

# *Living Each Day as a Steward!*

## *The Steward's Purpose*

“What is your purpose in life?” This is a challenging and puzzling question. It is obviously a question many people are trying to answer. As self-centered people, we tend to focus our purposes on our ambitions, goals, dreams, and vocations for this life. In contrast, Christians, who view this world as a transitory place, find fulfillment as they make their purpose one with God, who gave his Son who “*died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised*” (2 Corinthians 5:15).

Our purpose is not to live for ourselves, but for “*Him who for [our] sake died and was raised.*” The book *The Stewardship Life* lists four aspects of that purpose of those who **live each day as God’s stewards**:

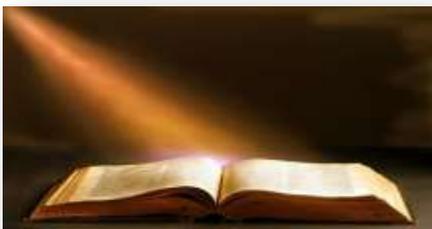
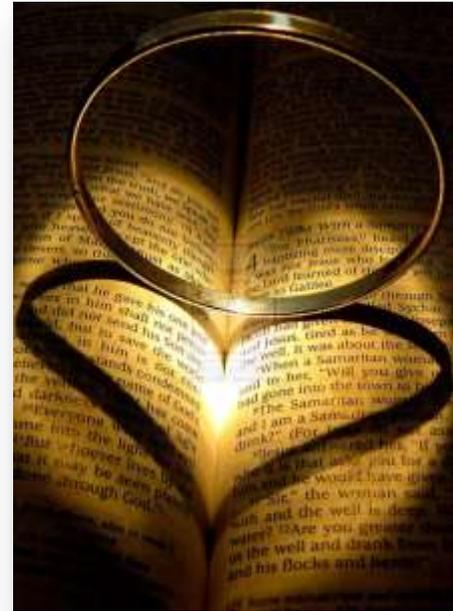
1. Glorification of God
2. Growth of the Kingdom
3. Relief of human ills
4. Salvation of the steward’s own soul

***Glorification of God*** “‘God first in all things’ is the watchword of the Christian life. ‘*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*’ (1 Corinthians 10:31). Stewardship can have no higher aim, and it must certainly have no lower. The one who thinks of one’s own glory as he/she serves is not a good steward. When we serve, let us serve ‘*by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ*’” (1 Peter 4:11).

***Growth of the Kingdom*** “The importance of performing our stewardship tasks for the growth of the kingdom of God, either directly or indirectly, appears in the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16), which teaches that those who take no part in the work of the kingdom of God are practically idlers in the market-place. A philanthropy, therefore, which merely addresses itself to certain temporal ills of humankind, but leaves out of consideration the higher and more urgent needs of the human soul, ... builds hospitals, schools, or libraries, but not faith communities that thrive and grow, ... may find favor with the world, but it is not really good stewardship. No person can be a true servant of God and ignore or neglect God’s Kingdom of grace on earth.”

***Relief of human ills*** “As to one’s stewardship duty to serve our brothers and sisters for the Lord’s sake, we need only quote Peter: ‘*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s*’

***“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”***



*varied grace*' (1 Peter 4:10). In obedience to this command a good steward will not only feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give shelter to the homeless, but will seek to nurture our neighbor's soul by sharing the good news of God's love in all that one does."

***The salvation of the steward's own soul*** "We owe it to ourselves to be good stewards according to Paul's admonition: *'Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling'* (Philippians 2:12). We do not merit eternal life by any act or display of good stewardship, but by faith in Jesus as our Savior through whom we have become children of God. We now walk as it becomes the children of God in order that we may not again lose the inheritance which became ours by the grace of God."

### **Glorifying and Serving God**

Through the reading and studying of God's Word, we not only learn about God, we come to know God himself. His Word and Sacraments not only give us life and salvation, they transform us into his image, taking from us the desire to be conformed to the pattern of the world (Romans 12:2). As our minds and hearts are taught and nourished by the Holy Spirit in Word and Sacrament, we find only emptiness in striving to please ourselves but true joy and fulfillment in carrying out God's purposes for our lives.

Thomas Carlyle wrote, "The man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder ... a waif, a nothing, a no man." We need purpose in order to have meaning for our lives. If we don't have meaning, life does not have value or hope. In Christ, we have purpose, meaning, and hope.

As people who **live each day as stewards**, we thank God that he has given us the faith and wisdom to understand that he is both our source of life and our purpose for living. We realize that we exist only because God wants us to exist. Our purpose is to give him glory, honor, and service.

