

Bible Study

“Empowered by Grace to Do Your Best”

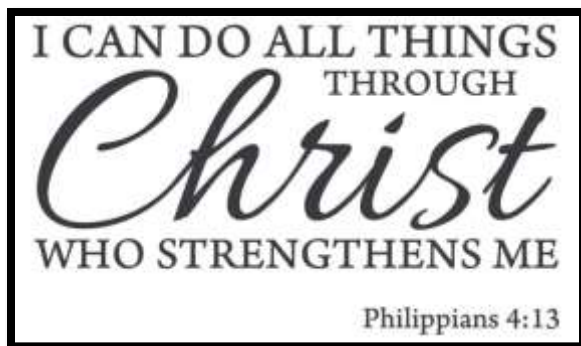
Prayer: Lord, you are the owner of every animal in the forest and the cattle on a thousand hills. We thank you for the privilege and opportunity to be your stewards. We pray that this study we begin today will equip and energize us to be more faithful in our stewardship. May all that we do bring you glory and honor. In Jesus' precious name we pray. Amen.

Introduction

Because of God's grace, we can serve, witness, give, and do the work of the Lord. It is God's grace that gives us the power to do our best in doing his will. God's rich supply of grace is our power source. God not only forgives and saves us, but he also gives us strength for service to him. By ourselves, we are powerless. In our humanity, we are weak and foolish. God pours out his grace on us because he loves us, calls us, and gives us his work to do. *“But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift”* (Ephesians 4:7).

The Apostle Paul wrote *“I can do all things through him who strengthens me”* (Philippians 4:13). When we abide in the Lord, we have the same strength that Paul had so we can do our best in service to the Lord. If the connection to Jesus is ever broken, our source of strength is severed. When we remain in Jesus, we share Christ's power because he dwells in us. *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”* (Galatians 2:20).

In this study, the encouragement to do our best is made with the understanding that what we do is always in response to what God has already done and through his power at work in us. Our stewardship does not originate with what we do for God. We love because God first loved. We give because God first gave. We speak because God first spoke. It is God who does the initiating. All that we are and have are because of God's grace. We are sinners who don't deserve what God does for us. Because of grace, we have new lives in him (Romans 6:4). Through faith, we willingly serve the Lord with our whole hearts and minds out of gratitude for who God is and what he has done for us. Paul encourages us to demonstrate our gratitude in faithful obedience and action. *“I appeal to you therefore brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship”* (Romans 12:1).



Questions for Discussion

1. Read Luke 10:1-3. For what purpose does God equip you?
2. Paul speaks of “the mystery” in Colossians 1:26-28. What is this “mystery” that enables you to give your best?
2. As sinners, we all fall short of the glory of God. Read Romans 5:15. Through God’s grace, we have been redeemed. Define grace by completing the following acronym.
3. G _____ R _____ A _____ C _____ E _____
4. Read John 1:16. What do you receive? How do you receive all that you have?
5. Read John 15:1-8. Who is the Vine? Who are the branches? How is it possible for you to do your best in doing what God wants you to do?
6. Read Matthew 25:35-36, 40. What does God want you to do?
7. Read Acts 20:24. Through God’s grace, Paul served the Lord with his whole heart and mind. What task did God give Paul that he now gives to you? Is that task important to you?
8. How could you receive Jesus’ death and resurrection in vain (2 Corinthians 6:1)?
9. How does 1 Corinthians 4:7 help you as a steward to keep things in perspective?
10. Read James 2:14-17. What point is the apostle making about faith and action?
11. God has chosen you to be his steward. You are to be a faithful steward of your life and resources. What are some characteristics of a Christian steward?
12. What prevents you from helping and serving others more than you do?
13. How did Christ respond to those who mistreated him (See Luke 23:34)?

God Uses Ordinary People to Do Extraordinary Things

Scripture is full of ordinary people whom God chose to accomplish his work. God not only calls; God also equips people for service. Following are some examples of people who gave their all in service to their Lord.

John the Baptist (Read Matthew 3).

John served the Lord by proclaiming the coming of the Messiah.

14. In what ways did John the Baptist attract people to Jesus rather than to himself?
15. How did the ministry of John the Baptist end (Mark 6:26-28)?

Barnabas (Read Acts 4:32-37).

Barnabas gave generously.

16. How did Barnabas help the Lord’s work go forward?
17. How did Barnabas help the Apostle Paul (Acts 9:26-29)?

***Prayer:** Lord, we thank you for the time that we had to study your Word as it relates to our stewardship. Help us to be faithful stewards who willingly serve you with our time, talents, and treasures. Use us as instruments of your love, grace, and mercy to those around us. In Jesus’ holy name we pray. Amen.*