

# IMAGINE

*Our God is a God of unconditional love and abundance, who in turn calls us to live as people of grace. Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:28, “Live out your God created identity. Live generously and graciously towards others, the way God lives towards you.” The theme of this 8 day, self-directed study focuses on Christ’s words about our love of possessions and how what we have can prevent us from knowing the joy and blessings of generosity. My prayer is that this study guides you to live your life in grace and gratitude and inspires you to be courageous by committing an investment level gift to IMAGINE in support of the mission of Our Redeemer’s Lutheran Church.*

—Ann Rauvola Bailey, Founder of Kairos and National Church Consultant for Stewardship

## PART 1: “LIVING IN TRUST OF GOD’S GRACE AND ABUNDANCE”

**THE CHALLENGE**...to trust in God’s abundant provisions, worry less about your life and be generous even as God is generous.

**THE PROMISE**...being greatly blessed by God for your generosity.

In response to God’s grace, Christians are called to respond and act with joy and expectancy. We are encouraged to be ever growing, generous persons (stewards) and share greatly the many gifts given to our care. Through these actions we will be blessed to be a blessing to others while making this world a better place as we expand God’s Kingdom.

*Read one Bible passage a day and then reflect on these questions:*

1. What have I done for others in my life that made me the most happy?
2. Do I feel like a blessed person? ...why? ...why not?
3. What is the greatest influence or control in my life; money or God’s word? How do I know?

Capture five minutes of quiet time daily and pray for a generous spirit, particularly in those areas where you take the greatest pride of self accomplishment or experience a sense of greed.

### DAY 1 Ephesians 1:3-5: You have been chosen

*“Long before God laid down the earth’s foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. ... It’s in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone” (The Message)*

**DAY 2** Ephesians 4:5-7 & 11-12.... We have different gifts, but we are all blessed with Grace.

*“... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s ultimate gift.... The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” (NRSV)*

**DAY 3** Excerpts from Luke 12..... Do not worry but keep the main thing, the main thing (NRSV)

*“He said to his disciples, ‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ... Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these... It is human nature to strive for material things; but your Father knows what you need. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and the worldly things will be given to you as well. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.’” (NRSV)*



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## **DAY 4 2 Corinthians 9:7-11...A joyful, generous disciple will be enriched in every way (NRSV)**

*“Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, ‘He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.’ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us.” (NRSV)*

## **PART 2: “LIVING IN THANKS, PRAISE, AND PROCLAMATION!”**

**HOW CAN I DO THIS?**...by daily praising and thanking God for caring for you in faithfulness and abundance.

...by being a generous steward so others will come to know of God’s goodness.

...by inviting others to share the Christian journey.

This is our time and our place to assure that God’s message of love and redemption is carried forward in a clear and bold voice. Let us boldly live out our Mission, given by Jesus Christ: to share God’s love, welcome others into his church, and grow to become like Jesus.

**Read one Bible passage a day; then reflect on these questions:**

1. How can I effectively share the joy of my faith with others?
2. Does the way I live my daily life send out a clear and bold message that I am a person centered in Christ?
3. Do my actions give honor and praise to God?

Capture five minutes of quiet time daily and pray for God’s presence to be made known and God’s will to prevail in decisions throughout your home, church, community, country, and the entire world.

## **DAY 5 Matthew 28:19 & 20...Christ’s Great Commission (NRSV)**

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have*

*commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (NRSV)*

## **DAY 6 John 15:7-11...Abide in love to receive God’s abundance (NRSV)**

*“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I love you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.” (NRSV)*

## **DAY 7 Excerpts from Philippians 4...Pray about everything (The Message)**

*“Celebrate God every day. I mean revel in him! Don’t fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God’s wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It’s wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.”*

## **DAY 8 1Peter 4: 7-11...Praise God through your actions (NRSV)**

Discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. Above all else, maintain constant love for one another...Be hospitable to one another...Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift you have received...serve with the strength that God supplies so that God will be glorified in all things. To Him belong the glory and power, forever and ever. **Amen**

