

Graceful Generosity

Published to help you grow as a steward of God's grace.

A Stewardship Thought

God-pleasing stewards are faithful in their prayer life, reading God's Word, worshipping, and receiving God's Sacraments. God-pleasing stewards are faithful stewards of the Gospel and personal witness. God-pleasing stewards are faithful stewards of the compassionate love of Jesus for others. God-pleasing stewards are faithful stewards of their time, talents, and treasures. God-pleasing stewards are faithful stewards of the kingdom of God in their families, in their work, and in daily living.

On the Lighter Side

A fellow office worker tells his friend, "My good man, you really should consider attending our church service on Sunday." "We respect all denominations. We especially respect twenties and fifties."

Testing your Knowledge of Scripture

Do you know who Joseph the Levite was in Scripture?

If you said Barnabas, you were right. In Acts 4:36-37 we read, "*Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.*" In the early church, there were no needy people because no one claimed that any of their possessions were their own. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, they shared with one another. Those with plenty gave to those in need. Barnabas willingly gave the land he owned for the work of the apostles.

With God's help, you can give freely and generously of the blessings that God has entrusted to you.



Not to Be Served But to Serve

The words of Matthew 20:28 - "*Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many*" – remind us that the life of Jesus was one of total sacrifice. It is clear that Jesus wanted to develop a servant spirit in his disciples and in us. He said in Matthew 20:26, ". . . *whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.*" He lived for his heavenly Father and for others. In the same way Jesus served his Father, we exist to serve him. Being conformed into the image of God we will take on the role of servants.

The concept of serving rather than being served is not a natural one. We have an inborn desire to want to be served ourselves and to have our own needs met rather than to see to others. We by nature prefer to be "number one". In addition, our apathy contributes to our lack of interest in sharing. God loves changing our mindset from wanting attention for ourselves to serving others. Seeing others as our brothers and

sisters in Christ helps us to follow God's command to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:31).



A life of service and servanthood is contrary to what our society promotes. We are told that we should aspire to fame, power, and wealth. In servanthood there is no glory, spotlight, or fame. A meaningful relationship with Christ is not possible if we put ourselves first and only seek the goals that are important to the world we live in. Living a life of service, we give of ourselves without striving for financial rewards or glory. Unlike the praise we receive from God, worldly praise has no lasting value. Along with the Apostle Paul we say, "*We*

are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts" (1 Thessalonians 2:4). As a servant, Jesus was not looking for praise from the masses, because he was only interested in glorifying his Father.

Second Corinthians 12:15 says, "*So I will gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well.*" Because of our desire to serve Jesus, we begin to identify with the interest that he has in other peoples' lives. We forego our interests and begin to live a life of Christian service. "*You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love*" (Galatians 5:13).

Our freedom should express itself in the form of service. God brings us into a proper relationship with himself so we can understand what service he expects from us. Jesus lived a life of compassion for others. He continually served the hungry, handicapped, and homeless, and we are called to be imitators of Christ (Ephesians 5:1). When we commit to serving others, it is not done for our own satisfaction or to put ourselves on a pedestal. We serve out of love for Christ and to be worthy of his calling.

Tithing is not a gimmick to solve the economic problems of churches; it is a significant act of remembering who we are.

Blessings on Your Stewardship Journey!