A Condensed Version of "With A Grateful Heart"

Used In Sunday Worship With Video Segments & Talking Points/Bulletin Points

Recap of Video Segments:

1st Week – Scene 1

• Christian Stewardship Involves A New Focus On How We Manage Our Lives

1. We do not focus on what we give up, but on the wealth of blessings we have and will receive from God.

2. A strong devotional life which focuses on God’s grace can change our perspective.

1. God is the owner of all things. Nothing is ours to keep. We can get all wrapped up in it now, only to give it up at death, or we can share it now, and invest in heavenly treasures.
2. God is our provider. He will always give us what we need and more.

5. God owns us and all that we have not merely by creation but by redemption. We were bought at a price, the blood of Christ.

2nd Week – Scenes 2 & 3

• Stewardship involves our response to God’s blessings.

1. There is a negative view of stewardship, an institutional view that many of us share with the stewardship committee in the video.
2. The real motivation that makes a difference comes from gratitude.
3. Consider how grateful your current level of stewardship of time, talents and treasures shows you to be.

• Stewardship Involves Service.

1. Consider the need for every person to be involved.
2. The “somebody” to whom everyone is looking to do “something” may be you.

Third Week – Scenes 4 & 5

• Stewardship involves the joyful giving of ourselves and our treasures

1. Gifts to the Lord offered begrudgingly are not acceptable to him.
2. The joy is in actually being a partner with our Savior.

• Willing response to God’s love

1. We give not because we must.
2. With the Macedonians we plead for an opportunity to share in the eternal work of God, and to give others reason to praise God.

4th Week – Scenes 6 & 7

• Challenge to Change and Grow

1. Consider what is really important, and where our priorities should be.
2. This is a point to challenge one another. How much more might you be able to commit to the Lord’s work over the next year. Could there be a long range plan for continued growth over the next five years. Consider the relationship between what you are able to commit, to what you have been and are willing to commit. Look over proportionate giving tables & pledge cards. What kind of realistic increase could you expect from yourself by God’s grace? Consider the Simply-Giving program.

• Change of Heart

1. Know who you are, and what you are here for.
2. See every day as a gift from God, and an opportunity to make a difference for eternity.

**Commitment Sunday Script For Personal Reflection:**

1. Reflect upon God’s blessings in your life and the gift of His Son to be your Savior. Consider, also, the witness given in the video we have been watching over the last number of weeks.

2. Consider where your priorities have been and the way you have used the blessings God has given you.

3. Think about the relationship between what you are able to commit to God and what you have been willing to commit to Him.

4. Ask yourself if it is time for a change and what that change might look like. What changes could you make in your priorities and lifestyle that would allow you to commit more of God’s blessings to His kingdom work?

5. Consider the following verses from 1 Timothy 6: ***“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”***

6. Make your commitment to God with a glad and sincere heart!

September XX, XXXX

Name

Address

City State Zip

Dear ,

Grace and peace to you from our God and Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As you consider your life of Christian service, I feel that it is necessary to consider three important questions:

• Has the Lord loved and blessed me?

• Do I love the Lord?

• How am I going to respond to His blessings and demonstrate my love in return?

In answer to the **first question**, I pray that the Holy Spirit will open your mind and heart to fully appreciate the love and blessings of God in your life. Take time to consider how much God has loved you in sending His Son to die for you so that you could have eternal life. Look at your life and all the things you have and enjoy. Every breath...every pleasure...every moment...every good and perfect gift has come to you from your loving, heavenly Father.

In answer to the **second question**, I, again, pray the Holy Spirit will lead you to confess with St. Peter, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love you!” But more than that, I hope He moves you to put that love into action. Consider how you have managed, or mismanaged, your life for Christ. Confess your love not just with words but with your entire life.

This brings us to the **third question**, and the most difficult of all. How am I going to respond to His blessings, and demonstrate my love? Here are a few suggestions from the Bible:

1. I will gratefully receive the salvation He offers me, call on His name, and fulfill my vows in His house of worship. (Ps. 116)

2. I will show Him that I love Him by observing His commands, and bearing fruit. (John 15)

3. I will offer all that I am and everything I have to His service. (Romans 12)

4. I will show the sincerity of my love by giving first my heart, and then my treasures to relieve the spiritual and physical sufferings of others for Christ’s sake. (2 Corinthians 8)

In the few years we would like to teach all the members of the congregation more about what it means to show our love for God. This year we will be viewing video segments during offering at worship and discussing what it means to manage our life for Christ. We hope that this will assist you in preparing to make your faithful pledge on commitment Sunday, **[Date of commitment Sunday]**.

Keep your eyes open for more information on how the Lord is preparing you to demonstrate your love. Peace be with you.

In Christ,

Pastor

October XX, XXXX

Dear Redeemed in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from our God and Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In my last letter I challenged you to consider how you might respond to the Lord’s blessings, and demonstrate your love for your Savior.

The Board of Stewardship offers the following recommendations for those who are wanting to grow in the grace of giving with a grateful heart:

**HEART**

1. Always remember:

We are redeemed children of God purchased by the blood of Christ and belong to Him.

Our gifts to God come first.

Our gifts to God are to be offered sacrificially.

Our gifts to God are to be offered with a cheerful spirit.

Our gifts to God are to be given in proportion to the blessings we have received.

The Old Testament starting point was 10% but we have been set from from the law to accomplish more under grace.

**TIME**

2. Do not forget to consider the gift of time God has given you, time with which you may serve Him. Consider increasing the amount

of attention you give to time in worship, prayer, Bible study, and service in the Church and to others for Christ’s sake.

**TALENTS**

3. Do not forget to consider the gift of your talents. Look over the Time and Talent sheets and pledge your gifts to God’s service in

proportion to your abilities.

**TREASURES**

4. If you are currently averaging a gift **between $1-10 per week** challenge yourself to begin returning to the Lord, in a first-fruit,

sacrificial manner that is in proportion to your blessings. It is recommended that you start by setting 2% of your weekly income

aside as a love gift to the God who first loved you.

5. If you are currently averaging a gift **between $10-30 per week** you are encourage to increase that gift by 10% or work toward

returning 10% or more of your blessings as an expression of thanksgiving and love to God.

6. If you are currently averaging a gift **over $30 per week** you are encouraged to increase your current gift by 5% or challenge

yourself to return 10% or more of all your blessings to God in loving appreciation for His tremendous sacrifice for you.

I encourage you to consider these suggestions, and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in your response to God’s love. On **[Date of Commitment Sunday]** you will have the opportunity of demonstrating your love for God as we together to celebrate our Commitment Sunday. If you are unable to attend, or forget to offer your pledge, send it in as soon as possible.

I pray the Lord’s blessings upon your consecrated life!

In Christ,

Pastor

October XX, XXXX

Dear Redeemed in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from our God and Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In my last letter I challenged you to consider how you might respond to the Lord’s blessings, and demonstrate your love for your Savior. One of the ways, as suggested by St. Paul in the 8th chapter of 2nd Corinthians, is by giving first your heart, and then your treasures to relieve the spiritual and physical sufferings of others for Christ’s sake. This is what our offerings through **[Name of Congregation]** are all about.

When it comes to showing the sincerity of our love through the pledging of our treasures to God’s service, the Board of Stewardship would like to offer the following suggestions:

**FOR ALL OF GOD’S PEOPLE**

Always remember that our gifts to the Lord are to come first. They are to be offered sacrificially. They are to be offered with a cheerful spirit. And they are to be given in proportion to the blessings we have received. The Old Testament starting point was 10%, but we have been set free from the law to accomplish far more under grace.

**FOR 8TH GRADE YOUTH**

It is suggested that you challenge yourself to give a minimum of $ .50 per week, or 10% of your weekly allowance or income.

**FOR 9TH GRADE YOUTH**

It is suggested that you challenge yourself to give a minimum of $ .75 per week, or 10% of your weekly allowance or income.

**FOR 10TH GRADE YOUTH**

It is suggested that you challenge yourself to give a minimum of $ 1.00 per week, or 10% of your weekly allowance or income.

**FOR 11TH & 12TH GRADE YOUTH**

It is suggested that you challenge yourself to give a minimum of $ 1.50 per week, or 10% of your weekly allowance or income.

I encourage you to consider these suggestions, and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in your response to God’s love. On **[Date of Commitment Sunday]** you will have the opportunity of demonstrating your love for God as we, together, celebrate our Commitment Sunday. If you are unable to attend, or forget to offer your pledge, please send it as soon as possible.

I pray the Lord’s blessings upon your consecrated life!

In Christ,

Pastor