

Session 2

God's Trustworthy Steward

► Before You Begin

Share insights from your prayer time and daily Bible reading.

Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ leads naturally to the practice of stewardship. These linked realities, discipleship and stewardship, then make up the fabric of a Christian life in which each day is lived in an intimate, personal relationship with the Lord. . . .

Following Jesus is the work of a lifetime. At every step forward, one is challenged to go further in accepting and loving God's will. Being a disciple is not just something else to do, alongside many other things suitable for Christians, it is a total way of life and requires continuing conversion.

—*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, National Conference of Catholic Bishops

Discipleship and stewardship can sound more complicated to us than they really are. That's because we often emphasize the results we desire instead of the means to get there. In reality, living as a steward of the gospel is simply the natural—or should we say supernatural—response of people who have developed a deep and lasting love for Jesus. When love for Christ is at the center of our lives, we want to do the things that please him and that bring joy to our own lives because we are expressing our love for him. When not motivated by love and devotion, discipleship and stewardship become burdensome chores.

In this session we will study the general concept of stewardship. In later sessions we'll look at specific ways our stewardship can be directed. Our

goal by the end of these sessions will be to recognize stewardship as an opportunity to live in harmony with God's will so that we experience its benefits in our daily lives. However, it's critical to keep in mind the difficulty of becoming God's disciples or stewards if we don't have a relationship of love based on both our will and our affection.

1. (a) In 1 Peter 4:7-11, Peter writes of being a "good stewards of the manifold grace of God." In your own words, explain how Peter would describe the responsibility of a steward.

(b) What motivations for being a "good steward" do you discover from this passage?

2. (a) In Titus 1:7-9, Paul equates the office of overseer, or bishop, with the role of God's steward. How does Paul describe the responsibility of being God's steward?

(b) Why do you think Paul set such high standards?

(c) What, if any, are the implications of this passage for people who are not called to the role of overseer or bishop but who nevertheless desire to grow as disciples of Jesus?

3. (a) Stewardship is again addressed in 1 Corinthians 4:1-5. What connection is there between being "servants of Christ" and "stewards of the mysteries of God"?

(b) Paul says that a steward must be trustworthy. Give an example of what you think Paul means by "trustworthy."

(c) How does your dictionary define "trustworthy"?

(d) What principle(s) do you see regarding motivation for serving God?

Jesus sometimes describes a disciple's life in terms of stewardship (cf. Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 12:42-48), not because being a steward is the whole of it but because this role sheds a certain light on it. An *oikonomos* or steward is one to whom the owner of a household turns over responsibility for caring for the property, managing affairs, making resources yield as much as possible, and sharing the resources with others. The position involves trust and accountability.

—*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, National Conference of Catholic Bishops

4. (a) What areas of responsibility do you feel God has entrusted to you as a steward?

(b) What tensions, struggles, and pressures do you experience while fulfilling your responsibilities as a steward?

► Preparation for Session 3

1. Continue to read and mark your Bible daily, and record your thoughts in your prayer journal.
2. Complete questions 1-6 on "Jesus' Responsible Servant," pages 32-34.

Notes for Session 2

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