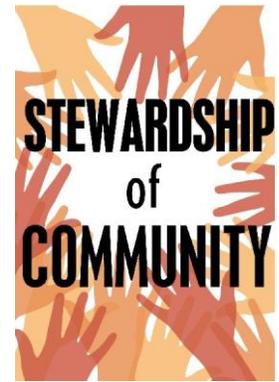


# New Life Teens Sunday School

WHOLE-LIFE STEWARDSHIP #11 – COMMUNITY



## DAILY READINGS:

- Monday:** It is not good for you to be alone (Genesis 2:18; 1 Kings 19:1-4, 9-10, 18; Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).
- Tuesday:** Examples of caring for family (Genesis 14:14-16; Exodus 2:1-4; Joshua 6:23-25; Ruth 1:16-17).
- Wednesday:** How should we care for our neighbors (Matthew 22:39; Luke 10:29-37; Philippians 2:4)?
- Thursday:** God wants us to be good stewards of nature (Genesis 2:15; Exodus 23:10-11; Deuteronomy 22:6).
- Friday:** Being faithful stewards of our country (Romans 13:1-5, 7; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; 1 Peter 2:17).
- Saturday:** How to care for our church family (Colossians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:10).

**MEMORY VERSE:** *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."* —Galatians 6:10



**Alexander Selkirk**

## You Are Part of Several Communities

Alexander Selkirk, a Royal Navy officer, lived as a castaway on an uninhabited island for more than four years. When he was finally rescued, he was so overcome with joy that at first he was unable to speak. We were not created to be completely alone. Adam (the first man) seemed to have everything he needed—food, animals, a beautiful home—but God knew he needed a helpmeet. Within each one of us is a need for other people. An English poet wrote, "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main" (John Donne). Isolation is the devil's tool; God wants us to work together with others.

Ecclesiastes 4:9 says, *"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor."* When you work together with the people God has placed in your life, you can accomplish so much more! You are a part of several communities. Your communities are unique; not all families, schools, neighborhoods, towns, and congregations are exactly the same. Your talents and gifts make you just the right person to steward (or manage) this resource. How does God (the Owner) want you to responsibly care for the communities you are a part of?

## Your Family

Consider the people in your family—mother, father, siblings, grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles. God has given each one to you. You might like some of them better than others; there might be some you argue with and others you love to spend time with. Regardless of personalities and opinions, these are your people. How does God want you to care for them? The Bible says, *"Honor your father and your mother"* (Exodus 20:12).

There are many other Bible examples of how to care for our family. Abraham rescued his nephew (Genesis 14:14-16). Miriam watched over her baby brother (Exodus 2:4). Rahab gathered her family in her home to spare their lives (Joshua 6:23-24). Ruth would not let Naomi return to her homeland alone (Ruth 1:16-17). Often families get busy with work, school, sports, and other activities. It becomes easy to lose



sight of our responsibilities. God created families, and it is not His will that we isolate ourselves. He wants us to encourage, listen to, care for, and help our family members. Who in your family community needs you today?

### Your Neighborhood



There is a game where the question is asked, "Do you know your neighbor?" How many years go by and we truly do not know our neighbors? God has placed you in that neighborhood for a reason. How does He want you to care for it? Could you take cookies to a neighbor, mow their lawn, shovel snow, or stop and check on them? The fast pace of our society often hinders us from realizing the importance of caring for our neighbors. In the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus asked which man was a "neighbor." The answer was "He that shewed mercy." Jesus told how we are to treat our neighbors who are in need: "Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37).

Your neighborhood also consists of the environment in which you live. What might good stewardship look like when it comes to throwing out trash along the road, littering, or unnecessarily destroying God's creations? In the Garden of Eden, Adam was told "to dress [cultivate, take care of] it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:15). God gave us the beautiful world in which we live. How are we caring for our part of it?

### Your Country

In the story *A Man Without a Country*, an army lieutenant named Philip Nolan became so upset with his country that he said, "I wish I may never hear of the United States again!" He was on trial at the time, and the judge was shocked to hear those words! He granted Philip Nolan's wish. The lieutenant was exiled on a warship with orders that he never be told anything about the United States for the rest of his life. Nolan only realized the importance of his country once it was gone. His epitaph reads, "He loved his country as no other man has loved her."

It is easy to point out all the things wrong with the country and government, but what does God's Word say about it? Many verses tell us to obey our leaders (Romans 13:1-5), pay our taxes (Romans 13:7), pray for our leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-2), respect and honor the authorities (1 Peter 2:17). Only when the authorities put in place rules and laws that are against God's Word are we "to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Consider how the Owner wants us to be a faithful manager when it comes to obeying rules at school, obeying the laws of our country, paying taxes, and voting. Consult the Owner about how to do these.



### Your Church Family

All of God's people are members of the body of Christ. However, not everyone worships together in one location. First Corinthians 12:18 says that God places "the members . . . in the body, as it hath pleased him." God has placed you in the congregation where He wants you to work for Him. He has given you that group of people to be a part of, to minister to, to encourage, and to pray for. There are many Bible verses that give guidance on good stewardship: "Bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2); "forgiving one another" (Colossians 3:13); "comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" (1 Thessalonians 5:14); and let "there be no divisions among you" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

In each congregation, there are often a variety of people with differing personalities, talents, gifts, and opinions. The things which make us different can work to separate us or they can make us stronger. It has been said that "communities run best when we are focused on loving one another and less upon ourselves." First John 3:11 gives this valuable admonition: "love one another." The songwriter Angela G. Gellenbeck wrote, "We need each other, brothers!" One definition of *community* is "working together for a common goal." The goals of the church family should be to learn more about God, support each other, provide fellowship, and see souls saved (Acts 2:42, 47; Galatians 6:2).

Paul wrote to the church in Galatia, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." (Galatians 6:10). Who are the "all people" God wants you to be a faithful steward to? Consider all the communities you are a part of. How are you caring for the people in those communities? What about the land God has given you or the governing authorities God has placed over you? One of the basic principles of stewardship is accountability. Are you a faithful manager?

# Bible Quiz



1. Food, animals, and a beautiful home were not enough for Adam. What did he need? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What does "no man is an island" mean? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What are four examples of communities? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What did Rahab do to care for her family? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What are three ways you can be a good steward of your neighbors? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. How should good stewards care for the environment? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What are two ways the Bible tells us to behave concerning our leaders? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What can you do to be a faithful steward of your church family? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What does 1 John 3:11 say concerning how to have the best communities? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. One definition of *community* is working \_\_\_\_\_ for a common goal. What should some of the goals of the church family be? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Which Community?

Fill in the blanks with the community that best fits that Scripture (FAMILY, NEIGHBORHOOD, COUNTRY, OR CHURCH FAMILY).

Luke 10:29-37

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Exodus 20:12

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Ruth 1:16

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Colossians 3:13

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1 Corinthians 1:10

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Exodus 23:10-11

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1 Peter 2:17

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