

Introductory Session: For Church Leaders

Overview

This introduction for church leaders to *Biblical Stewardship: Our Duty and Delight* sets the stage, grounding leaders with background for leading the study. Highlighted are three principles for focusing stewardship in the congregation:

- To focus more on *living* than on *giving*;
- To focus on the good news!;
- To present stewardship and giving as a privilege.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

How would you define stewardship?

View Presentation

Key terms: *See Glossary*

Financial stewardship
Privilege
Responsibility
Short Term
Tithing (tithe)

Additionally, review the entire glossary to familiarize yourself with terms used throughout this course.

Discussion

What is your comfort level concerning money, its role in the congregation and its effect in your life?

What signs do you see, or have experienced, that money is a private matter?

Bible passages

Look up passages identified for each session for this course.

Consider adding passages to those currently identified for each session.

How do Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions support stewardship?

How do the following factors influence your willingness to talk about money in the congregation: your attitudes toward money, your personal financial position today, and the manner in which you make and follow through on giving decisions?

What does it mean to you that we “belong to God”? What does it mean to you that “everything we have belongs to God”?

How would you describe advantages for a church that focuses on money through the A-R-M-S [how we acquire money; how we regard money; how we manage money; how we spend money] approach?

How can you explain what it means to tithe, what the church teaches, and the distinction between tithe and offering?

Closing and Prayer

In this session, what surprised you?

What challenged or provided comfort?

Was this session beneficial?

Actions and Considerations

Read the book by Mark Allan Powell, *Giving to God: The Bible's Good News about Living a Generous Life*. Review the discussion questions following the introduction and chapters.

Consider other resources.

Session 1: Belonging to God

Overview – Session 1

In this session, *Biblical Stewardship: Our Duty and Delight*, baptism is explored as basic to stewardship. Also, ownership is developed as a biblical principle: *everything we are and everything we have belongs to God*.

Further theological consideration is given to being a steward, grounded in the biblical account of God's action in Jesus. The good news is that because we belong to God, we are set free to care for what rightly belongs to God and to use these resources in appropriate ways, which just might be the way to a better life.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Remember your baptism: when (date) _____ and where (congregation) _____, were you baptized?

Video Presentation

Key terms: *See Glossary*

Bondage to sin
Debt
Finances
Free gift
Fund-raising
Hell
Holy Baptism
Obligation
Promise
Redeemed
Salvation
Saved (sanctified)
Stewardship
Time
Talent
Treasure

Bible passages

Genesis 1:26-27
Genesis 2:7
Genesis 2:20-22
Genesis 3:19
Exodus 6:7
Psalm 8
Psalm 24:1
Psalm 49:15
Psalm 100:3
Matthew 20:28
Mark 10:45
John 10:14-15, 18
Romans 6:23
1 Corinthians 6:19-20
1 Corinthians 7:23
2 Corinthians 5:15
1 Timothy 2:5-6
2 Timothy 3:17
1 Peter 1:18-19

Discussion

What does stewardship mean to you?

What do you find challenging and/or comforting about the statement – *everything we are and everything we have belongs to God*?

How do you react when you hear, “Everything you think you have belongs to God!”?

What do you think when you hear, “We belong to God: God purchased us. God *bought* us – redeemed us from bondage to sin, death and the devil so that we could be God’s people?”

What would happen if God was completely in charge of your finances?

In what way is it good news that we belong to a God of grace who loves us, cares for us, and wants our lives to have joy?

What does stewardship mean?

Closing and Prayer

In this session, what surprised you?

What challenged or provided comfort?

Was this session beneficial?

Actions and Considerations

Take a sheet of paper and draw a line to divide it in half from top to bottom. On the left side list what you have and hold that belongs to God. Then on the right side write how you have been caring for that which belongs to God.

Session 2: What is a Steward?

Overview– Session 2

In this session, *Biblical Stewardship: Our Duty and Delight* addresses the Christian role and our position as a steward. It looks at the question, *what is a steward?* Ownership and our response as a steward are considered, as they give direction for daily living. The mnemonic, A-R-M-S, assists in recalling the all encompassing meaning to: “What is a steward?”

Welcome and Opening Prayer

What characteristics do you associate with the word steward? Which of these characteristics are reflective in your life?

[View Presentation](#)

Key terms: *See Glossary*

A-R-M-S

Entitlement

Financial stewardship

Steward

Vocation

Discussion

How do you understand “being a steward” as both gift and response?

Consider the connection to gift and response from the statements: “... *being a steward of all that God has made.*” and “*God expects us to take care of this world and all creation.*” How do you feel we are doing?

Jesus’ parables explore the difference between “ownership” and “being a steward.” How does thinking that one is an “owner” rather than “a steward” influence understanding and effect actions?

In what way does God care about how we acquire, regard, manage and spend our money?

What have you observed, both positive and negative, about how people: acquire, regard, manage and spend money?

Closing and Prayer

In this session, what surprised you?

What challenged or provided comfort?

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Actions and Considerations

Draw a grid with three columns and five rows. Label column 1: A-R-M-S, column 2: Current Actions and column 3: Future Actions. Then label the rows, row 1 (same a column 1: A-R-M-S, row 2: Acquire, row 3: Regard, row 4: Manage and row 5: Spend.

A-R-M-S	Current Actions	Future Actions
Acquire		
Regard		
Manage		
Spend		

Bible passages

- Matthew 6:34
- Matthew 18:23-35
- Matthew 20:1-16
- Matthew 25:14-30
- Luke 7:41-43
- Luke 12:16-21
- Luke 16:1-9
- Luke 19:11-27
- Luke 17:7-10
- Philippians 4:11-12

Fill in column 2 “Current Actions” describing what you presently do or how you currently act with regard to A-R-M-S. Take some time and reflect on those actions. Discuss these with your spouse/significant other or trusted friend.

After considering your “Current Actions” describe what your “Future Actions” could be or what you desire to do. Again, reflect and discuss, being open to the Holy Spirit’s guidance.

Session 3: Treasures and Hearts

Overview – Session 3

In this session, *Biblical Stewardship: Our Duty and Delight* explores the stewardship and spirituality connection. This includes considering the role and function of money within our relationship to God.

Treasures and Hearts looks at the means and methods to shape our future. The presentation helps us see that we *can* bring our hearts to feel what they currently don't, and that is good news.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

What is something you “treasure”?

[View Presentation](#)

Key terms: *See Glossary*
Commandment
Forgiveness
Promise
Spirituality
Spiritual devotion
Stewardship

Discussion

Jesus says one cannot serve two masters – God and money(Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13) – What does this mean in your life?

Bible passages

Leviticus
Matthew 6:21
Matthew 6:24
Luke 7:36-50
Luke 12:34
Luke 16:13

Consider Matthew 6:21 or Luke 12:34 which say, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Describe the treasure/heart connection. How do the things you treasure, influence how you feel about them?

On what do you spend money? How do you decide, on what and how much to spend?

In looking back on your spending habits, what have you given priority in your life?

How can you make your heart feel what you want it to feel?

**If I were the sort of person I would really like to be, then what would I do?
How would I spend my money (time and all else)?**

Closing and Prayer

In this session, what surprised you?

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Was this session beneficial?

Actions and Considerations

Divide a sheet of paper in half. On one half make a list of things you value. Include people, relationships and possessions. On the other half, identify what you would like to value. Then review both sides to see the connection between what you value and what you would like to value. Where there is discord between the lists pray for direction.

Lord Jesus I want to do what is right, pleasing and acceptable in your sight. You know me better than I know myself. I want my life directed toward honoring you always. I ask you to guide me, now and every day. Thank you Jesus, Lord of my life. Amen.

Session 4: Motives for Giving

Overview – Session 4

Biblical Stewardship: Our Duty and Delight looks at giving money and the motives. It identifies a two-fold nature for motives summarized as – our duty and delight.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

State a reason why people give money to the church (local congregation).

View Presentation

Key terms: *See Glossary*

Charity
Faith
Grace
Gratitude
Greed
Hypocrites
Investing
Love
Penitence
Prosperity gospel
Reconciliation
Reward
Sacrifice
Thanksgiving

Discussion

Why do people give money away, in particular through the church? What motives do you see?

Bible passages

Psalm 116:12
Matthew 5:45
Mark 12:41-44
Luke 6:35
John 15:5
Romans 15:27
Acts 20:35
2 Corinthians 5:17
2 Corinthians 8:1-6
Galatians 2:20
Galatians 5:22-24
Ephesians 2:8
Hebrews 11:1
1 Timothy 6:10

Does God love a person more or less because of what he or she gives to the church or gives for the sake of others? Explain

What reasons would you state for giving, in particular giving money?

What consequences do you see for directed giving, that is, – giving with strings attached?

What happens when you gives out of gratitude and love in thanksgiving for all that God provides?

What does being a generous person mean to you?

How might you experience giving as both duty and delight?

Closing and Prayer

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Actions and Considerations

Biblically the tithe (10% of the crop) is given off the top, the first fruit of the harvest to God. Today many people live apart from directly growing crops, though the concept remains consistent, off the top, first fruit of the harvest (which is wages, a pay check).

Consider where you stand with regard to this biblical principle. First consider your current earnings (weekly, monthly or yearly) and write it down. Now divide this amount by 10 (that equals 10%). Then review what you give – financially – to the church (total the dollar value). Compare the two and consider what this means to you and how you might grow spiritually as you experience growth in financial giving.

Earnings: _____ divide by 10 = _____ Compare _____
ie. 40,000 / year 4,000 / year 2,500 / year

Session 5: Duty & Delight

Overview – Session 5

Biblical Stewardship: Our Duty and Delight continues to consider giving money to the church. This is good news for us concerning giving financially through the church.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

What do you recall about when you first gave financially to the church?

[View Presentation](#)

Key terms: *See Glossary*

Biblical stewardship

Budget

Church membership

Discipline

Expenses

Fair share

Faith practice

Giving

Justified

Obedience

Sacrificial giving

Discussion

Paul quotes Jesus, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

How do you experience blessings with regard to giving and receiving?

What blessings do you see that result from giving?

Bible passages

Acts 20:35

Romans 5:6-11

2 Corinthians 9:7

If the church divided expenses (its budget) equitably among all its members, do you think your “share” would be greater or less than you now give?

What is your response to “duty and delight” in giving to God through the church?

How have you experienced ‘voting with the wallet’? What results from ‘voting with the wallet’?

How do you experience giving as a ‘delight’?

How have you experienced sacrificial giving (giving something you *like/treasure* for someone else’s benefit) and/or receiving?

Closing and Prayer

In this session, what surprised you?

What challenged or provided comfort?

Was this session beneficial?

Actions and Considerations

Take a little time and consider how money functions in your life. Write out your thoughts, remembrances and understandings concerning money and its function in your experience. Use these questions to guide your writing: What are your earliest memories of money? How did your family talk about/use/make decisions with regard to money? In a word or phrase; describe money in your life. Recall the first money you earned and how it was used. Describe connections you see between faith/spiritual life and money. How are money decisions made in your life today?

Session 6: Cheerful Sacrifices

Overview – Session 6

Biblical Stewardship: Our Duty and Delight identifies the connection between worship and giving. It encourages giving up something we value as a sacrifice to God. “Cheerful Sacrifices” explores the distinction between tithes and offerings. It looks at joy in giving and how the message of stewardship is good news.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

What is one way money has influence in your life?

View Video

Key terms: *See Glossary*

Benevolence

First fruits

Offerings

Tithes

Bible passages

Genesis 8:20
Genesis 12:7-8
Genesis 13:14-18
Genesis 26:25 & 35:7
Genesis 28:16-18
Exodus 17:15 & 32:5
Leviticus 19:18
Deuteronomy 6:5
Judges 6:24 & 21:4
1 Samuel 7:17 & 14:35
2 Samuel 24:25
1 Chronicles 21:26
1 Kings 18:32
Matthew 2:1-12
Matthew 2:21
Matthew 19:19
Matthew 22:37
Matthew 25:16-25
Mark 12:28-31
Mark 14:3-9
Luke 10:25-27
John 21:1-8
Acts 20:35
Romans 13:9
Galatians 5:14
Philippians 4:11-12
James 2:8

Discussion

What is/are appropriate reasons to participate in church?

How would you describe the connection between worship and financial giving?

Offering is a most public act connected with giving in the church. How do you view offering during worship? Is this a cheerful sacrifice? How?

How do you determine your financial offering?

What is your reaction to “giving up something of value” so that it’s financial value is made into an offering?

“In God we Trust” is printed on U.S. coin and currency. How does giving money (coin and currency), in God-pleasing ways, express our love for God and neighbor?

What would you describe as the ‘good news’ revealed in biblical stewardship?

Closing and Prayer

In this session, what surprised you?

What challenged or provided comfort?

Was this session beneficial?

Actions and Considerations

Look at your pattern for handling money by running a summary report from an electronic program (Quicken, MS Money, etc.), or by opening your checking account (credit card, money fund) register and categorizing how you spent money. Review your spending and see what this says about you and your priorities – especially where you place God among your priorities.

Assess your desire to change the priorities for your financial resources. Using your current pattern, compare it to your desired pattern. Identify what you can do, and then set a first action – what I will do. Repeat this step periodically until you form your desired pattern for handling money.