

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Intentional Stewardship 2024

"Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act." -Psalm 37:5

Week 1: Back to the Basics

This fall at St. Paul's we are undertaking a Campaign called "Intentional Stewardship." Using Psalm 37:5 above as our cue, we will be committing the way we handle our resources to the Lord by learning his Word, being obedient in response, and trusting in him to act. Let's begin by looking at some basics; specifically: "What is Stewardship."

In a nutshell, ***Christian stewardship is the faithful management of all we have: our time, talents, and possessions.*** It begins with the understanding that everything we possess is God's (see Haggai 2:8, 1 Chronicles 29:14, Psalm 24:1, & Deut. 8:17-18) and therefore it is our calling to use it for his purposes in our various vocations or callings such as parenting, work, being a good neighbor, taking care of others, etc.

Besides our various vocations in family and society, we have the vocation of being a part of a local assembly of believers. Part of what stewardship entails in this area is the giving of our financial resources (exp. Galatians 6:6-10). This is what we're going to focusing on in our Intentional Stewardship Campaign.

This said, to help you commit your way to the Lord, below are five aspects of financial steward from God's Word. This week, let me encourage you to spend time meditating on what the Bible says regarding faithful Christian stewardship in your local body of believers. Alone or with your spouse, reflect on the words and questions below.

1) Giving is a willing and cheerful endeavor

2 Corinthians 9:7 "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Is giving for you a joyful endeavor? If not why not? What would need to change for that to be the case?

2) We are to give God our firstfruits, not our leftovers

Proverbs 3:9-10 "Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine."

Are you intentional about giving God your firstfruits? If not, why not? What would have to change for that to be true of you?

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3) Giving is a regular undertaking

1 Corinthians 16:2 *“On the first day of every week (i.e. Sunday), each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper...”*

Do you regularly give? If not, why not? What would have to change in your life for this to be a reality?

4) Giving is proportional

1 Corinthians 16:2 *“On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper...”*

Deuteronomy 16:17 *“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you.”*

Is your giving in proportion to how God has blessed you?
If not, why not?

For guidance on this, look at your giving in comparison to the Old Testament law of tithing (giving 10% of what you receive). Though no longer a *requirement* for Christians, the principle remains.

Does your giving even begin to measure up to what God commanded his people of old? If not, why not? What would have to change for that to be the case?

5) We are called to be generous in our giving

Mark 12:43-44 *“this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”*

Would you describe your financial stewardship toward the church as “generous?” If not, why not? What would need to change for that to be true of you?

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