



Faith Aflame: 360 Degrees

A Life Enabled to Serve God

Opening Prayer

Introduction

Perhaps you have seen the commercials featuring the energizer bunny. That bunny has power. Power that comes from a battery that just won't quit. Power that allows that bunny to just keep "going and going and going." In the book, *Much More Than Giving*, Roy Bleich writes: "The Holy Spirit, using the Means of Grace, is the divine energizer. Through His work of conversion, He not only changes people's attitudes toward God, but He also gives them the ability to carry on God's business. Holy Scripture declares: 'God is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure' (Phil. 2:13). The gifts that the Holy Spirit so freely gives to believers through the means of grace make possible all the activities that make Christians good managers of God's business...Through His work the Holy Spirit changes a person's philosophy of life. It is this philosophy that determines our perspective. Therefore it is the Holy Spirit who helps make God's business our first concern in life." (Page 24)

A few questions for discussion:

- How has God changed your attitude toward Him? Remember how you were according to Eph 2:1-3. Then look at Ephesians 2:4-10.
- What is God's business? Look at Luke 19:10. Is it your first concern in life?
- What is your philosophy of life? How does it compare to others in your family? To your friends? To most people in the world?

The power the Holy Spirit gives doesn't come from a battery—a battery that will eventually wear down, but from His storehouse of eternal power. Think about His power as you join in saying the Third Article of the Apostles Creed.



A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee; Take
my moments and my days, Let
them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my silver and my gold, Not a
mite would I withhold; Take my
intellect and use Every power as
Thou shalt choose.

Take my will and
make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine; Take
my heart,
it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour at
Thy feet its treasure store; Take
myself, and I will be ever, only,
all, for Thee. Amen

"Take My Life and Let It Be" by Frances R.
Havergal, 1836-1879 *The Lutheran Hymnal*
#400

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.

Faith Aflame: Christian stewardship begins in the loving heart of God.

What makes us stewards of God? There are three answers. The third answer: The only way we can become and remain His own is through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Bleich, in *Much More Than Giving*, states that as the pastor seeks to help people become better stewards, he needs to remember that two things are required for growth to take place:

The first is to confront the believer with

- God's expectation for His life.
- The Scriptural truth that everything belongs to God.
- The need for a personal examination
 - of his attitude toward God's Word,
 - of his individual stewardship performance, and
 - of his future goals and objectives; and
- The Gospel's strong, unequivocal promises of grace and mercy.

The second requirement for growth is a commitment to

- Live according to the will of God
- Set specific measurable objectives for growing in faith, and
- Develop a strategy for reaching those objectives.

Action Item: Which one of the items under "the need for personal examination" above will you work on? Share it with the group.

Closing Prayer

Adoration...

Confession...

Thanksgiving...

Supplication....

Praise...

Remember...

Ask...

Yield...



The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
District and Congregational Services
Stewardship Ministry
Rev. Wayne J. Knolhoff, Director
stewardship@lcms.org