

***Live a God-Pleasing Life!***  
*A three-week stewardship program*

Thank you for downloading the  
***Live a God-Pleasing Life!***  
sample packet.

This packet includes:

- † **Program instructions and timeline appear in the beginning of this packet, which provide a detailed description of the program, included program resources, and a timeline of program implementation.**
- † **Samples of several of the resources provided so the reader can evaluate writing style, tone, etc.**



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# Live a God-Pleasing Life!

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## A Three-Week Stewardship Program

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### *Overview and Instructions*



*“May the God of peace . . . equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to who be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” Hebrews 13:20-21*

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# *Program Description*

*“May the God of peace . . . equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:20-21).*

Stewards living a God-pleasing life are managers of God’s creation. *“The Earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it”* (Psalm 24:1). Because God is the owner and we are the managers, we are responsible and accountable to God for what we do with all that he entrusts to us. Once we acknowledge our identity and purpose as stewards, we will view our stewardship as active and involved participation rather than a passive caretaker role.

God chose to accomplish his plan on earth through us. We are God’s hands and feet. Even though God has the power to do all he wants without us, he chooses to work through us. God continually calls us to offer ourselves to him and his work. God wants us to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow him. Through each of us, he wants to impact the church and the world. By ourselves we are helpless, but, with God’s strength, we can be effective workers in his Kingdom. Through Scripture, God has revealed his plan of our partnership with him to serve and reach all people with his “Good News.”

**Live a God-Pleasing life!** is a three-Sunday stewardship program with the following themes:

*“Faith Is the Foundation”*

*“Discipleship Is the Path”*

*“Generosity Is the Hallmark”*

The program materials will provide you with everything you need to help members in your church grow in their commitment, discipleship, and generosity.

An important part of the **Live a God-Pleasing life!** stewardship program are the coordinated and thematic materials.

## ***Bible Studies***

To grow as stewards, people need to be reading and studying God’s Word. Each attendee in the Bible study should receive a Bible study for each week of the program.

## ***Devotional Meditations Booklet***

A book of devotional meditations is available to help people grow in their understanding of Christian stewardship. The devotional book contains 20 daily devotions.

## ***Testimonials/Lay reader presentations***

There are three written lay-reader presentations provided. Personal testimonials are more effective, but, if no willing member is found to share his/her stewardship story with the congregation, these talks may be used. The talks may be given at the start of the service or during the time of the offering.

## ***Follow-up Letters***

You are encouraged to send reminder letters to those who failed to return their commitment forms, as well as send thank-you letters to members who returned their commitment forms after the final week of the program.

# *Program Resources*

**Downloadable from your account at the *Parish Resource Center***

## ***Resources – General***

- † Program Instructions and Timeline
- † Program images for bulletin, newsletter, emails, slides or handouts (5, high-resolution)
- † Letters from the pastor (4)
- † Percentage giving chart
- † Daily devotions (20 for all three weeks.)
- † Youth handout (2 for different grade levels)

## ***Resources to Launch Program***

- † Kick-off Letters from the Pastor (2)
- † Commitment form (Two formats to choose from)
- † Newsletter articles (2)
- † Theme essay (Both letter and tri-fold formats)
- † Bulletin message
- † Thank you letters to follow up after the program (2)

## ***Resources for EACH of the 3 Weeks of the Program***

- † Bible studies (Answer guide included)

***Faith Is the Foundation***

***Discipleship Is the Path***

***Generosity Is the Hallmark***

- † Bulletin messages
- † Lay reader presentation
- † Sermon
- † Worship suggestions
- † Children's message

# Program Time Line

## ***Launching the Program***

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<b>Daily Devotions</b>	Prepare the Daily Devotions (printed or emailed). The Daily Devotions are provided in booklet format and are set up for easy duplex printing.
<b>Bible Studies</b>	Prepare the Bible Studies and distribute (printed or emailed).
<b>Commitment Forms</b>	Finalize (Edit red text areas) and print Commitment Forms (Use card stock, if desired)
<b>Newsletter Article</b>	Publish “ <i>Live a God-Pleasing Life!</i> ” newsletter article one month prior to program.
<b>Lay Readers</b>	Identify and prep three Lay Speakers. <i>Personal testimony is best, but use written lay reader messages as back-up.</i>
<b>Letter from Pastor and Devotional Booklet</b>	Mail letter, theme essay and Devotional Booklet to members so they receive them a few weeks before the beginning of the program.
<b>Letter from Pastor and Commitment Form</b>	Mail letter, theme essay and Commitment Form to members so they receive them a week before the beginning of the program. <i>(Edit Commitment Form for year and church name. Both tri-fold or letter formats of theme essay included.)</i>

*Note ... it is most effective to send two letters prior to the program, but more expensive. The two letters can be combined if desired.*

<b>Bulletin Messages</b>	Place the bulletin blurb in the bulletin two to three weeks prior to program. <i>There is a short “blurb” message for the period prior to the program and one for each of the first two weeks week of the program. There are also three full-size bulletin messages for each of the three weeks of the program. Use one per week, as desired.</i>
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## ***The Three Weeks of the Program***

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<b>For each week</b>	<p>Publish bulletin message.</p> <p>Provide extra devotions, as needed. Members should be encouraged to read the devotions prior to next week’s sermon.</p> <p>Present lay reader message.</p> <p>Use worship suggestions, as desired.</p> <p>Preach sermon.</p> <p>Teach Children’s message (optional).</p>
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**At some point during the program**

Hand out or explain Percent Giving Chart.  
Provide reminder about Commitment Sunday.

**Last week of the program**

*Commitment Sunday*  
Collect commitment forms.

***After the Program***

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**Letter to those not returning a commitment** Send reminder letters to members who failed to return their commitment forms.

**Letter to those who turned in a commitment** Send thank-you letters to members who returned commitment forms.



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# Live a God-Pleasing Life!

## What Is Stewardship?

Stewardship is faith in action. It is an expression of our personal relationship with Jesus. Because God has created, forgiven, and redeemed us, we show our gratitude to him by faithfully following, obeying, and serving him. We acknowledge that God is the owner of all things and that we are called to manage faithfully and responsibly all that he entrusts to us. God renews our minds and changes our hearts; he changes us from self-centered people to those who want to please him. Because of God's presence in our lives, we become stewards in both attitude and action.

God-pleasing stewards are committed and devoted to the Lord and live to glorify him.



## God Enables His Stewards

Stewards living a God-pleasing life are managers of God's creation. By ourselves, we are helpless to carry out his will. By ourselves, we are not God-pleasing stewards. By ourselves, we cannot bear the fruit that he tells us to bear.

The Holy Spirit working in us through Word and Sacrament transforms us into the image of Christ and enables us to be and do all that God had in mind for us to be and do when he created us. We are transformed from selfish, inward-looking people into stewards who respond to God's grace in all aspects of life.

Knowing that all we have belongs to God, we hold his gifts to us loosely, willing to use them, share them, give them as God wills. We are willing, as St. Paul points out, *"to offer [our] bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God . . . [as a] spiritual act of worship"* (Romans 12:1).

## Faith Is the Foundation

*"Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him"* (Hebrews 11:6). Reading the accounts of the heroic stewards of the Bible, we notice that they were people with human frailties just as we are. The secret to their accomplishments isn't really a secret at all. They knew their strength did not lie in themselves but in their God who is always faithful. God's favor did not rest on them because of their works, but because they were his children, just as we are.



## *Live a God-Pleasing Life!*

### *Sermon – First Week*

*(Remind your congregation to read the daily devotions that accompany our stewardship program. This week's theme is "Faith Is the Foundation.")*

#### **Faith Is the Foundation**

God's grace, mercy and peace be to all of you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and may his Holy Spirit fill your hearts and your minds in the hearing of his Word. This Sunday we begin a three-week series called "**Live a God-Pleasing Life!**" I pray that God will use this time and these messages to encourage and enable all of us to be faithful and God-pleasing stewards.

I also pray that each of you will spend time this week and the next couple of weeks reading the daily devotions that you are receiving for this program. The devotions for this week are titled "Faith Is the Foundation."

The Word for today is found in Hebrews 11. I will read verses 1 and 2, where we have a biblical definition of faith. "*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.*" This is the Word of the Lord.

Sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Can't see it. A certain hope and assurance for it. Okay, that's faith. There was a gentleman, a father, who was known far and wide for his quality-built homes. In the building of his homes, he always insisted on using the very finest of materials and always the very finest and best of contractors. He kept a list of those he knew he could depend on, those he could count on for quality work. The people who bought his homes were often willing to pay a premium price, because they knew the quality of home they were getting with this particular man as the builder. And so it was, then, with that background, that this particular father, and also husband, was celebrating his 56<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the husband and wife decided to take a trip to a far-away land. He went to his son who had worked so closely with his father but had some different ideas about how to build homes and how to save money and cut corners. His father sat down with him and laid out the blueprints for a particular home in a community of houses that they were working on.

He said, "Son, you know your mom and I are going to be gone for a long time which will give you ample time to build this home. Will you take on the responsibility of building this home for me in my absence?"

He said, "I sure would, Dad. Be happy to do it."

"Well, I know you can do it, son, but let me ask you: Will you also use the finest quality materials in the building of this home?"

"I will Dad, just according to specifications you have outlined."

“Son, will you also use the finest and best of contractors that we’ve grown to know over the years so well, those with experience?”

“Dad, you know you can count on me to use the ones that we’ve always used.”

The dad said, “Son, I’ll be proud of you – I know I will, please take care of it. Your mom and I will be back.”

The parents went away to a far-away land and were gone long enough for the house to be built. Well, the son has his own way of looking at things, and he decided that there were ways he could save quite of a bit of money. Instead of using 2 x 6’s as his dad had put in the blueprints, he used 2 x 4’s. Instead of putting insulation in the walls – well, his dad would never know – would the people really notice? He left the insulation out of the walls. He cut corners everywhere that he could cut a corner, and, even with choice of contractors, he found contractors who would do it much more cheaply than those he had ever used before. Even he discovered their poor quality of workmanship; nevertheless, he got to pocket a lot of extra cash and for that he was very, very happy. Then his dad returned from that long trip. His father came to see the house and, from the outside, this home looked beautiful. It fit in beautifully with the other homes. Only the son and those who worked on the house knew the kinds of materials and workmanship that went into it. The father didn’t know this.

The father looked at his son and said, “Son, I can’t tell you how proud of you I am this day.” He asked him, “Son, did you use the best materials?”

“Yes Dad.”

“Did you use the best contractors?”

“Yes I did Dad,” he said, lying to his father.

And his father said, “I am so proud of you.” Reaching into his pocket for the keys, he said, “Son, I know that you and Alice are going to get married next year – this is your mother’s and my gift to you.

Just as the son in our story cut corners in building the house his father asked him to build, could we be cutting corners building our spiritual houses? Are you trying to save and to scrimp? Maybe you think you don't need as much time as other people do in worship or in Bible study. Will you be protected from all of life's trials and tribulations, that, while they may come, they will not overcome, because the Lord has built your spiritual house. You will withstand those storms of trials and temptations. Unless the Lord builds the house, those that build it labor in vain. In vain . . . so, we let the Lord build our house.

I'm sure all of you have heard the story Jesus told about the two men who built their homes. One built his house on the sand and the other built his house on the rock. Remember the story? Young people, I'm looking at you. What happened to the man who built his house on the sand? Great storms and waves came, and all kinds of rain and winds came. What happened to his house? Well, the rain washed the sand away and took out the foundation of the house, and the house collapsed and washed out into the ocean. What about the man who built his house upon the rock? The storms came, the winds blew, and the house withstood the storms, didn't it? That's a picture: the rock that we build on is a picture of building our lives and our spiritual homes on Jesus Christ who is the rock of our salvation. He is our rock and our fortress. He is our redeemer

## *Live a God-Pleasing Life!*

*Newsletter Article*

*For use one month prior to the program*



### *Live a God-Pleasing Life!*

As Christians, we are stewards or managers of all the gifts God has given us. This is quite a task, a task, frankly, that we, on our own, are incapable of carrying out. Yet we don't have a choice; all Christians are called to be stewards. We are not left on our own, though. The God who calls us equips us as well.

*"May the God of peace . . . equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to who be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Hebrews 13:20-21)*

**Faith is the foundation** of our stewardship. It is only through faith that we can please God, and it is only by faith in Christ's mighty power within us that we are able to do the works God has prepared for us to do.

If we are to be stewards **living a God-pleasing life**, we must follow the **path of discipleship** that Jesus lays out before us. We are called to serve, even as Jesus himself *"did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many"* (Matthew 20:28).

God-pleasing stewards give generously, even as their Master, Jesus, gave all he had, his very life. **Generosity was the hallmark** of the early Christians who *"shared everything they had . . . There were no needy persons among them"* (Acts 4:32, 34). Out of thankfulness to our giving God, who gives so generously, we, along with our spiritual forefathers, respond to the needs of others, giving to them as unto the Lord (Matthew 25:40).

During the month of **[Program Month]** we will spend three Sundays learning and growing and becoming stewards **living a God-pleasing life**. It is my hope and prayer that you will attend both the worship services and the Bible studies for this very important, educational, and enriching program.

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_

## My Commitment to the Lord

### *Live a God-Pleasing Life!*

#### **Being faithful with my time and talents...**

- Read God's Word
- Pray
- Worship
- Attend Bible studies
- Witness
- Serve



#### **Being faithful with my money...**

As a steward of God's resources, the percentage commitment of my income to God through my church will be \_\_\_\_ percent which is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per week.

*Prayerfully consider the faith goal of tithing...*

Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Church Name**

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*Prayerfully consider the faith goal of tithing...*

*Keep this half for your records*

**Church Name**