

WEEK 5

TITHING & GIVING

To Be a Christian Steward

"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Pt 4:10).

What identifies a steward? Safeguarding material and human resources and using them responsibly are one answer; so is generous giving of time, talent, and treasure. But being a Christian steward means more. As Christian stewards, we receive God's gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with increase to the Lord.

Disciples as Stewards

Let us begin with being a disciple—a follower of our Lord Jesus Christ. As members of the Church, Jesus calls us to be disciples. This has astonishing implications:

- Mature disciples make a conscious decision to follow Jesus, no matter what the cost.
- Christian disciples experience conversion—life shaping changes of mind and heart—and commit their very selves to the Lord.
- Christian stewards respond in a particular way to the call to be a disciple. Stewardship has the power to shape and mold our understanding of our lives and the way in which we live.

Jesus' disciples and Christian stewards recognize God as the origin of life, giver of freedom, and source of all things. We are grateful for the gifts we have received and are eager to use them to show our love for God and for one another. We look to the life and teaching of Jesus for guidance in living as Christian stewards.

USCCB (Stewardship)

Stewardship

We are called to be good stewards or caretakers, of the gifts of God. These gifts are many: the earth and all it provides for us, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and individuals personal skills and abilities. These gifts must be used in service of the Kingdom of God.

One of the foundations of the Church's social doctrine is that God gave human beings stewardship of the earth. That means we have the will and intelligence to be in charge—not dominate or overpower, but to create a just and reasonable society, using the earth's resources. It is up to us to see that the goods of the earth are distributed in a just and charitable ways to every person in the world.

"From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded" (Luke 12:48)

Opportunities to share your gifts

Parents, who nurture their children in the light of faith;

Parishioners, who work in concrete ways to make their parishes true communities of faith and vibrant sources of service to the larger community;

All Catholics, who give generous support—time, money, prayers, and personal service according to their circumstances—to parish and diocesan programs and to the universal Church.

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If You almost never tithe or tithe very little and infrequently

or

You are a youth or young adult, and your parents do all the giving

Next Step:

- Pray about giving. Reflect upon the blessings you have received.
- Begin reviewing your life to see where tithing and giving might fit.
- Attend a Financial Peace University program. They are online and are very good.

If You give fairly regularly, unless things come up

Next Step:

- Pray about stewardship.
- Work on building the habit of giving by being more consistent. This helps us create healthy priorities.
- Move towards making tithing and giving a built-in part of your budget.

If You give and tithe consistently and faithfully

Next Step:

- Pray about the way you give and be open to the Holy Spirit.
- If your giving is always from the excess, it should move towards the sacrificial.
- Is your giving always associated with a tax benefit? There is nothing wrong with tax breaks, until you limit your tithing and giving to only those opportunities where there is a return financial benefit.