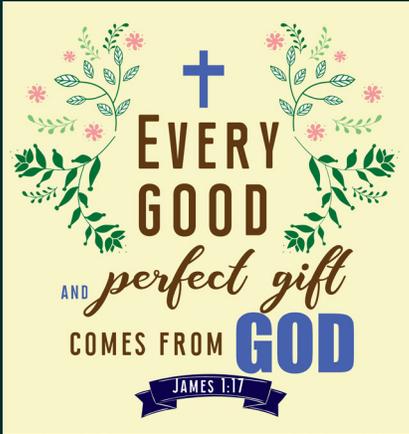


Stewardship

is the grateful response of a Christian disciple who recognizes, receives and cultivates God's gifts and generously shares these gifts in love of God and neighbor.



Live Each Day as a Steward!

By God's grace, we are given the high honor of being his stewards. In Genesis, God has given us a special role in his creation. God has charged us with being the caretakers of all that he has created.

Steward's Identity

SOWING AND REAPING



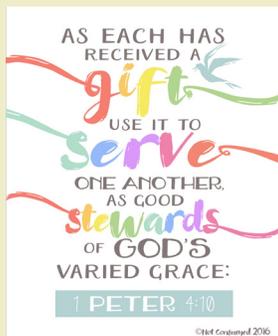
Scripture Reading: *“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully”* (2 CORINTHIANS 9:6)

When we think of sowing and reaping, we think of farming. A farmer who wants a corn harvest must plant corn. If the farmer wants to harvest a big corn crop, he must plant a lot of seeds. In the spiritual sense, we also reap what we sow. If we sow kindness, we reap kindness. Practically speaking as well, if we spend time in God's Word and participate often in the Sacraments, we will grow spiritually. If we work hard and manage our money wisely, we are likely to have our needs met and have plenty to give to the Lord's work.

God promises that, as we sow generously, he will pour out his grace on us that we may *“abound in every good work”* (2 Corinthians 9:8). If we give generously to others and for the building of God's kingdom, he will find ways to bless us. We can never out give God. Jesus tells us to *“give, and it will be given to you”* (Luke 6:38). Our giving will reap blessings.

Question for reflection: What seeds will I sow today?

Prayer: *Lord, thank you for your promise to me that, as I faithfully sow my gifts and resources, you will bless my efforts. Help me to remember always that you are the source of all good things. Forgive me when I fail to show my gratitude for who you are and all that you do for me. In Jesus' holy name I pray. Amen.*



Steward's Purpose

GO AND BEAR FRUIT

Scripture Reading: *"I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever remains in Me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing."* (JOHN 15:5)

Just as branches of plants remain alive and bear fruit when connected to the vine, our stewardship exists because we are connected to Jesus. When we are connected to Jesus through spending time in his Word and participating in the Sacraments, we will be fruitful. When we abide in Jesus, we minister to the needs of others as Jesus, the Vine, did during his life on earth.

We cannot be fruitful stewards apart from Christ. Like the apple, which stays red and juicy for a long time after being picked, appears to be as healthy as when it hung on the tree, we, too, may look and act healthy, but, apart from a true connection with Christ, we will wrinkle up and rot as surely as an apple in a bowl on a table. Some of us may try to maintain an outward connection with him by attending Mass once in a while, but, even if we are regular in our church attendance and are actively involved in the work and mission of the church, without faith linking us with the Person of Christ, our busyness is fruitless. *"Apart from Me,"* Christ said, *"you can do nothing"* (John 15:5), *nor are our works even acceptable to God without faith in him* (Hebrews 11:6; Isaiah 64:6).

Questions for reflection: Is my life bearing fruit? How can I tell?

Prayer: *Lord, help me to bear much fruit in your name. Amen.*



Steward's Lifestyle

NOT IN VAIN

Scripture Reading: *"Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain"* (2 CORINTHIANS 6:1)

God's grace is poured out on us daily and abundantly. Daily we rejoice in our baptisms through which God's grace makes us his children. Sunday after Sunday we celebrate the Easter message of God's grace made available to us through the suffering and victory of his Son. His grace is given to our physical bodies as well as our spiritual lives as he provides "our daily bread," including everything that has to do with our material support and sustenance of our physical needs.

How is it possible that we could receive this grace in vain? When we ignore the Giver of this grace, when we use his gifts for our own good rather than in service to others, and when we attribute our gifts, our abilities, our successes to ourselves, then we receive God's grace in vain.

The life of good stewardship cannot be accomplished on our own, for such an attempt not only is doomed to failure, but demonstrates our receiving "God's grace in vain." Stewardship that pleases God results when we, in response to his grace in our lives, use all the gifts he has given us to serve him by serving others.

Question for reflection: How can my life reflect that Christ's sacrifice was not in vain?

Prayer: *Dear heavenly Father, help me to receive your gifts and use them in my work. In Jesus' precious name I pray. Amen.*