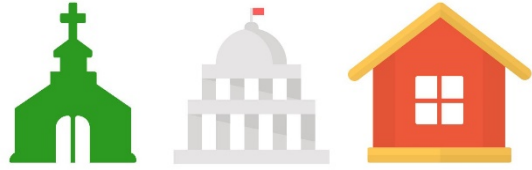


Placed for a Purpose

LEADER GUIDE



STUDY OVERVIEW

Placed for a Purpose is a four-session Bible study focusing on vocational stewardship within the framework of Luther’s three estates: church, state, and home. The study departs from the traditional “time, talent, and treasure” model, emphasizing first and foremost what our neighbors need rather than what we have to give. The sessions can be presented alone or integrated with the set of sermons prepared for this Bible study.

The Sessions

1. Vocation, Vocation, Vocation
2. Serving Our Neighbors in the Church
3. Serving Our Neighbors in the State
4. Serving Our Neighbors in the Home

Study Objectives

The 4-part study is intended to help participants . . .

- Understand and explain the role of vocation in the definition of stewardship
- Discover a different approach from the common “time, talent, and treasure” model of stewardship
- Understand stewardship as more than simply giving money to church
- Gain a fuller understanding of God’s expectations with respect to stewardship, as revealed in His Word
- Approach their own stewardship activities within a framework of serving neighbors in the “three estates”

Key questions for each “estate” study

- What resources and gifts does God provide in this sphere of life for serving our neighbor?
- To what end? What does God want us to do in this particular context? (What does Scripture say? What does the LCMS teach?)
- Application/discussion: Who are our neighbors? What do they need? What two or three things could you do, personally, to serve your neighbor in this area?

RESOURCES

In this leader guide you’ll find lesson plans for each session. Additional downloadable resources include:

- ❖ Handouts (Introduction, Church, State, Home)
- ❖ Sermons (an introductory sermon plus three sermons corresponding to each of Luther’s estates)
- ❖ A bulletin insert

The sermons are available in editable format to allow for customization; the handouts, leader guide and bulletin inserts are available as PDFs. If you'd like editable versions of these materials, contact Missions and Stewardship in the Kansas District Office.

GENERAL TEACHING TIPS

Handouts. Each session of the study is designed to work with a handout that includes content highlights on the front and an application chart on the back. The handouts were initially created with a one-hour study in mind, with the first 30-40 minutes devoted to lecture/discussion, and the last 20 minutes or so devoted to group discussion of the application activity. Previous participants have appreciated both sides of the handout, but many wished they had more time for “the chart.”

You can use the study as originally intended, or you can try one of the following alternatives: 1) Allow more time for each session (e.g., 75-90 minutes), 2) start with the chart (“Who’s your neighbor?”) and look for times in the discussion to address relevant content from the reverse side, or 3) go over the content side more quickly (e.g., highlighting only a few items, or going into less depth) to leave more time for application.

Core Message. One of the key messages previous attendees have taken away from this study is that stewardship is “not all about money.” This broader perspective is important, but so, too, is the need for regular and generous financial giving. The study addresses both messages, but leaders may want to give some thought to the right balance between the two for their particular context.

Order of Sessions. Luther addressed his three estates in the order of home, government, and church. Here, we’ve arranged things a bit differently, starting with the church (the most familiar context for stewardship), then moving to the state (a bit more challenging to connect to stewardship), then home (Luther’s most important state). Although the sessions are arranged in this order, feel free to move them around as you see fit.

Expanding the Content. The handouts provide a broad outline of talking points, which leaves room for study leaders to work in their own insights, observations, and anecdotes. We’ve provided a few examples with each Bible study to illustrate possible directions, but leaders will benefit from being prepared with additional material.

A FINAL THOUGHT

May God bless your study of vocational stewardship! If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to contact us in the Kansas District Office.

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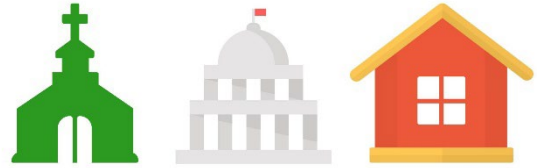
Sermons: Rev. Michael Henrichs, Senior Pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Whitefish Bay, WI

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All Luther quotations on the handouts are from *Luther’s Works* (*Lectures on Genesis*, vol. 7; *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper*, vol. 37, and *On the Councils and the Church*, vol. 41).

Placed for a Purpose: Session 1

Vocation, Vocation, Vocation



Session Objectives

This session is intended to help listeners ...

- Explore popular understandings (and limitations) of the term “stewardship”
- Define “steward” and “vocation,” along with three related concepts: calling, duty, and love
- See vocation in action in the parable of the Good Samaritan
- Understand their vocational role as “faithful steward” in using their resources for God’s purposes

Opening Prayer/Devotion: Proceed with a standard opening (e.g., Office of Daily Prayer, LSB, p. 295 or 297) or use the prayer for “Grace to use our gifts” (LSB, p. 311) or “Christian vocation” (LSB, p. 311).

Introductory Exercise: Word Association (5-10 minutes)

Write on the board (or display on a slide): STEWARDSHIP

Discussion starter: What words or phrases or anecdotes come to mind when you hear the word “stewardship”?

Discussion notes:

- Jot answers on a whiteboard or keep a mental note of responses. **Briefly highlight** any patterns you see, and comment on perceptions that may need to be broadened or corrected. For example, you’ll likely hear “money” early in the exercise. Point out that stewardship as “money only” is a common perception, which can be detrimental to a proper understanding of stewardship.
- Another likely response is “time, talent, and treasure.” This familiar stewardship mantra has merit; however, it can lead people to think about stewardship from the perspective of “my time, my talents, and my treasure.” As people consider what they have, they then think about what they’re willing to give up. One issue with this way of thinking is that everything we have is actually God’s—we’re just trustees of his resources (Ps. 24:1). Another issue with this perspective is that it doesn’t always lead us to think about the neighbors that God has given us to serve.
- As you wrap up the discussion, **introduce the purpose of the Bible study:** Instead of “time, talent, and treasure” as three most important things to consider when it comes to stewardship, this study offers another trio of terms: “vocation, vocation, vocation.” (You may want to refer to the “three most important rules in real estate.”)

Preview: In this session, we’ll lay the groundwork by studying some basic definitions and concepts, then we’ll see how those concepts work in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Definitions and Concepts (HANDOUT; 25 minutes)

A. Define stewardship and vocation

From Dictionary.com:

STEWARD

1. a person who manages another's property or financial affairs; one who administers anything as the agent of another or others
2. a person who has charge of the household of another, buying or obtaining food, directing the servants, etc.

VOCATION

1. a particular occupation, business, or profession; calling
2. a strong impulse or inclination to follow a particular activity or career
3. a divine call to God's service or to the Christian life
4. a function or station in life to which one is called by God: *the religious vocation; the vocation of marriage*

For discussion: Using the definitions here, how is "Christian steward" a vocation? What are the key elements of that vocation?

Concepts to highlight:

- Managing resources or acting as an agent (surrogate) of another person (see, e.g., the Parable of the Talents, Matt. 25:14-30)
- Having responsibility for overseeing a **household** (we are co-heirs with Christ, in the household of God; see, e.g., Rom 8:12-17; Gal. 3:29)
- Vocation as a calling; a station in life assigned by God

B. Define key concepts related to vocation: calling, duty, and love

Calling

Vocation means "calling" (see definition #1 above). Consider what God's Word says about being called in the following passages:

- **Is. 43:1** ("I have called you by name ...")
- **1 Cor. 7:17** ("Let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him ...")
- **1 Peter 2:21** ("To this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you ...")
- **If time: Eph. 4:1** ("Walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called ...")

Duty

Duty isn't always highly regarded. (*Ask listeners for negative associations with duty. Note how we sometimes think these ways ourselves about our duties.*)

In other contexts (e.g., the military, biblical times, certain cultures), duty was and is honorable and important. (*Could ask listeners for positive associations.*)

- Consider what Jesus says in **Luke 17:7-10** (on servants doing what is commanded).
- Luther's Table of Duties (*LSB*, p. 328; *could simply make listeners aware of this resource at this point and note that you'll be revisiting it in later sessions*)
- Useful additional reading (for study preparation): "Do Your Duty," by Gene Edward Veith; available at <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/do-your-duty/>

Love

Our ways of thinking about love aren't always consistent with God's definition. How do people in our culture typically think of love? (*Field a few responses*)

Now consider what God's Word teaches about love.

- **1 John 3:16-18** ("By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us ...")
- **John 14:15** ("If you love me, you will keep my commandments ...")

Note key points in these passages, underscoring the unique points of the Scriptural definition. Connect to vocation.

Vocation in Action: The Parable of the Good Samaritan (15-20 minutes)

Read aloud the parable of the good Samaritan: Luke 10:25-37. If time is short, you could start with verse 29.

Draw connections between elements of the parable and the concepts under discussion:

- Stewardship
- Vocation
- Calling
- Duty
- Love

Points to highlight:

- This parable teaches us that **vocation** involves meeting the needs of others. The Samaritan was a true neighbor to the beaten man because he showed the man mercy out of **love**.
- The love of God always calls us or gives us the **duty** to serve our neighbor (Rom. 13:8).
- The priest and Levite had vocations (temple worship), but the beaten man presented a more pressing need for them to address. (*Note that we all have multiple vocations.*) These characters failed to do their duty and heed this more pressing vocational **call**.
- Jesus teaches us that serving our neighbors is actually service to God (Matt. 25:40). Helping and serving our neighbor, wherever that neighbor may be – in our community, in our church, or in our home is – is what our **stewardship** is all about.
- **A special note about money:** While stewardship isn't only about money, money is clearly part of good stewardship practice. Just as the Good Samaritan used his money to help the beaten man (Luke 10:35), we can and should use our money to serve our neighbors. God's Word also instructs us to make use of our financial resources for the work of His kingdom (1 Cor. 16: 1-3 and Luke 16:1-9). We can't pick and choose what resources we'll use for stewardship. We can't claim that we'll give of our time and talents but say that we won't use our treasures for

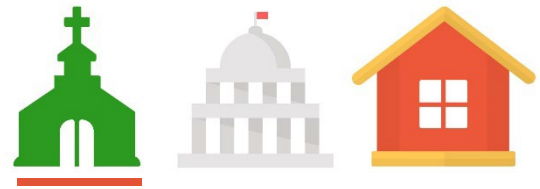
stewardship. (For example, sometimes “whole-life stewardship” gets used in this manner; people appeal to it to deflect talk about money.) Stewardship involves using ALL the resources that God has given us to serve our neighbor.

Internal session summary (remaining time)

Key takeaway: Vocational stewardship teaches us to consider things not primarily from our perspective, but to look to our neighbor and his or her needs when figuring out how God wants us to use the things He’s given us.

In the next sessions: We’ll look at vocational stewardship in three spheres of life: church, state, and home. We’ll start with church, since that’s where we tend to hear the most direct talk about stewardship.

Placed for a Purpose: Session 2
Serving Our Neighbors in the Church



Session Objectives

This session is intended to help listeners...

- Consider God’s call to Christians in in the context of the Church
- Recognize that God calls us to serve fellow Christians in the congregation where He gathers us
- Understand that stewardship involves more than giving money to the Church
- Identify specific ways in which we can exercise good stewardship in the Church

Opening Prayer/Devotion: Proceed with a standard opening or use the prayer for “Grace to use our gifts” (LSB, p. 311) or “Christian vocation” (LSB, p. 311).

Introduction: The Three Estates (5-10 mins)

Discussion starter: Here’s a little “insider information”: This Bible study was originally going to be called “Estate Planning.” Can anyone guess why?

Field a few guesses. If someone knows Luther well, they might make the connection between the three estates and the “places” of church, state, and home. If not, fill them in.

Even though “Estate Planning” didn’t stick as a title, Luther’s concept of the three estates is still central.

Luther on the Three Estates (*Distribute handouts at this point and read aloud the two quotations from Luther on the left side of the handout. Highlight salient points after the passages are read.*)

- **Passage 1:** *We know that there are three estates in this life...*
- **Passage 2:** *Above these three institutions and orders is the common order of Christian love ...*

God created these three institutions (church, state, and family) in which our lives are ordered. In this session, we’ll be looking at one of those institutions: the church. The church is actually Luther’s third estate, but it tends to be the first place we associate with stewardship.

Definition of the Church (*read aloud, right side of the handout*)

NOTE: The supporting passage from Genesis, which you could address if you have time, offers another perspective on the church. According to Martin Luther, the Church began when God gave His Word to Adam and Eve. God gave Adam and Eve His Word, His Truth, and His commands; in so doing, He created the Church.

Case Study (10 minutes)

Read aloud Acts 6:1-7 (“Seven Chosen to Serve”), then guide the group through the questions on the handout.

Points to highlight:

- Note the concept of **need**: widows were being neglected.
- Another **need**: the twelve needed more time to preach and teach. It might seem that serving tables (i.e., distributing resources to the needy) is not as important as what the twelve were doing, but that’s not the point of the text. Service to one’s neighbor is never unimportant. Jesus shows us that there is no service beneath Him when He washes His disciples’ feet (John 13:1-15). If there is no service beneath Jesus, there can be no service beneath us.
- **Qualifications** for the seven: men of good repute, full of the Holy Spirit and full of wisdom.
- **Connection to duty**: After the men are chosen, they’re appointed to a duty (v. 3). The twelve had been given a specific duty regarding the preaching and the ministry of the Word. The seven are appointed a different duty. To be given a duty in service to others in the Church is holy work, whether it is preaching the Word or washing tables.
- **Wrap up thought**: Martin Luther said: “A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject of all.” We like the first part of this quotation. Too often we neglect the second part. The Lord calls us to service. See also Matt. 20:25-28 and Luke 17:10.

Elsewhere in Scripture (10 minutes)

Consider the following additional passages that deal with service in the Church:

- 1 Cor. 12:12-31
 - In this well-known passage Paul compares people in the church to members of a body. What does this have to do with our vocations (callings) in the Church? (*Encourage participants to discuss the service that various parts of the body provide.*)
 - Recall the previous session’s discussion of love. When Paul calls the Corinthians to love, he’s calling them to **serve** other members of the body.
- Other passages linking love and service
 - Rom. 12:3-8 (“Having gifts that differ...”)
 - 1 Peter 4:8-11 (“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another ...”)
- The need for financial gifts
 - Rom. 12 (“Contribute to the needs of the saints ...”)
 - 2 Cor. 8:1-15 (Generosity of the churches in Macedonia; “a wealth of generosity ...”)
 - 1 Cor. 16:1-3 (“Put something aside and store it up ...”)

As these passages teach, we’re expected to love our neighbors, which we show through service. God works through us to provide for our neighbors.

What can you do right here in your vocation as a member of THIS congregation to serve your neighbors?

Application (remaining time—try to leave at least 20 minutes)

Work through the application chart on the back side of the handout, either as a large group or in small groups (depending on the time available).

Questions to consider:

- Who are your neighbors in the church? What do they need from you?
- What has God given you that would enable you to fill these needs or serve other people in your church?
- Identify 2-3 things that you could do to serve somebody else at church, including serving in a position within your church's structure.

EXAMPLE: Pastors

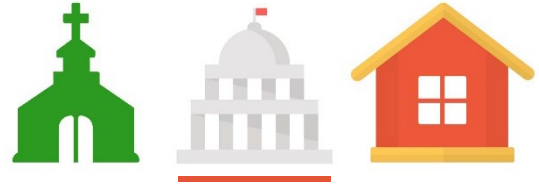
- Our gifts (love, care, financial support) are necessary to support and care for the pastor(s) and workers that God has given to us in the church (see 1 Cor. 9:14; 1 Thess. 5:12-13).
- At the same time, God's Word calls pastors to serve for the benefit of God's people (1 Tim. 3:2-4).

Key takeaway

Vocational stewardship begins with considering our neighbors and thinking about what they deserve or need from us. This teaches us what it means to be the body of Christ. God has given us, as members of that body, the duty or vocation to love and serve one another.

Placed for a Purpose: Session 3

Serving Our Neighbors in the State



Session Objectives

This session is intended to help listeners ...

- Think more broadly about the concept of stewardship
- Consider God’s call to Christians in the context of the state
- Recognize that God gives us governmental leaders and calls us to respect them and keep them in our prayers
- Understand that God calls us to be stewards who serve our neighbors in the community
- Identify specific ways in which we can exercise good stewardship in the state/community

Opening Prayer/Devotion: Proceed with a standard opening or use the prayer for “Grace to use our gifts” (LSB, p. 311) or “Christian vocation” (LSB, p. 311).

Introduction (2 minutes)

Discussion starter: In our first session, we defined two terms: steward and vocation. Can someone give us a definition of the vocation of Christian steward?

- The Christian steward manages God’s resources for the good of others.
- We’re *called* by God to be good stewards.

Last week, we focused on these ideas in the context of the church. That’s where we typically hear about stewardship. But one of the aims of this Bible study series is to **broaden** that perspective. Stewardship is not just about church, and it’s not just about money.

Our God is not just “a God of the hills.” And if you don’t know what that means, you will in a minute.

Seeing Stewardship More Broadly (10 minutes)

Read aloud: 1 Kings 20:13-30, the story of Ben-hadad and Ahab.

- *Summarize key points:* Ben-hadad is the king of Syria. He’s about to take on Ahab, the king of Israel. Ben-hadad has a “great multitude” of soldiers (v. 13). Israel has just 7,000 fighters. But who wins? Israel!
- What counsel does Ben-hadad get from his advisors (v. 23)? “And the servants of the king of Syria said to him, ‘**Their gods are gods of the hills**, and so they were stronger than we. But let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.’”
- Point out that people in the Old Testament believed in many gods. They associated gods with particular activities (e.g., think of Greek gods of fertility or war). What do WE think of that?

- Note the outcome of the second battle: Israel wins again. Why? Because **our God is a God of everywhere**. We know it's true. And we say we believe it. But there are plenty of examples of us living and believing otherwise.
 - Who can finish the saying, "What happens in Vegas ...?"
 - Insert other examples here (e.g., a friend who listens to raunchy music, but won't do it on Sundays, or neighbors who confine Christian life to one hour on Sunday mornings.)

The point: Stewardship can get compartmentalized in the same way. When it comes to stewardship, our God is not just a god of the hills. He's not just a god inside the church walls.

Our God works in other spheres, and He wants us to work there, too. The story we just read is a good example. Kings like Ben-hadad and Ahab are God's stewards. Governmental advisors are God's stewards. Soldiers and citizens are God's stewards.

In today's session, we're going to take a closer look at our own stewardship **in the state** (i.e., government, community, society).

Stewardship in the State: Luther's Observations (Handout; 2 minutes)

Read aloud Luther's quotation about the three estates, noting salient points highlighted in bold. Who makes up the city? People, princes, and lords. What's the city's purpose? To guard, protect, and defend.

Second paragraph: What's our responsibility in this estate? Living aright and resisting the devil.

"Living Aright" (Being Faithful Stewards) in the State: Scriptural Guidance (20-25 minutes)

Dual Duty: The Governed and Those Who Govern (top of handout)

Read Romans 13:1-4 aloud

- What's our duty as citizens? Be subject to the governing authorities. Do what's good.
- What's the duty of leaders? Act as God's servant for the good of those you lead.

Selection of Leaders: Authority Comes from God

God appoints leaders to accomplish His will. They're instituted by God, as stated in Rom. 13:1. Examples (*read aloud as time allows*):

- **1 Sam. 16:1-13**: God has rejected Saul as King of Israel and has "provided for himself a king among [Jesse's] sons" (v. 1). If there's time, note the process for choosing David. Samuel (like many modern voters) is swayed by appearance, but God sets him straight: "Man looks the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (v. 7).
- **Is. 44:28**: The Lord says of Cyrus, King of Persia (who ended the Babylonian captivity): "He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose." In Is. 45:1, Cyrus is referred to as the Lord's "anointed." Note that God is in control of all nations, not just Israel.
- **Is. 10:5** (and following): God uses Assyria, calling it "the rod of my anger." Verse 13: "I remove the boundaries of peoples, and plunder their treasures; like a bull I bring down those who sit on thrones."

We get what God gives. Sometimes, that's good (as in the case of King David). Other times, it's not so easy. (Consider contemporary American politics, where some people are always dissatisfied with leadership, or examples of Roman leaders at the time of Paul, or a king like Ahab.)

Duties of Citizens and Neighbors

Read aloud as time allows:

- **1 Tim. 2:1-2:** “I urge that all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions ...” Note that we routinely pray for our leaders in church. Leaders need our personal prayers, too.
- **Titus 3:1-2** (and beyond): “Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work ...” Essentially, our role in society is to be rule followers. Although we have a command here to follow our leaders, there are, nonetheless, times for civil disobedience. (See Acts 5:29: “We must obey God rather than men.” Participants may want to spend some time discussing this.)
- **Matt. 25:31-40** (if time): We are to serve “the least of these”—a call to attend to the needs of those around us.

Application (20 minutes)

Work through the application chart on the back side of the handout, either as a large group or in small groups (depending on the time available).

Questions to consider:

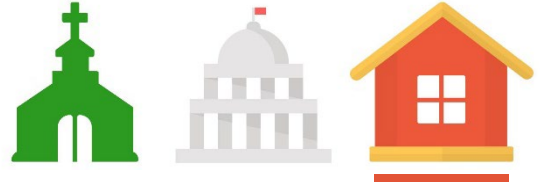
- Who are your neighbors in the state? What do they need from you?
- What has God given you that would enable you to fill these needs or serve other people in your community?
- Identify 2-3 things that you could do to as a faithful steward in the state, whether as a leader, citizen, or neighbor.

Key Takeaway

As faithful stewards, we're called to look beyond the walls of the church to serve our neighbors in the community, whether we're leaders or citizens. God provides clear expectations for that service in His Word, urging all people to serve for the good of others.

Placed for a Purpose: Session 4

Serving Our Neighbors in the Home



Session Objectives

This session is intended to help listeners ...

- Consider God's call to Christians in the context of the home
- Recognize that God brings husbands and wives together to create families and gives the gift of children
- Understand that God calls us to do good works in our household
- Identify specific ways in which we can exercise good stewardship in the home

Opening Prayer/Devotion: Proceed with a standard opening or use the prayer for "Grace to use our gifts" (LSB, p. 311) or "Christian vocation" (LSB, p. 311).

Introduction (3-4 minutes)

Discussion starter: We've talked in this Bible study series about stewardship in the church and in the state. The last place we're going to look at is the home. Let's start by thinking about life in our homes. What are the various relationships that you have in your home and family?

- Spouse, child, grandparent, in-law, sibling, stepchild, stepparent, aunt, uncle, cousin, nephew, niece
- Also relevant: coworkers, employers and employees. Luther puts work in the "home" context. (The household produces. The state protects. The church proclaims.)

God's Word has something to say about all these relationships. (*Note relationships on the handout.*)

Luther on the Home (handout; 2-3 minutes)

Luther elevated what most people thought of as common; he elevated the role of work within the family. For Luther, this is holy work. In his day, the thinking was that if you wanted to do holy work, you'd become a priest, or a monk, or a nun. Luther puts a different spin on things by saying that ALL work is holy if we do our work to God's glory, in God-pleasing ways. If you're a cobbler and you work with shoes, that can be holy work. If you're raising your children in the faith, that's holy work.

One of the challenges with stewardship, as we've talked about, is we either make it all about money or all about our service in the Church. This neglects how God has set things up with respect to vocation in the various spheres of life. When we pay attention to Christian vocation, we see how foundational it is in faithful stewardship.

Holy Work in the Home (30-40 minutes)

Read and discuss the following passages:

Spouses

- **Gen 1:26-28:** “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image ...’ When God begins it all, he starts with a family. This shows us how foundational the family is to the fabric of society. The family is also critical to the well-being of the Church. Mary Eberstadt, a cultural critic, makes this point in her book *How the West Really Lost God* (2014). We’ve long thought that the Church is good for the family due to its positive influence on children. According to Eberstadt, the evidence shows that while the church *is* good for family, the *family* is also good for the Church. (As the family has suffered, so has the Church.)
- **Heb. 13:4:** “Let marriage be held in honor ...” It’s easy to focus on the second part of the passage—“Let the marriage bed be undefiled” (no adultery)—and miss the first part. But that first part is critically important: Let marriage be held in honor. How are we doing with that in our culture? (*Could note divorce, low view of marriage, cohabitation, etc.*)
- **Matt. 19:4-6:** “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” What does God teach us in verse 6? It’s not two autonomous individuals saying, “Hey, I’m going to make this happen.” God unites people in marriage. Marriage was His idea from the beginning. He wants us to esteem it. He’s the one who brings husband and wife together.
- **Eph. 5:22-31:** “Wives, submit to your own husbands ... Husbands, love your wives.” God gives wives and husbands different roles, but husband and wife are to serve the other, to put their spouse in front of themselves. (*Highlight verses 31-33: Marriage points to the relationship between Christ and the Church.*)

Parents and Children

- **Psalms 127:3:** “Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord.” What does this passage teach us about parents and children? What does our culture teach about children? (Reinforce the notion of children—and the work of raising them—as a blessing.)
- **Proverbs 22:6:** “Train up a child in the way he should go ...” What does this passage teach us? Again, what are some of the cultural messages that fight against this? It’s common now to outsource the teaching of the faith. (“That’s the pastor’s job!”) Parents need to be teaching the faith, too. The limited hours a pastor has with children aren’t enough.
- **Ephesians 6:1-4:** “Children, obey your parents ...” *Could pass over this passage fairly quickly, especially if there are no children present.*
- **Mark 7:9-13:** Christ upbraids the Pharisees for rejecting the Fourth Commandment in favor of human traditions. Note that the Fourth Commandment applies not just to young children but to adults, as well.

Widows/Extended Family

- **1 Timothy 5:3-8:** “Honor widows who are truly widows. But if a widow has children or grandchildren ...” What does God call the Church to do in this passage? How about if you’re part of a widow’s family? Note how strong Paul’s language is verse 8.

Employers/Workers

- **Eph. 6:5-9:** “Slaves, obey your earthly masters ...” When you hear the word “slave” insert the word “employee,” and insert “employer” when you hear “master.” Pay attention to verse 7: “rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man.” Whatever we do for our employer we do for the Lord. This should motivate us to be good workers. We’re actually working for the Lord.
- **2 Thess. 3:6-12:** The passage warns us to “keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness.” Work is a good and blessed thing. We should do our work and do it well.

Application (20 minutes)

Work through the application chart on the back side of the handout, either as a large group or in small groups (depending on the time available).

Questions to consider:

- Think about your neighbors in the sphere of the home and family. What do they need from you?
- What has God given you that would enable you to fill these needs or serve other people in your home or family or at work?
- Identify 2-3 things that you could do to as a faithful steward in your home, family, or place of employment.

Key Takeaway

When we talk about vocational stewardship, remember that teaching your children the faith is a good work. Making a meal for your family is a good work. Praying for your grandchildren is a good work, as is serving other people through your job. These are just a few of the ways in which we can be faithful stewards in the third estate: the home.