

Being a Christian Steward in the 21st Century

In this three-week series, we will examine what it means to be a Christian Steward today. We will begin by looking at the term steward in Biblical times. Each week we will try to discern what God is saying to us about being a steward. Through our discussions we will explore the many aspects of being a steward of creation, of our time, of our God-given talents, of the material gifts God entrusts to us and of all that is.

Agenda for Session One

- A Stewardship Litany (See attachments.)
- References to being a steward in the Bible
- When do we hear the term steward in the 21st Century?
- Of what are we stewards?
- What are the characteristics of a steward?
- What do you want us to make sure we discuss in the next two weeks?
- What do we hear God saying to us in Paul's Letter to the Colossians? (See attachments.)
- In the coming week, try to be aware of being a steward as you go about your normal week's activities and tell us one time you were especially aware of being a steward
- A closing prayer

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Agenda for Session Two

- Stewardship litany and reflection on the scripture passages
- How were you aware of being a steward during the past week?
- One steward's story
- Let's talk about the barriers ...
- Speaking of barriers, let's also talk about money
- Closing prayer of thanksgiving

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Agenda for Session Three

- Stewardship Litany
- What did you discover from thinking about the “money reflection questions?”
- Reclaiming the status of steward
- What are the barriers to being a good steward?
- What are the “payoffs” for being a good steward, both immediate and longer term? Or: How might my life be different if I truly lived my life as a faithful, loving, generous steward?
- How might we share what we have learned?
- Writing your own personal stewardship statement
- A closing thought about stewardship
- A closing prayer

A STEWARDSHIP LITANY

PRESIDER: Let us pray for the wisdom and courage to make stewardship a way of life with God.

(pause)

PRESIDER: Because of our faith in You, O Lord...

All: ... we acknowledge You as the source of all that we have and all that we are. *(pause)*

PRESIDER: Help us to place You, our loving Creator, first in our lives...

All: ... by becoming more prayerful and more focused on loving and caring for our families and our neighbors in need, and by becoming less preoccupied with material things. *(pause)*

PRESIDER: Help us, Lord to find the true source of happiness and fulfillment that we all seek...

All: and that You, alone, can provide. *(pause)*

PRESIDER: Help us to hear Your call to be good stewards of all Your gifts...

All: ...by sharing them for Your purposes. *(pause)*

PRESIDER: Help us make Your priorities ...

All: ...our priorities. *(pause)*

PRESIDER: Help us challenge each other, as disciples of Jesus Christ...

All: ...to put our faith into action.

(pause)

PRESIDER: Let us pray that as good stewards we will plan our sharing.

(pause)

PRESIDER: As we plan the things in our lives that are most important to us...

All: ... Lord, help us plan our sharing of time with those in need.

(pause)

PRESIDER: Help us plan ...

All: ... how to "give back" the talents with which we have been blessed.

(pause)

PRESIDER: Help us plan...

All: how to share our treasure to do Your work.

(pause)

PRESIDER: Our planning and sharing...

All: ...demonstrates the great importance that You and the truth of the Gospel has in our lives.

(pause)

PRESIDER: Help us plan...

All: ... to serve our church, our community, and our world with Your Gifts.

(pause)

PRESIDER: Let us pray that we will share in proportion to what has been given us.

(pause)

PRESIDER: Help us, Lord...

All: ... return a portion of all You have given us.

(pause)

PRESIDER: We do this, O Lord, as a sign of our love..

All: ... and in thanksgiving for the many blessings we have received.

(pause)

PRESIDER: We offer not only the "first fruits" of our financial resources...

All: ... but a generous portion of our time and talents as well.

(pause)

PRESIDER: Giving proportionately means it is equal for all of us

All: ...according to what You have given us. You ask the same of each of us.

(pause)

PRESIDER: As we give proportionately...

ALL: ... help us to put our trust, security and faith in You.

(pause)

PRESIDER: ...As good Christian Stewards,

ALL: ...we pray we have a joyful spirit of mind and heart.

ALL: AMEN

STEWARDSHIP REFLECTIONS

"The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and care for it."

- Genesis 2:15

ALL: Lord, help me to do all that you ask, in the way that you ask, for as long as you ask, simply because you have asked it of me.

(pause)

"For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them..."

- Romans 12:4-6

ALL: Lord, help me to do all that you ask, in the way that you ask, for as long as you ask, simply because you have asked it of me.

(pause)

"This is what the Lord then said to Moses: 'Tell the Israelites to take up a collection for me. From every man you shall accept the contribution that his heart prompts him to give to me.'"

- Exodus 25:1-2

ALL: Lord, help me to do all that you ask, in the way that you ask, for as long as you ask, simply because you have asked it of me.

(pause)

"Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more."

- Luke 12:48

(pause)

ALL: Lord, help me to do all that you ask, in the way that you ask, for as long as you ask, simply because you have asked it of me.

"Give and gifts will be given to you: a good measure, packed together, shaken down and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you."

- Luke 6:38

(pause)

ALL: Lord, help me to do all that you ask, in the way that you ask, for as long as you ask, simply because you have asked it of me.

ALL: AMEN

Adapted, with permission, from the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa 2010 Conference website.

Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

NRSV

What word, phrase, idea stands out for you?

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

NIV

What is God saying to you?

So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.

Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness. Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.

The Message

What is God calling you to do?

Money Reflection Questions

What is your earliest memory about money?

What was your earliest instruction about money?

Was money discussed in your family of origin? How so?

Do you lean towards sharing, saving or spending money?

What is your earliest memory of giving money away?

What is your giving practice now?

What messages do you give your children (grandchildren, nieces, nephews) about a Christian's relationship to money?

TELLING THE STORY OF YOUR STEWARDSHIP/SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

The gift of one's story is one of the most precious gifts that one person of faith can give to another. What is your story? Consider writing a personal stewardship statement by completing the following sentences:

I believe ...

[What do you believe about stewardship?]

I commit ...

[How do you strive to be the faithful, loving, generous steward God created you to be?]

I invite ...

[How does this enrich your spiritual life? What would you say to others as an invitation for them to join you in this spiritual journey?]

Remember that your witness is precious in the sight of God –just as you are.