their works, but because they were his children, just as we are.



In response to the gift of faith that God has given us, we do the works that he has sent us to do. The works are the proof of the faith. *“Show me your faith without deeds,”* challenged James, *“and I will show you my faith by what I do”* (James 2:18).

With faith as our foundation, we say confidently with Paul, *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”* (Philippians 4:13).

Discipleship Is the Path

What is a disciple? How do we become disciples? Peter and Andrew became disciples because Jesus said, *“Follow Me”* (Matthew 4:20), and they did! We did not choose to be created; we did not choose to be saved; we do not choose to be disciples. Without the call of Jesus, we are not equipped to make the sacrifices required for the calling.

Discipleship is a life of joy. *“Come to me,”* Jesus invited, *“all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”* (Matthew 11:28). While discipleship requires on-going learning and training, education is not a prerequisite. Few of the disciples were scholars. The only explanation for their effectiveness was *“ . . . that these men had been with Jesus* (Acts 4:13).

Discipleship does require that we suffer as our Master suffered, that we deny ourselves in order to know Christ only, and that we are willing to give up all to follow him ... all for the joy of being stewards of this great Good News!

Generosity Is the Hallmark



The generosity of God is beyond our comprehension. He gave us the earth and everything in it. He continues to replenish his gifts, so that our needs are always supplied. Beyond providing for our temporal needs, God has given us the sure hope of eternal life through the sacrifice of his Son whom he gave to be our Savior from sin, death, and Satan.

His generosity leads us as God-pleasing stewards to respond in generous acts ourselves. This has always been the case. The Israelites brought so many gifts for the building of the Tabernacle that they had to be restrained in their giving. Many years later, during the building of the Temple, the same thing happened as the people responded, not only to God’s generosity, but to the example of their generous king, David.

How should we give? The Apostle Paul commended the Macedonians for their giving, because *“ . . . they gave themselves first to the Lord”* (2 Corinthians 8:5). When we give ourselves to the Lord, when he is our beginning and our end, our Alpha and Omega, our giving will know no bounds. Our money, our talents, our time—all will be his without limit.

“May the God of peace ... equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.”

Hebrews 13:20-21