

# Your Stewardship Toolkit for October 2019!

October's theme: ***Wants, needs, and the path to contentment***

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Check out my blog: [www.thestewardshipguy.com](http://www.thestewardshipguy.com)!

Good, thoughtful, consistent communication, education and action can help your congregation develop a healthy culture of stewardship and generosity. This kit can help get you there!

The resources of this kit are most effective when used to support a monthly emphasis about a different aspect of stewardship. Exploring the theme, “Wants, needs, and the path to contentment,” you could use the newsletter, snippets and resource links below to plan bible studies, temple talks, a preaching series and other activities.

Here's what you'll find:

**-Stewardship Snippets:** Put a monthly themed “Stewardship Snippet” every week in your Sunday bulletin! It's a quote from the week's Revised Common Lectionary lessons, followed by a brief reflection. Just cut and paste!

**-Newsletter Article:** Publish something in your newsletter every month on stewardship and faith, or post it on your website. Keep your people thinking about stewardship. Just cut and paste!

**-Links to Resources:** You'll find links to resources on the Web:

-The **“think it” resource** – Something thoughtful and insightful to get your mind turning and your soul fired up. Share it with your leadership, or use it for a temple talk.

-The **“teach it” resource** – Your folks ought to prayerfully and faithfully wrestle with some of stewardship's biblical, theological and discipleship issues.

-The **“do it” resource** – Talk, as they say, is cheap, so put your stewardship efforts into action.

-The **“preach it” resource** – Check out the weekly Lectionary Reflection written by Lower Susquehanna Synod pastor and synod staff person Sharron Blezard.

**-General Resource Websites:** – These are places you can go for great ideas!

## Stewardship Snippets

*Copy and paste into your bulletin!*

*Source: Rob Blezard.*

### *Stewardship Snippet*

**October 6, 2019** (Time after Pentecost—Lectionary 27, Proper 22, Year C)

**Luke 17:5-6** –The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” The Lord replied, “If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”

*The apostles want more faith, but Jesus says they need only have faith the size of a mustard seed. In both our congregational and personal lives, more is not always needed -- whether it's more faith, more behinds in the pews, more money, or more stuff. What would Jesus say to us today?*

### *Stewardship Snippet*

**October 13, 2019** (Time after Pentecost—Lectionary 28, Proper 23, Year C)

**2 Kings 5:10-11** – “Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, “Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean. But Naaman became angry and went away, saying, “I thought that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy!”

*What we want and what we need are often quite different. Because of his status Naaman wanted and expected the “royal” treatment in his healing. Sometimes the simpler blessings are exactly what we need. Be grateful for all of God’s amazing gifts—no matter the packaging, timing, or messenger.*

### *Stewardship Snippet*

**October 20, 2019** (Time after Pentecost—Lectionary 29, Proper 24, Year C)

**Luke 18:7** – And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them?

*We want what we want in this life, but God knows exactly what we need and won't forsake us. Listen carefully for God's guidance and then be fearless and persistent in seeking what God desires for you. Listening to and for God is good stewardship!*

### *Stewardship Snippet*

**October 27, 2019** (Time after Pentecost—Lectionary 30, Proper 25, Year C)

**Psalms 84:5** –Happy are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion. *Sometimes our wants are not in line with the values of a follower of Jesus. Humans are great at rationalizing and justifying wants. What we NEED is to turn to God with all our heart, mind, and strength. In doing so, God will align our wants to the divine will so that we may have life abundant. Are you finding your strength in God, or are you relying on your own bootstraps and will?*

## Newsletter article

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OCTOBER 2019

## Wants, needs, and the path to contentment

*There is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. –1 Timothy 6:6-9*

When Apple released a new iPhone some years ago, our teenager grew unhappy with the one that had been a treasured birthday present only a few months earlier.

“I really *need* a new iPhone,” we were told with urgency and expectation. Sensible parents, we said no, pointing out that a new iPhone was definitely a *want*, not a *need*. Our teen stormed off, outraged by the injustice and deprivation.

Children and youth are forgiven for confusing *wants* and *needs*, but many of us reach adulthood without the knowledge. The distinction is especially hard to learn in our consumer culture, where every advertisement tells us that true happiness is forever *just one more* purchase away. When we believe this lie, we suffer lives of insatiable desire, ever grasping for the *newer*, the *better*, the *larger*, the *more*.

Mature faith and biblical stewardship challenge us to distinguish our *wants* from our *needs*, so that we may find contentment with “enough” — decent housing, healthy food, clean clothing and reliable transportation. No longer slaves to a desire for more, we are free to enjoy the abundant life that comes from loving relationships with God and family and neighbor.

Getting free may take discipline, but with God’s help we can grow. Faced with desire, we pray: “Is this a *need* or a *want*? If it’s a want, why do I sense it’s a need? Can I be content without it?”

Finding contentment, we open ourselves to the life God intends for us, rich and abundant in love, joy and grace.

--**Rob Blezard**

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## Links to resources

### The “think it” resource

[\*Want, Don't Need\*](#) – What’s wrong with wanting? Not a darn thing, author Russell Grieger writes in *Psychology Today*. The trick is never to confuse wanting with needing, so that you are clear on your true motivations. If you want something, go for it without desperation. Thought-provoking article.

(<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/happiness-purpose/201305/want-dont-need>)

### The “teach it” resource

[\*Wants vs. Needs: Celebrating God's Provision\*](#) — This Bible study looks at how God provided for the Israelites in the wilderness as a way to distinguish between wants and needs. It’s geared for schoolchildren, but with imagination could be adapted for use with youth or adults.

(<https://ministry-to-children.com/wants-or-needs-lesson/>)

### The “do it” resource

[\*Need vs. Want\*](#) — How can we know in our daily life what’s a want versus a need? And what do we do with that information? This handy chart from Simple Living Daily can help us sort things out, so that we can live better.

(<https://simplelivingdaily.com/need-vs-want/>)

### The “preach it” resource

[\*Weekly Lectionary Stewardship Reflection\*](#). Sharron Blezard, Lower Susquehanna Synod assistant to the bishop and pastor, looks at stewardship implications in the week’s Revised Common Lectionary lessons.

([www.stewardshipoflife.org](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org))

## General Stewardship Resource Websites

[\*Stewardship of Life Institute\*](#)– Headquartered at United Lutheran Seminary, this site has a trove of resources in areas of congregational and personal stewardship. ([www.stewardshipoflife.org](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org))

[\*ELCA Stewardship Resources\*](#)– Our denomination’s deep well of materials. ([elca.org/stewardship](http://elca.org/stewardship))

[\*Center for Steward Leadership\*](#) – Luther Seminary’s excellent website. ([www.luthersem.edu/stewardship/](http://www.luthersem.edu/stewardship/))

[\*The ELCA Foundation\*](#) a ministry of our denomination. ([www.elca.org/give/elca-foundation](http://www.elca.org/give/elca-foundation))

[\*Lower Susquehanna Synod Stewardship\*](#) – Select free or low-cost resources.

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