

# Stewardship

Inspiring a deeper understanding of true giving



Grow as a Steward  
Through Faith, Love and Hope!  
*Bible Studies*

## Grow as a Steward through Faith, Love and Hope! Bible Study

### *Love Prompts Action*

**Prayer:** Lord, we pray, “Your will be done,” but so often we ignore your will and do what pleases our sinful natures instead. Give us the desire to love others as you have loved us. Make us willing stewards who give of ourselves as you gave yourself. Let the love that you have put within us be eager to expend itself in service to you as we love others through our labor on their behalf. Through Christ we pray. **Amen.**

**Theme Verse:** “*We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

1 Thessalonians 1:3

### Objectives

- ✠ To understand that God is the source of love.
- ✠ To understand that it is God who enables us to love him and others.
- ✠ To understand that our love, like God’s, is to be shared without limit with everyone we meet.
- ✠ To understand that love is shown, not just in words, but especially through our actions.

### Introduction

Perhaps more songs have been written about love than any other topic. Close attention to the lyrics of these songs reveals that most of them are not talking at all about the kind of love that Scripture exalts. Only a few come close at all. One that did was called “Put a Little Love in Your Heart,” recorded by Jackie Deshannon in the 1960’s. She sang,

*“Think of your fellow man;  
Lend him a helping hand.  
Put a little love in your heart.*

*You see it’s getting late;  
Please don’t hesitate.  
Put a little love in your heart.”*

Not bad as popular songs go. Maybe it did inspire some to think about others and desire to lend a helping hand. Did the listeners ever have trouble, though, with the “put a little love in your heart” part? We all know it’s gratifying to help those who are appreciative, those who notice that you’re trying to help and will respond. But when that’s not the case, our motivation decreases and our love grows dim. Without love, our labor is begrudging or non-existent.



## Love Motivates Our Gratitude

Love came down from Heaven to us in the incarnate Christ. Because of his love for us, our Father gave his only Son, who, through his death, destroyed death. He, who became one of us so that he could atone for our sins, has suffered for us and is therefore able to help us through our earthly trials (Hebrews 2:14-18). Certainly, as we consider what his love has brought about for us, we can have no response but humble gratitude.

In Ephesians 1:11-14, Paul tells his readers that we are chosen by God to believe in him and “*be for the praise of his glory.*” As believers, the Ephesians had been sealed and set apart for God.

11. According to Ephesians 1:15-16, what motivates Paul to give thanks to God?

- a.
- b.

12. Skim 2 Corinthians 8:1-9. Read 2 Corinthians 8:24.

- a. What does Paul ask his readers to do for the ministers (Titus and the other two “brothers”) who were sent to them (verse 24)?
- b. Relating this verse to verses 1-9, what kind of proof of their love did Paul want them to give?

*“When I think of God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes leap and dance as they leave my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart, I serve him with a cheerful spirit.”*  
Franz Joseph Haydn

Paul, along with Silas, had been “*stripped and beaten*” by the magistrates in Philippi (Acts 16:19-24). However, the pain he endured at the hands of his enemies was overcome by the bond between himself and the Christian Philippians. He prayed for the saints there “*with joy,*” thanking God “*every time [he] remember[ed them]*” (Philippians 1:4). Their mutual love motivated Paul to gratitude.

13. Read Colossians 1:3-8. Compare Paul’s words here to what he wrote to the Ephesians (Refer to question 11).

*“We must not only give what we have: we must also give what we are.”*  
Desire Joseph Mercier

### Application for the Steward

The giving of ourselves and all we have – our time, our gifts, our money – is a meaningful way to show our love and gratitude to God for all he has done

for us through his Son, our Savior Jesus. **His love for us prompts us to acts of love in response.**

14. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-9.

- a. According to verse 6, how should we give?
- b. What should our attitude be as we give?
- c. How is such an attitude possible?

15. Read 2 Corinthians 9:10-11.

- a. How can we give generously?
- b. What (2) things will happen as we give generously?

16. Read 2 Corinthians 9:12-15.

- a. What can be included in “*this service that you perform*”?
- b. For what will God be praised?

## Grow as a Steward through Faith, Love and Hope! Bible Study

### *Hope Goes the Distance*

**Prayer:** Gracious Lord, you are the same yesterday, today, and forever. You are our anchor. Our hope is built on Jesus' blood and righteousness; there is no other foundation for our faith. Keep our eyes focused on you, so that, as we **hope in you, we may be inspired to continue in faith** unto the day of Christ Jesus. In his name we pray. **Amen.**

**Theme Verse:** *"We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."*

1 Thessalonians 1:3

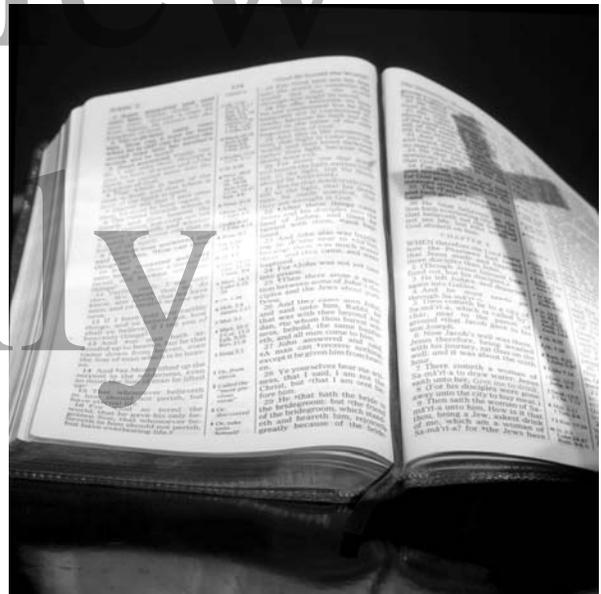
### Objectives

- ✠ To understand that hope in Christ is not wishful thinking, but a sure reality.
- ✠ To understand that the hope we have is not for this life alone, but for eternity.
- ✠ To understand that our hope rests not on ourselves or our circumstances but on Christ alone.
- ✠ To understand that we are stewards of this hope and have been gifted to share it with others.

### Introduction

The Apostle Peter writes, *"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have"* (1 Peter 3:15). Too many of us have not given enough thought to Peter's admonition here. Often, when people are asked about Heaven, they remark with a nervous chuckle, "Well, I **hope** I'm going there!" For many, thoughts of life after death are quickly dismissed from the mind because they bring anxiety and fearfulness.

This is not the case for the believer, as Scripture tells us plainly that, because of what Christ has done for us, we **know** we'll spend eternity with him. What a wonderful opportunity we have, then, to share *"the reason for the hope that [we] have"*! What an obligation we have to *"be prepared to give an answer"*! And what a challenge lies before us as we live out our faith with the **endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.**



4. Read 1 Timothy 4:10. Where does our hope come from?

Yes, God is our Rock (Psalm 92:15b)! He is our Savior (1 Timothy 4:10)! We put our hope in him alone!

5. Read 2 Timothy 2:13. Why can we be secure in our hope in God?

6. Read Titus 1:1-2.

- a. What characteristic of God makes ours a sure hope?
- b. What did God promise us?

7. Read 2 Corinthians 1:18-22.

- a. How does God fulfill his promises to us?
- b. What did God do to enable us to stand firm in hope?
  - i.
  - ii.
  - iii.

Our source of hope is God, *“for no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ.”* What is left for us to do but to speak the *“‘Amen’ . . . to the glory of God”* (2 Corinthians 1:20)! Therefore, in response to God’s faithfulness, the Church breaks out in praise, thanks, and adoration to Christ who fulfilled all his Father’s promises and is our only source of hope.

### **What Are We Hoping For?**

The gifts God gives us on this Earth are too abundant for us to comprehend. As Jeremiah writes: *“... his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness”* (Lamentations 3:22b-23). Yet, Paul writes that these Earthly blessings cannot compare to *“the hope that is stored up for [us] in Heaven”* (Colossians 1:5).

8. In fact, what does St. Paul write in 1 Corinthians 15:19 about hope for this life alone?

9. Read Galatians 5:4-5.

- a. What are we hoping for?
- b. How will we receive it?

10. Read 1 Peter 1:3-9.

- a. What are we hoping for?
- b. How will we receive it?
- c. What about the meantime?
- d. What results from waiting in hope (Verses 7-9)?

***“When you get to your wit’s end, you’ll find God lives there.”*** Anon

11. Read 1 John 3:3-5.

- a. What are we hoping for?
- b. Because of this hope, we are to purify ourselves, even as Christ is pure. What does this mean and how is it accomplished?

In Romans 5:1-5, the Apostle Paul writes about the blessings that are ours because we have been justified by faith. We have *“peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* who has also given us