
A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

Dear Lord,

I pray that You give me the wisdom to guide me on this faith journey of stewardship.

Help me to understand that everything I have is a gift from You.

Open my heart and my mind so that I may use these marvelous gifts to give back to You here on Earth.

I pray that You welcome me into Your kingdom at the end of my life, and that You are pleased with what I have done with all Your gifts.

Amen.



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Christian Stewardship

*To Share Christ in and
through the Church*



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STEWARDSHIP: TURNING CULTURAL VALUES UPSIDE DOWN

Many Catholics wince when they hear the word “stewardship.” It is a reaction prompted by a mistaken notion that stewardship is just another way the Church asks for money. This is not true.

The Life of a Christian Steward

The decision to share our financial resources with our communion of faith is an important aspect of being a Christian steward. But that is only part of the story. Christian stewardship is the commitment we make in response to God’s generosity — to live a life of gratitude; to make daily decisions to glorify God; and to share ourself and our gifts generously as circumstances and talents allow.

The United States Bishops, in their Pastoral Letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, give us guidance in simple terms on what striving to be a Christian steward means in our daily lives. First, they define a Christian disciple as “*one who responds to Christ’s call, follows Jesus, and shapes his or her life in imitation of Christ’s.*” They then describe a Christian steward as “*one who receives God’s gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord*” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, p. 9).

A life of gratitude is the first mark of a Christian steward. God has endowed His followers with more gifts than we can imagine — life and faith; freedom, time, and relationships; health, talents, skills, and material goods. Everything we are and have is a gift from God, and a Christian thanks God daily for these blessings.

Stewardship Involves Daily Choices

Stewardship means making daily, conscious choices that glorify God. We make decisions daily that reveal our priorities. The axiom, “Tell me to what you pay attention and I will tell you who you are,” holds true. There are such things as self-glorification and the exaltation of wealth, social status, success, and power. Our commitment to Christian discipleship will be recognized by the place God has in daily life.

Christian stewards regard success, a high standard of living and the accumulation of material objects as secondary to loving God and a life of generosity, hospitality, and the primacy of personal relationships. In making these decisions, we turn culture’s values upside down.

We Give Thanks for God’s Blessings

The best way to respond to God’s loving generosity is by our reflecting that generosity day by day. Take time for prayer; nurture relationships with family and friends; participate in the worship life of our communion of Christians; and act out of loving concern for others in the world. What God does in Jesus’ human life is a much magnified version of what happens when we rearrange our personal schedule to be with someone who is lonely or despairing, or when

we devise creative ways to volunteer our talents for our parish, or when we reprioritize our family budget and spending habits in light of the Gospel. The stewardship question is not, “Should I do these things?” but rather, “How much should I do?”

The Decision is Ours

Ultimately, Christian stewardship comes down to personal decisions about how each of us lives, and how each of us will respond to God’s gifts based on our experience, self-knowledge, and the call of God’s grace. There is the paradoxical truth, hallowed in the New Testament, that by giving ourselves to someone or something beyond ourselves, we discover our own best self: “*He who loses himself for My sake will find himself*” (Matthew 10:39).

Living as Christian stewards should bring a deeper and more solid joy and confidence about being disciples of Jesus Christ. Though Christians, we have not seen Christ; but we are assured — by faith truly lived and generously practiced — the joy, the peace, and the life that comes to those who dare to believe and trust in Him.

“*As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.*” (1 Peter 4:10)