

Stewardship

Inspiring a deeper understanding of true giving

Inspiring Stewardship

**A Comprehensive Program
to Inspire Christian Giving**

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Overview and Sample Packet

The Challenge

Churches everywhere are in need of additional funds.

The problem is not the economy.

The problem is not apathy on the part of church members.

The problem is:

- People are not familiar with what God's Word says about money, material possessions and giving.
- People have never been trained to make giving to God a priority; they give what is left over at the end of the month instead of giving "first-fruits" offerings.
- People of all ages who fail to recognize that God owns it all!
- Sacrificial givers who comprise the financial backbone of most churches are slowly passing away without being replaced.



For a variety of reasons, most pastors do not feel comfortable preaching about money. And yet, this is an important subject. There are more verses in the Bible dealing with money, material possessions and giving than with heaven and hell combined. The Bible says more about this subject than about faith.

The dilemma: How do you instruct your people about scriptural truths concerning money without making it yet another job for the pastor or without pressuring people?

The Solution

Follow the key to successful programs everywhere: Use what has proven to work.

The *Inspiring Stewardship* program is based on God's Word and works in any church that uses a Bible! The program has benefitted thousands of churches of all sizes in the US and Canada.

This program, which is led by the laity, is not another job for the pastor. Nor is it just a short-term "fund-raising" endeavor. Rather, it is a year-round educational and training program designed to inspire people to be life-long stewards.

It consists of 48 principles concerning money, material possessions and giving. These principles are closely coordinated with Scripture and are used in a variety of systematic presentations.

How the Inspiring Stewardship Program Works

The program includes all necessary materials and is based on a series of 48 stewardship principles; one lesson per month. The first four principles are provided here to give an idea of how these fit together:

1. *All that we have belongs to God.*
 Psalm 24:1
 Psalm 50:10
 Haggai 2:8
2. *Because all that we have belongs to God, our goal in using that which belongs to God is to glorify him.*
 Deut. 8:18
 Psalm 62:5
 Matt. 6:19-21
 1 Cor. 10:31

3. *Money is a neutral commodity, a means of exchange. It is neither inherently good nor evil.*

Prov. 4:23
Matt. 6:33
Col. 3:1-2
1 Tim. 6:10

4. *The wealth we have is determined by God.*

Deut. 8:18
1 Chron. 29:11-12
Psalm 127:2
Eccl. 5:19
Col. 3:23

Each principle builds on previous lessons, but all are designed to stand alone, something very important in areas where there is high turnover. The program lasts for 48 months, but can be canceled at any time. The materials are not dated, and the program can start in any month of the year.

Using the materials that we provide:

- Each week an outlined box appears in the bulletin with that month's principle and Scripture verse as a weekly reminder.
- Each month in the newsletter (or as a bulletin insert or email attachment); an article appears featuring that month's principle, as a more thorough explanation.
- Once a month, a lay person presents another, reinforcing view of that principle just before the offering is received.
- Once a month, Bible study groups, youth groups, or Sunday school classes receive a discussion sheet containing some basic questions about that month's principle, in order to include the broadest audience possible.

Thus, the program is presenting scriptural truths in a comprehensive, but low-key way, "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little" (Isaiah 28:10). Because God is faithful to honor the Scriptures, the program heightens a congregation's awareness of biblical truths concerning giving and leads to an overall increase in financial support.

Everything is Included!

Every month, all of the resources necessary to run the *Inspiring Stewardship* program will be available in your account at [The Parish Resource Center](#) on our website:

- The **Bulletin "box,"** which appears in the bulletin each Sunday for one month.
- "*Applying Bible Principles*" is the **newsletter article** that is published once during the month. This can also be used as a bulletin insert or attached to an email. Most are longer than the sample at the end of this packet.
- The **Lay Speaker Presentation** is given once a month by a lay speaker, usually right before the offering. We suggest this take place on the third Sunday of the month since relatively few holidays occur on that Sunday. The lay speaker can put this material into his or her own words; however, most read it for maximum effectiveness. All of these presentations are designed to last about three or four minutes.
- The **Bible Study or Your Group Discussion** is for Bible study groups, youth groups and Sunday school classes. Younger children are asked to discuss the questions with their parents or guardians; adults and older teens are requested to discuss them with their families. It takes about five minutes to use once each month.

- **Offering Appeal Letters.** Three offering appeal letters for Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas are included.
- **Thank-You Letters.** Four thank-you letters each year are included to accompany quarterly donor statements.
- **Commitment Campaign** (optional, purchased separately) include all materials needed for a four-week emphasis on commitment each spring or fall. The campaign resources include newsletter articles, letters to the congregation, four lay speaker presentations, follow-up materials, discussion sheet, campaign brochure, response card (also known as “Faith Promise Card,” “Estimate of Giving Card,” “Pledge Card,” etc.) and master schedule. The theme of the first campaign is “*Faithful Stewards of God’s Infinite Grace.*”

All campaign resources can easily be edited, if desired. The campaign brochure and response card requires you to insert the church name and then are ready to print.

If the Commitment Campaign materials are used, they are used in lieu of one month of the regular program. Thus, the Commitment Campaign is inserted in between two regular program months (you don’t skip that regular monthly lesson, but instead do it in the month following the Commitment Campaign).

Well Organized, Little Effort Needed

In most situations, the pastor’s role is to review the materials. The key person in utilizing the program is a Lay Coordinator. He or she is responsible to contact individuals for the Lay Speaker Presentations. In addition, the person responsible for the bulletin (and newsletter) will include the bulletin box each week and article once a month. Thus, this program does not constitute another job for the pastor unless the pastor desires “hands on” involvement.

Inspiring Stewardship materials are 100% downloadable and available in your account at [The Parish Resource Center](#) (in both MS Word and PDF formats) one month prior to the month they are used and remain there for the month in which the resources are used. Keep in mind that more than one person may have the log-in information to your online account. All materials are designed to be used “as-is,” but can easily be edited to fit specific needs. Occasionally, resources will require inserting the [Church Name] or [Date] in easily identifiable places shown in [red].

Choose from three different emphases!

Every church is different. When ordering ***Inspiring Stewardship***, you can choose the emphasis most appropriate for your needs:

- ***Giving of Treasure*** This is the most popular emphasis because it addresses the most acute problem: financing the Lord’s work. Its lessons are presented in a peer-to-peer, laid-back manner by lay people.
- ***Giving of Time, Talent and Treasure*** This emphasis is broader and helps people see that their time is an invaluable addition to Christian giving, as well as help them discover that their many talents can be valuable to others.
- ***Giving of Time and Talent*** When money isn’t the issue, then your emphasis may be to empower people to better share the gifts that God has given them.

When ordering, we also offer an alternative translation of the Scripture references. The NIV Bible is the default, but you can also choose ***Inspiring Stewardship*** that uses the NRSV Bible translation.

Cost, Payment and Money-back Guarantee

The monthly cost of *Inspiring Stewardship* is only pennies per person and depends on the size of your church:

	Monthly Cost	Commitment Campaign (Optional)
<i>Fewer than 100 members:</i>	\$29.95	\$49.95
<i>100 - 250 members:</i>	\$39.95	\$59.95
<i>250 – 500 members:</i>	\$49.95	\$69.95
<i>Greater than 250 members:</i>	\$59.95	\$79.95

The monthly charge does not change during the entire four years a church uses the program. The material is copyrighted, and participating churches and pastors are entitled to a one-time use of the materials. We can charge your credit card or bill the church each month, but we also provide substantial discounts for prepayment (Prepaid programs are non-cancellable):

Prepayment	Discount
<i>1 Year</i>	10%
<i>2 Year</i>	15%
<i>3 Year</i>	20%
<i>4 Year</i>	25%

Money-back guarantee: For those opting to pre-pay, if the program has not met the expectations of the church at the end of the four years, we will refund the full amount paid. So, there is nothing to lose and we believe that you will experience the same success other churches have!

What Pastors and Stewardship Leaders Have Said

“This stewardship program is simple in that it relies on common biblical truths. It is low-key in that it is not a hard sell drive to meet a certain fixed goal. (In fact, it is so low-key that it is difficult for people to realize that this is a planned, well-organized program.) But best of all, it is based on biblical principles of stewardship and not on fund raising techniques. This program trains stewards. I am pleased to recommend it to you.” Pastor, Centralia IL

“The monthly program and Commitment Campaign worked very well for us in my former church. Our weekly giving increased by almost 25%, and we experienced no problems whatsoever in using the program. That's why I want to use it in my new appointment.” Pastor, Gering NE

“Since we first started using the program, our giving has gone up substantially. We have found the materials to be very good in terms of their content and presentation. We have also appreciated the timely, predictable manner in which the materials have been sent each month. We recommend the program highly.” Chair, Finance Committee, Park Hills MO

“After eight months of using the program, our church finished the year by raising 98% of the budget, which reflects an increase of over 10% as compared with prior years. Following the second year of the program, we finished the year in better financial shape than ever before in the six years I've been at this church. Also, normally, in the Commitment stewardship campaign, commitment cards cover about 66% of the budget; this year, the cards covered 75% of the budget. We have found the program to be an excellent way to teach biblical stewardship on a year-round basis. We remain very pleased with the program and are happy to recommend it to other churches.” Stewardship Chairperson, Hannibal MO

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Lesson One
Bulletin “Box” Message

Reprint

All that we have belongs to God.

“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it” (Psalm 24:1).

For

Review

Only

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Lesson One

Newsletter, Bulletin or Email Article

Applying Bible Principles

“God Owns It All” is the chapter heading in a book by a Christian author who presents this chapter first as the foundation for money management and giving.

God does own it all! That is the teaching of Psalm 24:1 which says, “The earth is the Lord’s.” Psalm 50:10 says that all of the animals of the forest belong to God, and that the cattle on a thousand hills are his. Haggai 2:8 says that God even owns the silver and gold in all the mines.

Now, God allows us to use what rightfully belongs to him, but God continues to retain the ownership. We are just managers and stewards of what God has entrusted to us.

Someday, when we stand before God, we shall give an account of what kind of job we have done in managing the resources that God has allowed us to use.

That’s why every spending decision becomes a spiritual decision. Every time we use some of God’s money, we are making a decision which has eternal ramifications.

Are you using money and possessions as if they belong to you, or are you making spending decisions with the full realization that “God owns it all”?

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Lesson One

Lay Speaker Presentation

In considering how we manage our money, and in considering how we should support God's work at [Church Name], it is important for us to realize that we own nothing. God has never relinquished his title deed to the world. God owns it all. We are just managers and stewards. God allows us to use money, possessions and other things, but really, he owns it all.

Listen to Psalm 24:1 — “The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.” It all belongs to God.

Psalm 50:10 expresses it a bit differently. God says, “For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.”

The prophet Haggai said it this way. In chapter 2 and verse 8 of the book which bears his name, Haggai states, “‘The silver is mine and the gold is mine,’ declares the Lord Almighty.”

We are using God's resources when we spend the money that God has entrusted to us. This means that every spending decision is in reality a spiritual decision. Buying a loaf of bread can be as spiritual a decision as deciding what to give to the Lord's work.

Since everything belongs to God, God has the right to whatever he wants whenever he wants it. And since it all belongs to God, we can give freely of God's resources to his purposes and to his people.

If you want to see what kind of priority God has in your life, check out your checkbook. As you look at the past few months, did you make decisions as if things belonged to you or to God? As you look at the months which lie ahead, will you make spending decisions as if things belong to you or to God?

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Lesson One

Bible Study, Youth Group, or Sunday School Discussion

This month, our emphasis is on the eternal ownership of money, things, and possessions. The claim of Scripture is that God owns it all. Please have your students look up these verses in their Bibles and then discuss with them the meaning of these verses:

Psalm 24:1

Psalm 50:10

Haggai 2:8

Emphasize to your students that God continues to own everything in the world. Although people may think that they own property, houses, cars, land, and money, the truth of the Scripture is that God continues to own it all. God allows us to use these things, not as owners, but as managers and stewards.

The key question to ask your students is this:

Are you making spending decisions as though your money belongs to you or to God?

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