

Excel in the Grace of Giving!

A Three-week Stewardship Program

Thank you for downloading the **Excel in the Grace of Giving!** sample packet. This packet includes:

- † **Program description.**
- † **List of resources included in the program.**
- † **Samples of a few of the resources to provided so the reader can evaluate writing style, tone, etc.**
- † **We also suggest downloading the [program instructions and timeline](#), which will provide a detailed description of program implementation.**

If you would like additional information,
please visit our website or call us toll-free at 888-320-5576.

Program Description

Excel in the Grace of Giving! is a 3-week stewardship program designed to be an integral part of your stewardship plan. It will create a positive atmosphere in which to focus on commitment of your members. We recommend that it be accompanied by monthly communication and inspiration about stewardship throughout the year, such as a bulletin or newsletter insert. This will provide a consistent, meaningful backdrop to conveying the stewardship theme.

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Program Material Files

The program material files contain all of the resources required to undertake a successful program. These materials are available to download from the *Stewardship Resource Center* at www.parishpublishing.org. They are clearly labeled in separate files, making them very easy to use. Simply download the material to your computer in either MS Word or PDF format. Share the Username with others involved so they can download what they need too!

You can edit or change any material, as desired, to add the church name/logo or personalize in any way. Print as many copies as you need for your entire congregation!

The following materials are included:

Materials to launch and follow up the program:

- † Program Instructions
- † Background photo
- † Newsletter articles (2)

- † Bulletin messages (5)
- † Email messages (4)
- † Letter from pastor to accompany Commitment Form
- † Letter from pastor regarding “Give Plus One Challenge”
- † Letter from pastor to those not returning a Commitment Form
- † Letter from pastor to thank members who turned in a Commitment Form
- † Give Plus One Challenge worksheet
- † Giving Chart
- † Bible study answer guide
- † Commitment Form

Materials for each week of the program:

- † Bulletin insert
- † Children’s message
- † Lay reader presentation
- † Worship suggestions
- † Bible study (including Bible study answer guide.)
- † Sermon

Excel in the Grace of Giving!

Bulletin Insert - Third Sunday

God's Blessings through Giving

Every command God gives us is for our good, for the building up of the church, and for the honor and glory of his name. God's command to give, to share with others the resources with which he has blessed us, follows the pattern of command linked to blessing. Throughout Scripture, when a command to give is stated, along with that command is a reference to the rewards that the giver will enjoy. These blessings come in many forms. Some verses that promise blessing:

"Honor the Lord with your firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing..." (Proverbs 3:9).

"A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed" (Proverbs 11:25).

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it" (Malachi 3:10).

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Luke 6:38).

As God's people, we don't give to receive, but God has ordained that through our giving we are blessed.



Excel in the Grace of Giving!

Sermon - First Sunday

“Overcoming Greed”

Text: Ecclesiastes 5:10-20

Prayer: Father, we thank you for the gift of work, the means through which you provide for us. Help us to find satisfaction in what is ours, by your grace, and not to seek to amass wealth beyond our needs. Thank you for filling the void in our lives that only you can fill. Now sanctify us by the truth; your Word is truth. **Amen.**

Do you realize that Jesus spoke more about money than any other topic? More often than prayer, more often than witnessing, more often than faith, Jesus spoke clearly and specifically about money. As a matter of fact, the entire Bible is filled with stories and teachings on the topic of money.

The reason the Bible deals so often and so forthrightly about money has to do with the second reason for us to examine our theme, "**Excel in the Grace of Giving,**" and that is that money is one of the most powerful weapons Satan, our enemy, uses to separate us from our heavenly Father. The devil, throughout history and to this day, uses money to destroy homes, businesses, countries, and the personal lives of many people.

We also need to evaluate our attitudes about money, because money is an excellent place to start in taking a look at ourselves as generous stewards who **excel in the grace of giving.** How we handle our money is one of the best indicators of how responsibly we're managing the resources God has given us.

Jesus said, "*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*" (Matthew 6:21). Talk is cheap. Anyone can talk about what it takes to live the Christian life. Anyone can talk about how great God is, but the true test of stewardship is whether or not we're bearing fruit (John 15:16). Jesus said in Matthew 7:20 that His followers will be recognized by their fruit. One of the clearest insights we can gain into ourselves is what we do with the money God gives to us.

The writer of our text from Ecclesiastes was a very wealthy man, commonly thought to be King Solomon. Perhaps the richest, certainly the wisest, king in the history of Israel, Solomon lived about 2800 years ago, and what he taught in this book still has relevance today. In verse 10, Solomon addressed the sin of greed. Greed: the desire for more and more of something, especially money, the opposite of the desire to give, much less to **excel in giving.** Solomon wrote, "*Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless.*" Jesus also warned us of the all-consuming nature of greed. He said, "*Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possession*" (Luke 12:15). Isn't it interesting that two notable figures in history, one among the wealthiest, the other among the poorest, warned us about the negative effects greed can have in our

(Continued on pages 2-4...)

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Lay Reader Presentation - Second Sunday

Give Plus One Challenge

This morning is the second Sunday of our program “Excel in the Grace of Giving.” Our theme verse for this program is from 2 Corinthians 8:7 which reads:

“But just as you excel in everything ... in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us ... see that you also excel in this grace of giving.”

As you seek to respond to God’s admonition to “*excel in this grace of giving,*” you are encouraged to take part in the “Give Plus One Challenge.”

The “Give Plus One Challenge” encourages giving to God through your church one percent more of your income than you are currently giving. God is honored, and we begin to **excel in the grace of giving** when we give the first part of our incomes faithfully, regularly, and generously. Those who grow and **excel in the grace of giving** place their trust in the Lord rather than in themselves and things of this world.

For some of us, this increase in giving may be very difficult. For some it won’t be possible. However, with God’s help, many of us are able to take a leap of faith in our giving. Those who accept this challenge will increase their giving by giving one percent more of their incomes. For example, if you are currently giving three percent of your income, you will, by God’s grace, begin to give four percent, etc.

To help you with your giving calculations, a “Giving Chart” and a sheet titled “Give Plus One Challenge” have been provided. To determine what your new weekly contribution would be if you increased it by one percent, you can look at the “Giving Chart.” If you don’t know what percentage of your income you are giving, use the handout titled

(Continued on page 2)