

## **5 Day Bible Reading Guide**

### **Day 1: The Calling of Stewardship**

**Reading: Colossians 1:24-29, 1 Peter 4:10-11**

**Devotional:** As we begin this week, let's reflect on our calling as stewards of God's grace. Just as Paul was entrusted with the ministry of the gospel, we too have been given unique responsibilities. What areas of your life has God entrusted to you? Your relationships, money, time, or resources? Consider how you're managing these 'fields' in your life. Are you cultivating them according to God's will, or following your own agenda? Today, ask God to reveal areas where you can grow in faithfulness in your stewardship. Remember, we're not owners, but faithful managers of what God has given us. How might your perspective shift if you viewed everything in your life as a gift to be stewarded for God's glory?

### **Day 2: Suffering and Discipleship**

**Reading: Romans 8:16-18, 1 Peter 2:19-25**

**Devotional:** Today we confront a challenging truth: following Christ involves suffering. Paul spoke of "filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions," not because Christ's sacrifice was insufficient, but because as disciples, we're called to follow in His footsteps. This includes embracing suffering as we become more like Jesus. Reflect on areas in your life where obedience to God is causing discomfort or hardship. Perhaps it's in resisting temptation, loving a difficult person, or sacrificing personal desires for the good of others. How might viewing these challenges as part of your sanctification (growth in Christlikeness) change your perspective? Remember, Christ suffered for us, leaving an example. Today, ask God for the strength to embrace the hardship of suffering, knowing that suffering produces perseverance, character, and hope.

### **Day 3: The Power of God's Spirit**

**Reading: Ephesians 3:14-21, Galatians 5:16-25**

**Devotional:** Our calling as stewards and our ability to endure suffering come not from our own strength, but from the power of God working within us. Paul describes "toiling with all His energy that He powerfully works within me." This is the indwelling Holy Spirit, empowering us for every good work. Today, take time to acknowledge your dependence on God. In what areas of your life do you need His power most? Perhaps in resisting a persistent temptation, loving a difficult family member, or finding joy in challenging circumstances? Pray that you would be filled with the Spirit to rely on His strength throughout your day. Remember, the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. They are evidence of His work in us.

### **Day 4: Faithful Stewardship in Daily Life**

**Reading: Matthew 25:14-30, Luke 16:10-13**

**Devotional:** Today we consider how faithful stewardship plays out in our everyday lives. Jesus often used parables to illustrate the importance of managing well what God has entrusted to us. Reflect on the various 'talents' or resources God has given you. How are you using them for His kingdom? Remember, stewardship isn't just about money, it includes our time, relationships, skills, and even our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. Are there areas where you've been neglecting your stewardship responsibilities? Perhaps you've been using your time unwisely, neglecting relationships, or not using your gifts to serve others? Ask God for wisdom in how to be a more faithful steward in these areas, and take action towards better management and faithful obedience.

### **Day 5: Joy in Suffering**

**Reading: James 1:2-4, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

**Devotional:** We conclude our week by exploring a paradox of the Christian life: finding joy in suffering. Paul spoke of rejoicing in his sufferings for the sake of the church. This isn't simply putting on a brave face; it's a deep, spiritual joy that comes from knowing our suffering is not in vain. Today, reflect on challenges you're facing. How might God be using these difficulties to shape you more into the image of Christ? Remember, our present sufferings are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. Ask God to give you His perspective on your trials. Pray for the ability to see beyond your current circumstances to the eternal purposes

He is working out. Finally, consider how your endurance in suffering might be encouraging others in their faith. Your steadfastness could be a powerful testimony to the sustaining grace of God.

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion**

- How does viewing your life as a series of 'fields' to steward for God change your perspective on your responsibilities and relationships?
- In what ways can viewing yourself as a steward rather than an owner change your attitude towards your possessions, talents, and relationships?
- What are some specific areas of your life where you feel God is calling you to be a more faithful steward, and what steps can you take to cultivate those fields?
- How does the concept of stewardship under God's authority conflict with modern cultural values of personal autonomy and self-fulfillment?
- In what ways do you find yourself struggling with the suffering inherent in stewardship?
- In what ways might our digital age and constant access to entertainment be hindering our ability to be diligent stewards of the responsibilities God has given us?
- How does the promise of God's abundant provision for our stewardship responsibilities encourage you in areas where you feel inadequate or overwhelmed?

### **Family Discussion Guide**

- Can you think of something that you are responsible for, like a toy or a pet? How do you take care of it?
- Why do you think it's important to take care of the things God has given us?
- Our passage spoke about being a faithful steward? What does it mean to be a steward? What does it mean to be faithful?
- Where do we find God's will and prescription for how to faithfully manage the things he has given us?
- The sermon mentioned different "fields" like our family, school, friends, our time and our bodies. What are some ways we can be good stewards in these areas?
- Sometimes doing the right thing can be hard or uncomfortable. Can you think of a time when you had to do something difficult, but you knew it was the right thing to do?
- The sermon talked about using God's strength to help us be good stewards. Why do we need God's strength and help to be faithful stewards as he has called us?
- Where does that help and power come from?
- Who has the Holy Spirit within them? How does someone have him in them?
- What is one area in your life where you feel you can improve as a steward with God's help?