

I am steward.

Welcome!

The IAM Steward Campaign is a resource of materials for the local Church designed to emphasise the broader principles of stewardship and encourage each member to consider how they might use their time, talents and treasure for ministry.

Each week you will be provided with a preaching outline, small group material, offering readings, a video clip and a creative element to use in your worship service. The branding will be available in powerpoint templates along with additional resources to promote the campaign in your emails and bulletins.

Below you will find an introduction to the content and an outline of the topics that will be covered throughout the four weeks. As each Church will have unique spiritual needs the campaign is designed so that the topics can be tailored to each context. It is strongly encouraged that all Churches start with one of the introductory sermons that gives an overview of the broader principles of stewardship and helps set up the rest of the series.

Week 1 – IAM Steward: A Generous Life (introducing the theme of: Trusting God’s promises and releasing God’s resources to advance God’s mission).

Weeks 2 – 4 Each Church will be able to pick from the following sermon outlines the content that fits their context.

TIME – ie. I have 24 hours in a day. How can I use my day-to-day life for God, the opportunities He gives etc.

WORK - God gives us the ability to work and provide for ourselves, how can we use it for His glory?

FINANCES/TREASURE – tithes and offerings/our increase and ability to work from God/blessing

HEALTH – stewards of our bodies

TALENTS – spiritual gifts/abilities/personality/SHAPE

GOD’S WORD – spiritual disciplines/believing God’s promises and how His word impacts how we live.

GOD’S WORLD – environment/social justice/my role as a Christian citizen.

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SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 1

I amsteward: What is Stewardship? A Generous Life

Summary: Introducing a new definition of Stewardship: Trusting God's promises, releasing God's resources to advance God's mission on this earth. Challenging Church members to put their full trust in God.

INTRODUCTION

Opening Illustration: Share about time when you put your trust in something that let you down. ie. technology, spouse or child, a service or retail experience.

LINK: Every day we put our trust in a whole heap of different things, most of the time they come through for us, but undoubtedly they let us down. At the heart of Stewardship is the question "who do you really trust?"

BODY

1. Trusting God's Promises

- a) What does it really mean to trust in God and His promises?
 - Hebrew word for trust is "chasah" meaning to put your full weight upon (Proverbs 3:5-6).
 - It's not a tentative trust but full dependence on God.
- b) God's word is full of promises for us.
- c) But how can we trust His promises?
 - Illustration: Describe how it feels to have someone break a promise to you or when you may have broken a promise you made to someone else.
 - God has the power to fulfill His promises eg. Abraham (Romans 4:18-21)
 - God does not change. (Numbers 23:19)
 - God cannot lie. (Malachi 3:6)
 - We can trust God because He has kept His promises in the past.

LINK: When we are truly able to trust God's promises then it is no longer difficult to release His resources to advance the mission of God.

2. Releasing God's Resources

- a) God's resources and not ours.

- The Bible tells us that the earth is the Lord's and everything in it. (Psalm 24:1)
- Even the children of Israel recognised that their offerings were just returning to God what already belonged to Him. (1 Chronicles 29:12-16)
- God is the one who gives us the ability to produce wealth. (Deut 8:18)
- It is by the Spirit that we have talents and spiritual gifts. (Romans 12:5-8)
- Our time on this earth is a gift and we are in a constant battle to make good use of the time we are given. (Ephesians 5:15-17, Psalm 39:4-5)

LINK: Our time, talents and treasure are to be used to help others come into a saving relationship with Jesus.

3. Advance God's Mission

a) What is God's mission on this earth?

- That we would make disciples of all nations. (Matthew 28:19)
- That we would alleviate pain, suffering and set captives free. (Luke 4:18)
- That all would come into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 2:4)
- To preach the gospel to all nations. (Matthew 24:14)

CONCLUSION

1. Stewardship is more than just our tithes and offerings.
2. Stewardship begins with trusting God's promises and is focused on mission.

APPEAL

1. What is preventing you from putting your 'full weight' on God?

NOTES:

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SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 1

I amsteward: What is Stewardship?

Summary: Introducing a new definition of Stewardship: Stewardship is about Lordship, submitting to God as Lord of our lives.

INTRODUCTION

What does a typical day look like for you?

Wake up, go to school/uni/work, talk with friends, spend time on the net, listen to some music, buy some clothes, eat, watch some television, check your inbox and then go to bed. It's been another 'good' day. This is how life is for millions of people and it all seems to be going along just fine. For many Christians it can be pretty much the same with a prayer added in - if there's time.

LINK: The truth is you were made for far more. Too many people think life is all about them and end up giving their lives to things that while perhaps good, in the big picture are meaningless. You were made for far more than doing well, having a good job and accumulating things. You were made to glorify the God of the Universe!

BODY

1. *It All Belongs To God*

- a) When you think of what a successful person looks like what car would they be driving? Where would they live? What would they look like? Our society is very good at measuring people by what they own.
 - However the Bible reminds us that our value is not linked to what we own. In fact we own nothing and that everything we have is just entrusted to us to use for God's purpose. Psalm 24:1; Genesis 1:26
 - If you have the ability to make money, clever mind, skilled athletically...etc then remember it all belongs to God and is for His purpose.
 - The word the Bible uses for looking after what already belongs to God is stewardship.
- b) Stewardship is about your heart.
 - What does it mean to be God's steward and live a lifestyle that makes Him 'Lord of all'?
 - In the Bible, a steward was a servant entrusted to manage an estate. In a similar way, being God's steward is about overseeing the resources God has entrusted to you.

- Stewardship means recognising that nothing we have really belongs to us. Everything we own belongs to God. We are simply stewards of His wealth, His gifts, His cars and His computers.

LINK: God has provided you with time, talents, treasure and many other resources which He asks you to steward well for Him. "Stewardship is the lifestyle of the one who accepts Christ's lordship and walks in partnership with God, acting as His agent in managing His affairs on earth." (*Ben Maxson – Biblical Leadership Foundations, Leadership Seminar Manual, 14.*)

2. Living As God's Stewards - 4 Key Points!

- a) God wants to be intimately involved in your life.
- b) God ultimately is the owner of everything you are, have and ever will have (Psalms 50:7-15)
- c) God chooses, most times, to work in and through human agents in accomplishing His will (Philippians 2:12-13)
- d) God does not force His lordship on us - we can choose.

LINK: Stewardship is a daily choice and act of submission. When we recognise that our time and treasure and talents all come from Him and we submit to His Lordship our whole perspective changes!

3. Stewardship Asks

- a) What do we need to have to be content?
- b) Are we willing to share?
- c) What will we live on less so that others might have more?
- d) Can we downsize rather than trade up?

CONCLUSION

1. When God is truly Lord of our life stewardship is the natural result. Declaring God as Lord means really believing the promises of God's word, releasing the resources that He has entrusted us with to advance God's mission on this earth

APPEAL

1. Will you make God the Lord of your life today?

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SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 1

I amsteward: A Generous God

Summary: We serve a God who is generous and benevolent. He asks us to reflect His character and be generous with what we are given as well.

INTRODUCTION

Opening Illustration: Share a time when you have been ripped off, or stingey, or paid less for something than you should have!

Do we serve a God who is stingy and miserly? A scrooge who carefully calculates how much He is reluctantly willing to give us? A God who is watching every move that we make, to work out how much He can take away from our daily ration of bread?

LINK: Or do we serve a God whose generosity knows no limits? A God whose heart overflows with love and the desire to pour blessings into our lives so that there isn't enough room to receive it? A God who is waiting and longing to give us more good things and to empower us to reach our full potential beyond anything that we could ask or imagine?

BODY

1. Biblical Stories

a) Never-Ending Flour and Oil (1 Kings 17)

- Re-tell the story in your own words.
- "For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: There will always be flour and olive oil left in your containers until the time when the Lord sends rain and the crops grow again!" So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her family continued to eat for many days. There was always enough flour and olive oil left in the containers, just as the Lord had promised through Elijah."

b) Feeding the Five Thousand (Matthew 14:13-21)

- Re-tell the story in your own words.
- Twelve baskets left over described as "full and overflowing"

c) The Catch of Fish

- Re-tell the story in your own words.
- "put out your nets again..." and they were full and overflowing.

LINK: Why would Jesus lead so many fish into their nets? Didn't He know that they only needed enough to fill one boat? Why provide fish enough for two boats and more? Why did He need to

provide an abundance of oil and water for the widow? Why have 12 baskets of food left over from feeding the 5,000? Because this is the type of God we serve—a God who gives and gives, and if there is still more room, gives some more.

2. *The Nature of God*

- a) Are these just isolated incidents or do they reveal a consistency about the nature of God?
- b) The Psalmist claimed, “my cup overflows...” (Psalms 23:5)
- c) The Prophet Joel talks about God’s abundance (Joel 2:23-24)
- d) Malachi writes about the abundance of blessing for our obedience (Malachi 3:10)
- e) Jesus speaks of the results of generosity (Luke 6:38)

LINK: There is no limit to God’s generosity in our lives!

3. *God’s Ultimate Generosity*

- a) There is a gift from God that surpasses them all! The most generous gift!
- b) For God so loved the world that He **gave** His only Son... (John 3:16)
- c) He who did not spare His own Son but **gave** Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously **give** us all things? (Romans 8:32)
- d) In **giving** up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. (Steps to Christ, p21)

LINK: And yet the amazing thing is that God’s generosity continues. God did not stop at giving us all of Himself in the Person of Jesus. Jesus promised us that He would continue to give us Himself in the Person of the Holy Spirit! (Luke 11:9-13)

4. *Becoming Like Jesus*

- a) My question for you this morning is this: do you want become more like Jesus? Do you want your life to reflect more of the character and love of God? How?
- b) More generous with your Time: ie. the Sabbath
Illustration: Share an experience where prioritising the Sabbath has been a blessing for you.
- c) More generous with your spiritual gifts: use them for ministry.
- d) More generous with your relationships: both inside and outside the Church
- e) More generous with your finances: faithfully returning tithe and offerings. or giving more than you have given before!

CONCLUSION

1. Giving is a blessing, it's an opportunity God has given us because He knows that living with generosity like He did can change our life.

APPEAL

1. Do you want to become more like Jesus? Do you want to reflect more of the character and love of God today?

NOTES:

Contributed by Pr Sven Ostring, GSC Discipleship

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SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 2-4

I amsteward: TALENTS

Summary: Our talents are a God-given gift for service and ministry, not just at Church but in our home, our workplace and our world.

INTRODUCTION

Opening Illustration: Share a story or illustration from your life about a time when you have used your talents to serve someone else. It might be in your home or workplace, an overseas mission trip or for some personal gain. Talk about the great blessing of service, that God wants that blessing for us!

Alternately: use the children's story object lesson from the Kid's resources as a lead in to the topic of service, that our small acts of kindness and service can have a huge impact.

LINK: It's easy to think that life is all about US . We end up giving our lives to things that while perhaps good, in the big picture are meaningless. We are made for far more than doing well, having a good job and accumulating things. We are made to glorify the God of the Universe! God has gifted us with talents and gifts that He calls us to use to glorify Him in the service to others. This isn't just for others benefit. He knows that when we use our talents and gifts to serve others we are enriched.

BODY

1. *Life is Meant for Serving*

- a) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)
- b) God has wired you up with talents, gifts, experiences and style so that you can make a unique contribution in the world. We are called to steward our talents in a way that serves our family, church, world and ultimately glorifies God.
 - If you read what Jesus says we say that serving is a big deal.
 - We miss this aspect of Stewardship because we are wrapped up in our own needs.
 - Stewarding your talents is about looking outside of our own needs to others, not for what they can give us or how they contribute to our success, but because, like us, they are God's children.
 - *Illustration: Share a story when you've lost perspective and forgotten that someone else was a child of God. ie. when you're driving in traffic and someone cuts you off do you see a child of God? etc. When you look at others do you see a child of God?*

LINK: God has provided you with gifts and talents, experiences and a unique style that he calls us to use in service to Him. Part of this is recognising that the people we serve with our talents are valued by God!

2. *Serving at Home*

- a) But anyone who won't care for his own relatives when they need help, especially those living in his own family, has no right to say he is a Christian and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:8, Living Bible)
- First but hardest place to serve, because often our homes are broken and dysfunctional even in just minor ways.
 - Starts with your right now: the next family member you interact with needs to see God's light reflected through you.
 - Don't wait for someone else to start.

LINK: Our home is our first mission field. It can be the hardest ground to work when it comes to service but it is the most rewarding. God gives us a unique personality and skill set to use in service to others. Some of those talents are specifically for the building up of the Church.

3. *Serving at Church*

- a) It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. (Ephesians 4:11-12)
- God wired you to make a unique contribution to your Church family. He gives you talents, gifts and then asks you to use and develop them (Matt 25:14-30). The Bible says, 'We are God's workmanship, created in Christ to do good works.' (Ephesians 2:10)
 - "God might have committed the message of the gospel, and all the work of loving ministry, to the heavenly angels. He might have employed other means for accomplishing His purpose. But in His infinite love He chose to make us co-workers with Himself, with Christ and the angels, that we might share the blessing, the joy, the spiritual uplifting, which results from this unselfish ministry." (Ellen White, Steps To Christ, 79)
 - Your spiritual gifts were not given for your own benefit but for the benefit of others, just as other people were given gifts for your benefit.
 - The Bible says, 'A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church' 1 Corinthians 12:7. When we use our gifts together we all benefit.

- There are no insignificant ministries in the church. Some are up front and some are behind the scenes, but all are valuable. Today countless churches are dying because of Christians who are unwilling, for various reasons, to serve. They sit on the sidelines while the Body suffers.
- When people use their gifts and talents, ministry happens and the whole body benefits. Church becomes an exciting place. We come together, serve, build each other up and are then released to serve our world.

LINK: While we have different gifts, style, and passions, all of us are called to look after each other and especially those who cannot look after themselves. Every Christian must ask: 'What am I doing to help my less fortunate brothers and sisters and what am I doing to lead others to help?'

4. A World in Desperate Need

- a) We forget that Jesus asks us to be His hands and feet. We forget that when we give help to the least person it's as though we've done the same thing to Jesus. We forget that the sheep and goats were separated by how their love for Jesus translated into loving His children. (Matthew 25:46)
 - Tony Campolo says that the enemy we face today is 'complacent, middle class Christianity.' Margaret Myer writes about spiritual leukaemia where the white cells of complacency have made us blind to a world in desperate need.
 - Singer/Songwriter Margaret Becker wrote this after a trip to Kenya. 'With my own two eyes I have seen what money – money that we leave on our night table, money that we cast into a jar somewhere as we tidy up – can do. Hungry, sickly people do exist; there is a devastating force of poverty vying for their lives. They smile, they laugh, they cry. And if you are doing something to alleviate hunger, they hold on to your hand for dear life. Your hand is life, your hand is hope, your hand is Jesus' hand.'

LINK: GIVE IT A GO! The best way to work out where to serve is give it a go. Pray for God's leading as you discover your ministry area. Try various areas of serving in your church. See what areas fire you up. See what areas other people in your family affirm you in.

CONCLUSION

1. When was the last time you prayed a 'use me' prayer? Have you seriously prayed it? 'God will use your words to encourage people. He will use your mind to inform and counsel people. He will use your heart to show kindness. He will use your hands to serve and when He does, you'll experience the thrill

of being used by God. God tends not to commandeer tools. He tends to let them stay on the display shelf until somebody prays, 'Use me, God. Use my life.' Then the adventure begins. (John Ortberg, *If You Want To Walk On Water You've Got To Get Out Of The Boat*)

2. In choosing men and women for His service, God does not ask whether they possess learning or eloquence or worldly wealth. He asks: "Do they walk in such humility that I can teach them My way? Can I put My words into their lips? Will they represent Me?" (Ellen White, *Testimonies 7, 144*)

APPEAL

1. Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? Try the online survey at sydney.adventist.org.au/stewardship
2. In what ways could you use your talents to serve your home, church, community and world for God's glory, seeing people not as just other human beings but children of God.

NOTES:

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SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 2-4

I amsteward: TIME

Summary: Our time is in need of redemption! We are entrusted with a limited number of seconds, minutes, hours, days and years in our life but all we come up with is busyness! What is God calling you to prioritise as a good steward of the time you have?

INTRODUCTION

Opening Illustration: This sermon works really well with the creative element entitled "Time". Use it as an introduction to the sermon or share a story about when you were running late or had a deadline and just needed more time.

LINK: TIME! If only we just had more of it! Then I could do more and be more and see more and so many other things if we only had more time... But what if I told you that God is actually the Lord of not just our treasure and talents but our TIME.

BODY

1. Redeeming Time!

- a) See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, **redeeming the time**, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. (Matthew 5:16 NKJV)
- b) For people in the 'rat race' determined to make it on their own, making time for God can seem like an unnecessary interruption – it's alien to our proud human nature.
- c) In our 'hurry-sick' society we often find it difficult to slow down for anything, including time with husbands and wives, children and most importantly God.
 - We try to cram more into each day: start earlier, work later, phone while driving.
 - Our significant relationships get squeezed into a part of our day.
 - The world mentality tells us to run at 10,000 rpm all day if we want to be successful and feel like we've achieved something.
 - Illustration: The word BUSY ie. How was your week? Oh just so busy. It's the catch cry of our generation and it's worn like a badge of honour
 - It's rewarding, it's exciting – but it leaves precious little time for quiet moments with God which is what life is really all about.

LINK: God has given us so many minutes, hours and days in our life but what are we using them for? Are we being intentional and wise about the time we are given or foolish with this precious resource? God calls us to redeem our time, in other words,

use it for His glory not our own. The problem is we are becoming increasingly overburdened and overcommitted.

2. Overburdened and Overcommitted

- a) But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:33, NKJV)
- You don't have to be in business to be over-committed. Students know what it is to have more study to do than time in the day. Women with small children know what its like to go at 10,000 rpm. Their day is consumed by little people who pull their clothes, throw food on the floor and then wake you in the middle of the night.
 - Reality is, the busier we are the more we need to invite God's wisdom into our lives - however it is usually at our busiest point that recalibrating time with God is left as some sort of unnecessary luxury for the people who have time.
 - Every once in a while you'll meet someone who is different – still achieving but doing it to the beat of a different drum. Their character seems deeper, ideas fresher, spirit softer, courage greater, leadership stronger, concerns wider, and compassion more genuine.
 - They steward their time in a way that they have time for people and time to allow God to work in and through them. Their perspective on life is "renewed every morning."

LINK: We want to beat to the rhythm of God's drum, be in tune with His timing and seasons of our life. Prioritising people over projects, relationships over the rat race, and deep and meaningful connection over deadlines.

3. Stewards of Time

- a) Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." (Ephesians 4:11-12 NKJV)
- b) Who is really in control of our time? Can we honestly say, "If the Lord wills"? When we give God control our priorities change.
- The truth is you are called to be a Steward of your marriage, children, friendships and soul.
 - God asks us to Steward the time He has blessed us with in a way that has us growing in our love for Him and the people He placed us in relationship

with. Romans 12 highlights what a person who stewards their time wisely looks like. Paul calls it 'living sacrifice' life.

- ***Make some time to slowly read through Romans 12:1-2. If possible, read it through in different translations.***
- For the first eleven chapters of Romans Paul has been describing how great God is. Now in Romans 12 he says that because of all that God has done for us, is doing in us, and will do for us then what else can we do but steward our time in a way that honours Him.

LINK: What would it look like if our life was a Romans 12 kind of life? If someone said how was your week? Would we answer 'busy'? Or would we have a different type of answer?

CONCLUSION

1. Where does the still small voice fit into your life? When do you allow Him to lead and guide, correct and affirm; and if this seldom happens what is the price you pay? What would it take to make more space for prayer throughout your day? How hard would it be to skip that TV show?
2. We rarely stop and wonder if God might want to speak to us. God speaks through His word, through people and direct leading of the Holy Spirit. He will bring a verse to mind and guide you through thoughts and feelings. Prayer has been likened to leaving the smog of this world to breathe the pure air of heaven. Let's grab the opportunity for a breath of fresh air.

APPEAL

1. What is God asking you to prioritise when it comes to time?
2. Ask God to redeem your time and help you to prioritise a pause!

NOTES:

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SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 2-4

I am steward: TREASURE

Summary: Our talents are a God given gift for service and ministry, not just at Church but in our home, our workplace and our world.

INTRODUCTION

Opening Illustration: Share a story or illustration from your life where money or buying something has given you a temporary feeling of elation or happiness. Talk about what that felt like and how long it lasted before the feeling was gone.

LINK: Recently when Australians were asked what it would take to make them happier the most common reply was more money. Somehow we've been tricked into thinking that money will buy us whatever we need, including happiness. Sadly once a person ends up in an old age homes with big bank accounts but empty hearts they realize that happiness is not determined by the size of your bank statement.

BODY

1. Money, Money, Money

- a) The Bible tells us that, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Timothy 6:10 NKJV)
- b) We tend to think that the Bible only has bad things to say about money so we avoid talking about it from the pulpit...
- c) Jesus talked more about stewarding money than any other topic.
 - At least two-thirds of Jesus' parables deal with money or material possessions.
 - The Bible has about 500 references to prayer and less than 500 on the subject of faith. However there are over 2,300 biblical passages that refer to money.

LINK: Jesus realised that our attitudes toward money are a barometer of our hearts. Money has an incredible ability to control us and reflects our deepest values. What does your credit card statement say about your heart?

2. Serving Two Masters?

- a) God is not against you having money; however, He is against money having you! Jesus explains how no one can serve two masters.
 - You can't serve God and money, but many people try.

- Jesus claims that money has the greatest potential to replace God in your life (Matt 6:19-24).
 - Money is seen as an end in itself and traps us.
- b) Money is dangerous because it deceives us into thinking that wealth is the easiest way to get everything we want.
- It's dangerous because we trust money rather than God to solve problems.
 - Steve Arteburn says that one of the most perilous threats to faith in God is a fat paycheck.
- c) Ezekiel 7:19-22 describes how God's children, Israel, had wandered away from having God as the central focus and instead were more obsessed with money. They were still worshipping God in their actions however He could see their hearts. Their hearts were more concerned with their houses, crops and how much they owned than God. They found worth in things rather than being children of God.
- d) The problem is not money in itself. Money can do great good when used by a steward who has a well-ordered heart. When Jesus is your master, money serves you. Proverbs 14:21 reminds us that Satan can also give you money.

LINK: The big deal is are you using it to serve God's purpose or have you been seduced by money's hypnotic appeal and now you spend your life consumed with how you will get more of it? The fruits of the spirit don't cost money and they're the big deals. The best things in life aren't material.

3. It All Belongs to God

- a) We need to stop and remember that one hundred percent of our money belongs to God and He has blessed us with it for His purpose.
- b) Sometimes we think that ten percent belongs to God and the rest is ours. However, reality is that all of it is His. He asks us to return a tithe of ten percent as a symbol of our giving control of our finances to Him.
- c) Tithing goes against the accumulating, me-first trend of our society. When we return our 10% and give an offering to the church, the body of Christ of which God is the head, we do so in a way that steps out in faith.
- d) Does God need our money? No – it's all His already (Romans 11:35). Does He give us the privilege of partnering with Him? Yes. God doesn't need you to give, but He knows that you need to give. He knows that if we don't give our hearts can very easily become self-absorbed and greedy.
- e) There are three levels we need to consider when dealing with money:
- The heart: We need to make sure our heart is right and that we love God first.

- The head: We need to carefully plan our use of money, or it will control our lives.
- The pocket: As we manage the material blessings God places in our hands, we need to find ways of placing His kingdom first.

LINK: Revelation 18:11-19 reminds us that in the end your money all burns! Jesus says to store up your treasure in heaven. That treasure is people.

CONCLUSION

1. Jesus' most significant teaching on money: Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:21

APPEAL

1. Who are you serving? God or money?
2. Who is Lord of your life?

NOTES:

I am steward.

SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 2-4

I am steward: TIME

Summary: Introducing a new definition of Stewardship: Stewardship essentially means recognizing God as the Lord of our lives. Benjamin Franklin once described time as the stuff life is made of, so it is vital that we are responsible stewards of the talent and gift of time.

INTRODUCTION

Opening Illustration: Share the following riddle:

"I am free, but I'm priceless. You can't own me, but you can use me. You can't keep me, but you can spend me. Once you've lost me, you can never get me back."

The answer is TIME!

LINK: All of us have a talent, the talent of time. It comes to us in equal amounts no matter who we are. Our use of time will determine the quality, joy and influence of our lives. Here are three strategies or principles to enable us to be good stewards of our time.

BODY

1. Value the Talent of Time

a) A precious resource

- Time is arguably our most precious resource.
- It cannot be stored, slowed down, or held back, etc.
- *Illustration: The respective values of portions of time*
 - To realise the value of ONE YEAR: Ask a student who has failed a final exam.*
 - To realise the value of ONE MONTH: Ask the parents of a premature baby.*
 - To realise the value of ONE WEEK: Ask the editor of a weekly newspaper.*
 - To realise the value of ONE HOUR: Ask two lovers waiting to meet each other.*
 - To realise the value of ONE MINUTE: Ask someone who has missed a train or plane.*
 - To realise the value of ONE SECOND: Ask someone who has survived an accident.*
 - To realise the value of a MILLISECOND: Ask a silver medalist at the Olympics.*

b) A resource to be cared for

- The request of the psalmist (Psalm 90:12)
- The need for wisdom and diligence (Ephesians 5:15-16)
- The importance of a daily list and a weekly schedule
- Important to ask questions about priorities and urgency when budgeting our time

LINK: As stewards of time we are challenged to treasure and savour this precious resource.

2. Invest the Talent of Time

a) Questions about priorities:

- Time cannot be saved, but it can be invested.
- *Illustration: Time is a limited resource. Consider the hours of one week and what is left after sleep, work, meals and self-care. How we spend that remainder of time reveals a lot about our priorities.*
- *Illustration: Take a jar and fill it with rocks, pebbles, sand and water. The rocks represent the big issues of life; the other elements represent peripheral matters. If sand, water, pebbles and debris are poured first into the jar, there will be no room to fit in the rocks.*
- The challenge of time management is not so much the management of time, but the management of ourselves and our priorities.

b) Establishing priorities:

- We need to establish what is important in our lives. Note the words of Jesus in this regard (Luke 12:15) - a relationship with God.
- The tragedy of the rich fool who missed the whole point about life (Luke 12:16-21). The goal of life is to glorify God in every area of life (1 Corinthians 10:31) - relationships with family and friends.
- *Illustration: A quote by Billy Graham, "Time is the capital that God has given us to invest. People are the stocks in which we are to invest our time..."*
- Relationships take time. We need to assign a priority to relationships, and that will require an investment of our time - a purpose for living.
- *Illustration: A group of 50 people over the age of 95 were asked what they would do differently if they had their lives to live over again. A popular answer was that they would invest more of their time in a cause that would outlive them.*
- Consider the testimony of the apostle Paul (Philippians 1:21; 2 Timothy 4:6-8). Are we living for a title or do we want to live with a testimony?

LINK: We shall not have enough time for all things, but we have enough time for the important things. Good stewardship of our time involves investing in the things that really matter.

3. Enjoy the Talent of Time

- ### a) Using our time wisely is a great responsibility, but it should not be a burden. Time is a gift to enjoy.

b) The example of Jesus

- He had the greatest mission of any person who has ever lived, but He did not live His life according to a full and rigid schedule.
- He had time for children (Mark 10:13-16)
- He had time for friends. (Luke 10:38-42)
- He appreciated nature.
- He regularly accepted invitations to meals from different sources. (Luke 7:36, 14:1; 19:5-7; John 12:1-2)
- He attended parties or celebrations. (John 2:1-11)
- Jesus enjoyed the gift of life and talent of time.

c) Regard time as a friend

- Various passages of Scripture encourage us to be quiet and to be still. Life is not designed to be a constant slog; a well-balanced use of time involves rest and relaxation. We are to live and enjoy a day at a time (Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 6:33). We are to enjoy the present and savour the challenges and opportunities of each day as it comes.
- *Illustration: A sheet of music contains rests. There is no music in a rest, but a rest is part of a musical piece. Quiet and times of rest are part of the rhythm of life e. g. Sabbath*
- Enjoying time involves creating memories, planning special experiences, and leaving space in our lives.
- *Illustration: A margin on a page helps the reader. A page full of writing is too crowded and overwhelming.*
- Enjoying time is more conducive to better health, better relationships, and a more productive life.

CONCLUSION

1. Time is a precious but perishable gift. Effective use of this talent will depend upon a clear purpose, right priorities, and thoughtful planning. The importance of using the talent of time well is reflected in the words of this poem shared at a funeral.

Illustration: Dash Poem

APPEAL

1. How are you living your 'dash'?

NOTES:

I amsteward.

SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 2-4

I amsteward: OUR WORLD: Restoring Eden Part 1

Summary: When God first created our world, it was perfect and beautiful, a reflection of His character of love. Environmental degradation is a consequence of choosing not to follow God's plan. God alone can change our hearts so that we will love Him, and follow His way of life. Then we will worship God, love others and care for our environment as a love response to Him.

INTRODUCTION

Environmental degradation and sustainability are current issues in society (see, for instance, Walker & Salt, 2006).

Debate continues over human contribution to problems such as climate change (Dessler & Parson, 2010; Walker & Salt, 2006).

Harding, Hendriks & Faruqi (2009) identify values and values systems as significant to the way in which the environment (be it ecological, social or economic) is managed.

Followers of Christ strive to model their life on the plan God has revealed in His written word, the Bible. So how does God view environmental degradation? Does He care, or is He just up in heaven doing nothing? Does He have a solution?

The Bible reveals God as a God of love, and illustrates that He does care about social and ecological problems. God's original creation of the world was perfect (Gen 1:31; GC534); He wanted people to know and be only good, never evil. He sees the sparrow fall, and states that He will give judgment in favour of the oppressed (Matt 10:29-31; Rom 8:22; James 5:1-6; Rev 11:18; GC492-504; 531-549; 662-678; MB45-46; SC9-15).

God's diagnosis of, and solution to, current environmental issues is different to every other one ever suggested. In the Bible, environmental degradation is linked to moral degradation – the loss of God's character of love from the hearts of people. However, God has a plan to restore human hearts to His likeness. This plan, created in eternity, was put into action as soon as it was needed – as soon as Adam and Eve sinned. God's plan has not changed in thousands of years. One writer put it this way: *"It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken... His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness."* (Steps to Christ page 18)

LINK: An overview of Earth's history will reveal God's plan to change human hearts. Only by accepting God's plan into our lives can each one of us become part of the future, eternally sustainable universe He will create.

BODY

1. God's Law of Love:

- God is the giver of every good, perfect gift (Matt 7:11; James 1:17)

- Jesus: perfect, full representation of God's character; worked with His Father to create all things (Col 1:15-19; Heb 1:1-3; PP33-43; DA19-21)
- Jesus takes all things from God to give; "taking to give" is the law of love/ life for the universe (John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18; 1 John 4:16; DA20-21)
- 10 commandments (promises) all derive from principle of love ("taking to give"); they specify God's perfect plan for structuring relationships at all levels (love to God, love for people; by implication, other parts of God's creation e.g., animals; plants; caring for environment) (Ex 20:3-17; Ed 126; 173-184; MB45-78; 145-152)
- Creation: designed to reflect God's character of love, through praise, joyous service (Ps 19:1-6; 103:19-22; Rom 1:20)

LINK: Originally, all creation reflected God's character of love perfectly.

2. Adam & Eve's Sad Choice:

- God gives perfect world to Adam and Eve (Gen 1, 2; PP44-51)
- Provides for all human needs (Gen 1:28-29; 2:18-23)
- Gives gifts of immortal life (Tree of Life); freedom of choice (Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil) (Gen 2:9)
- Warning: death will result from neglecting to follow God's plan (eating from Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil) (Gen 2:16, 17)
- Satan enters Garden disguised as a serpent (Rev 12:9; Ezek 28:13; Gen 3; PP52-62)
- Satan misrepresents God's character to Eve, inducing her to join him in rebellion. Eve then persuades Adam also to disobey God by eating forbidden fruit
- This choice gives Satan control over Adam and Eve; they begin to experience the first consequences of sin

LINK: Even though God had given Adam and Eve a perfect world to live in, they chose to distrust God.

3. God's First Promise of Deliverance:

- God puts eternally existent plan of salvation into action (Gen 3:8-24; Rev 13:8; PP63-70)
- First promise of "everlasting gospel"/ new covenant of grace: God promises Adam and Eve that He will send a deliverer, His Son Jesus Christ, to pay the price for sin. Jesus will also show humans how to obey

God's law, and create a new heart/ nature within individuals, so that they may gain victory over sin in their lives. All who accept Christ's gift, and overcome through Him, will again be given the gift of eternal life (Gen 3:15; Ezek 36:36)

LINK: God loved people so much that when they disobeyed, He promised to send His Son to save all who would accept Him into their lives, and choose to follow His plan.

CONCLUSION

1. God's original creation of our world was perfect. He gave Adam and Eve clear instructions about how they could live sustainably, forever, in the home He had created for them.
2. Moral choices of humans has led to environmental degradation that is now reaching a crisis point.
3. God has provided a way out of the problem we have created: He sent Jesus Christ to pay the price for sin, and free us from it.

APPEAL

Would you like to be a steward in God's plan to restore people and the earth to His likeness?

NOTES:

I amsteward.

SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 2-4

I amsteward: OUR WORLD: Restoring Eden Part 2

Summary: When people turned away from God, they no longer reflected His character of love. Jesus has been working throughout Earth's history to change people's hearts. This shows His great love for us. When we think about His love, this can inspire our hearts with His love for others and the world He has made. If we allow Him, He will change our hearts, so we can be partners with Him to save other people, and care for our world.

INTRODUCTION

God's original creation of our world was perfect. He gave Adam and Eve clear instructions about how they could live sustainably, forever, in the home He had created for them.

People, however, chose to distrust God. Adam and Eve's act in eating the forbidden fruit destined humanity to a future controlled by a tyrant determined to steal, kill and destroy them (see Eden Lost; John 10:10). God offered humans the option of still following His plan, through believing in Jesus' sacrifice and allowing Him to change their lives so they are like Him. This transformation will include personal stewardship. Those who accept God's plan and allow Him to work in their lives will enjoy eternal sustainability in the perfect universe He will one day recreate.

LINK: This presentation will outline the restorative work of Jesus Christ, the I AM steward, throughout Earth's history (Ex 3:14,15; John 8:58; Rev 1:8, 11, 17-18; PP253, 365-367; DA24-25,465-470). Without Christ's work for us, we would have no hope of eternal life; we would be under Satan's control entirely.

BODY

1. Stewardship of God's People:

Not alone at the Saviour's advent, but through all the ages after the Fall and the promise of redemption, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19. – Patriarchs and Prophets, page 366.

a) Examples of Christ's work for humans before His first advent:

- Explained gospel to people (Gen 3:15)
- Attention drawn to deliverance aspect of Christ's work by title "I AM", at the burning bush (Ex 3:14,15; PP253)
- Cloudy pillar (Ex 23:20; PP365-367)
- Smitten Rock (1 Cor 10:4)
- Spoke God's law on Sinai (Deut 33:2, 3)
- Gave law engraved on stone to Moses (Ex 31:18)

- Worked through the Holy Spirit to inspire the Old Testament writings; special emphasis given to role in book of Daniel (Dan 10:21). These writings were complete several centuries before Christ's first advent to Earth (Luke 24:25-27; 44).

LINK: God's Son Jesus Christ has been working for the restoration of people throughout Earth's history.

2. Stewardship on Earth:

Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. – The Desire of Ages, page 21.

- a) Jesus came to Earth to show what God is really like (John 1:18; DA19-26).
- b) Jesus understood His origin, identity, purpose and future from the sacred writings. These were the basis of His life and teaching (see, for instance, Matt 4:4, 7, 10; Mark 1:15,16; Luke 24:25-27,44; John 7:46; DA68-92; MB; MH p. 469).
- c) Jesus often explained the Scriptures of Old Testament through illustrations drawn from God's creation (nature) and human experience (general revelation; see, for instance, Ps 19:1-6; 107:43; Rom 1:20; Matt 13; COL)
- d) Jesus perfectly fulfilled every prophecy about His first advent during His earthly ministry (Luke 24:25-27, 44)
- e) He lived a sinless life, perfectly in harmony with God's law (John 8:46; 15:10)
- f) Satan incited humans to spy on, and finally murder, Jesus. Satan hated Christ because He revealed the true character of God to the entire universe (see John 11:45-57; 12:10,11; DA758-764; GC492-504).
- g) Jesus showed His triumph over Satan when He rose from the dead. All heavenly beings now saw clearly the loving nature of God and, by contrast, the malignity of Satan (Matt. 28; John 20; DA779-786).

LINK: Jesus came to reveal what God is like. He paid the price for human sin when He died on the cross.

3. Stewardship in Heaven:

- a) Upon Christ's return to heaven, He entered the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary as both priest and sacrifice (Ex 25:9, 40; Heb 9:9, 23; 8:5; 9:24; Rev 4:5, 8:3, 11:19; GC409-422).
- b) Christ gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to spread the gospel. The spread of the gospel included the writing of the New Testament, again inspired by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:1-4; 24:48; John 15:26, 27). These writings were completed by approximately the end of the first century A. D.

- c) October 22, 1844, was the start of a new phase of Christ's ministry. While invisible to human eyes, prophecy clearly shows that on this date Christ began the work of the judgment/ vindication of the righteous, which will conclude shortly before He returns to Earth. This judgment is in progress currently. It draws special attention to the law of God, contained in the ark of the covenant. These 10 commandments, as inscribed by the finger of God and recorded in the Bible, are the basis of the new covenant of grace between God and people. As they are applied to the life through the strength God gives, they bring people into harmony with God's character once again. They reveal God's plan for sustainability; when lived in spirit and truth, they promote environmental sustainability (GC343-354; 391-408, 423-431).
- d) As society moves farther and farther from God's plan, social, environmental and financial systems become more and more vulnerable. God does not delay solving these issues because He is unwilling to. God, seeing the end from the beginning, is working to ensure that everyone has been given a fair opportunity to accept His plan. The time will come, however, when God ultimately leaves the world as a whole to the consequences of their own choice to reject Him. He will no longer hold in check the forces of evil; Satan and his angels will have complete control over the wicked, and the environment. He also pours out just judgments on those who oppress others. He continues to protect the righteous during this time, then finally appears in the clouds of heaven to take them to heaven for 1,000 years. The wicked, who wish to be hidden from God, are destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming (1 Thess 4:16-18; 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 18; GC375-390; 534-536, 613-661).
- e) Third advent: resurrection of wicked; Christ's stewardship throughout Earth's history is revealed before the entire universe. All beings now recognise that God's plan alone is sustainable. The wicked, however, would not be happy were they given eternal life. In mercy to all, God destroys them by the revealing of His glory, which is a consuming fire that destroys sin (Rev 20; GC662-678).
- f) This fire cleanses and purifies the Earth. The entire universe, now recognising God's perfect love, the perfect blend of mercy and justice, can never again be turned from their allegiance to God (Rev. 21, 22).

LINK: Since returning to heaven, Jesus has continued working to save all those who choose to accept His gift of salvation. He will soon return to save those who remain loyal to Him.

CONCLUSION

1. Jesus Christ, like God, loves people and wants them to be perfectly happy, and to care for the beautiful world He designed and created.
2. Jesus has been working throughout Earth's history to reveal God's perfect plan for serving Him, and caring for others and our world.
3. Today, Jesus is the representative of people in the courts of heaven. He will soon return to take all His loyal followers to heaven.

APPEAL

Would you like to make the decision today to allow Christ to be Lord of your life?

NOTES:

Contributed by Kylie Smith, Masters in Environmental Management

I amsteward.

SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 2-4

I amsteward: OUR WORLD: Restoring Eden Part 3

Summary: Even though people have turned away from Him and are destroying the beautiful Earth He created, God gave His Son Jesus Christ to show us how to live sustainably. Jesus also gives us power to obey God – to follow God’s plan. God’s plan involves whole-hearted commitment. It involves developing a close relationship with Him through daily prayer and Bible study. It involves choosing to live His way. If we ask Jesus, He will help us to do these things, so that we can follow God’s plan for loving and living. This will prepare us for the eternally sustainable New Earth He will soon create.

INTRODUCTION

God designed and created our world to be perfect. Environmental degradation has been the result of not following God’s sustainability plan. Jesus Christ’s life, death, resurrection and heavenly ministry provide the means by which human hearts can be changed to again reflect God’s character of love. If we allow God to work this miracle in our lives, we will love God, other people and everything else He has made. We will care for them by following God’s plan (also called His law).

How can we copy Christ, the I AM steward? The Bible tells us that “God’s way is in the sanctuary” (Ps 77:13).

LINK: Let’s see what Jesus’ work as steward in the heavenly sanctuary reveals about how our characters can be changed so that we reflect God’s love to others (GC409-431).

BODY

1. Courtyard (on Earth):

a) But what do we give up, when we give all? A sin-polluted heart, for Jesus to purify, to cleanse by His own blood, and to save by His matchless love. And yet men think it hard to give up all! I am ashamed to hear it spoken of, ashamed to write it. – Steps to Christ, p. 46.

- Altar of burnt offering (Lev 1-7): God’s love, shown especially in Christ’s death for us, leads us to repentance and confession of sin (Rom 2:4; 1 John 4:16; John 1:29; Ps 51:10; Ezek 36:26; SC9-41)
- Lavar (Ex 30:17-21) Christ’s righteousness cleanses us from sin (1 John 1:9); Holy Spirit given by Christ to change our character so that we become like Him (John 3:5; Rom 6:1-6; SC43-75)

LINK: When we see the goodness of God, we realise our need of Jesus’ cleansing blood and saving power.

2. Holy Place

- a) Do you ask, "How am I to abide in Christ?" In the same way as you received Him at first. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." "The just shall live by faith." Colossians 2:6; Hebrews 10:38. You gave yourself to God, to be His wholly, to serve and obey Him, and you took Christ as your Saviour. You could not yourself atone for your sins or change your heart; but having given yourself to God, you believe that He for Christ's sake did all this for you. By faith you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow up in Him--by giving and taking. You are to give all,--your heart, your will, your service,--give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must take all,--Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper,--to give you power to obey. –Steps to Christ, pp 69-70.
- Showbread (Ex 25:23-30): God's written word, the Bible, is our spiritual nourishment; it is to be studied and applied to our lives (John 5:39; Acts 17:11; Rom 15:4; SC85-91; DA383-394)
 - Altar of incense (Ex 30:1-10): Our prayers ascend to God, and Jesus makes these acceptable through His righteousness (represented by incense; SC93-104)
 - Golden candlestick (Ex 25:31-40): As our character becomes more and more like Jesus, this will lead us to care for others and the natural environment. As people see God's love through us, we can tell them of God's love and His plan to save them (Isa 58; Matt 5:14-16; Rev 14:6-12; SC77-83).

LINK: Through prayer, Bible study and sharing God's love, we may develop a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

3. Most Holy Place

- a) [O]bedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience--the service and allegiance of love--is the true sign of discipleship. Thus the scripture says, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 5:3; 2:4. Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience. – Steps to Christ, pp. 60-61.

- Ark of covenant containing Ten Commandments (Ex 20:3-17; 25:10-22; Ps 119:89; Rev 11:19)
- Outline God's plan for sustainability (Ed. 173-184).
- They point to God as our Creator (commandments/ promises I-IV), and thus, the only Being who can create in us a new heart that will love God's law and keep it (Ezek 36:26).
- The seventh-day Sabbath is the special sign of God's creative and redemptive power (Gen 2:1-3; Ezek 20:12; GC451-460). This is a special opportunity to learn about God through His created works (COL17-32).
- Loving God involves caring for other people and the ecological environment (commandments/ promises 5-10). As part of God's creation, we realise their value to God. God loved people so much that He paid an infinite price (the blood of Jesus Christ) to redeem them (1 Peter 1:18,19). When an individual takes hold of Christ's strength to overcome sin, his or her character will reflect God's character more each day. This character change will prepare them to meet Christ when He comes in the clouds of heaven (Isa 27:5; 2 Cor 3:18; Rev 1:7; GC461-478).

LINK: God's law of life and love shows us what He is like. Following His plan on the Earth prepares us to live forever in the New Earth He will create.

CONCLUSION

1. Jesus Christ, our I AM steward, wants to restore God's character in our hearts. He is working for us today in the heavenly sanctuary.
2. By spending time in daily prayer and Bible study, we may learn more about God's character. Our hearts can be changed so that we again reflect His character of love.
3. By following God's plan, we are cooperating with Jesus every day, and will become more and more like Him. This is how we are to prepare for His soon return.

APPEAL

Would you like to commit to spending time with God in prayer and Bible study each day, so you can become more like Him?

NOTES:

I amsteward.

SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 2-4

I amsteward: TREASURE/FINANCES

Summary: Jesus spends a lot of time talking about finances so they must be important! God calls us to control our money rather than letting it control our lives. What does the Bible say about money and more specifically what does Jesus say about your money?

INTRODUCTION

Opening Illustration: Share a story or illustration about keeping things separate (ie. separating an egg to make a dessert or two children that are fighting). Sometimes we need things to be separate, but sometimes we keep things separate when they really shouldn't be.

LINK: Too often we keep our finances and our relationship with God separate. As followers of Jesus we should take into account everything that Jesus taught and the topic He taught most about was our possessions.

BODY

1. *Why do you have so much?*

a) This is a really good question that highlights our view of money. Why do we have more than we need or use?

- Culture does not want that question. Culture asks, "Why don't I have more?"
- Culture focuses on what you don't have but COULD have.

b) Needs v. Wants

- "I want" sounds greedy so we say that "we need".
- Every dollar gets spent because needs get met more easily than wants.
- Illustration: Third world countries and the difference between a real need and a want: share an experience from a mission trip or similar situation.

b) Lifestyle v. Income

- Think of a time you really did need more - chances are you prayed about it! God, why is this happening?
- What about a time when you have more than you need - do we pray, God why do I have so much extra?

LINK: Jesus gives a powerful answer to these challenges of needs and wants, lifestyle and income.

2. Luke 12 - include context of Luke 12, starting v. 13 - Jesus is teaching and is asked a question.

a) 12:15 - Be On Your Guard About Greed:

- Jesus appears to have changed the topic, it's hard to see greed in the mirror - easy to see anger, pride in ourselves but greed can be disguised as good management.

b) 12:15 cont. - Your Self Worth is not Your Net Worth: "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions"

- *Illustration: Story of Adolf Merckle (google for more details) - German billionaire who committed suicide because of his 5 billion dollar loss, even though he still had 8 billion dollars left.*
- We get caught playing the materialism game, the game of consumerist thinking. Advertisers spend millions to get you to be unsatisfied and spend. There is a correlation between television viewing and excessive spending.
- Most materialistic society on the planet: Tim Kasser said "never before in humankind's history has our desire toward materialism and consumption been afforded such opportunity for expression."
- Money + Materialism = Danger - because we trust money rather than God to solve problems.
- Ezekiel 7:19-22 - Israel and money: they found worth in things rather than trusting and being children of God.

c) 12:16 God is in Control:

- "Ground produced a good crop..." We get caught thinking that we are in control of it all.
- We do not control locusts, weather, wind etc. We assume we are the source of the extra and that the extra must be for us.
- He was already rich, therefore abundant crop is extra. The problem is not being rich but understanding why and what we do with our abundance.

d) 12:17 It's Not About You:

- Jesus' definition of greed: when we decide that life's extras are about me. That type of thinking leaves little room for generosity.
- Rich Fool: thought extra was about him, tore down his perfectly good barns to fit all the grain, now he had abundance of abundance, he assumed the extra was his.

- v. 18 - abundances causes us to do the irrational and lose sight of what's important.
- *Illustration: What do we really control? A man may be a powerful CEO of a multi million dollar company but his heart still beats 100,000 beats every 24hrs and one day it will stop. We don't control everything.*
- Culture says: life is all about you. God says: Life is not about you (1 Corinthians 15) everything is from God and is only for God's glory.
- *Illustration: We get caught living lie like a big game of Monopoly, however, when it is finished all the pieces, all our possessions go back in the box.*

e) 12:20 Remember that it all goes back in the box:

- Rich Fool was dependent on God for his allotment of time, pity he did not also realise that it was the same with his possessions.
- It's going to be given away anyway... Not because you thought of others, or made a generous decision but because you died!

LINK: v.21 - life is about being rich towards God through loving and enjoying those around you, learning about your gifts and talents to help improve the world, being generous with your stuff, making that which is temporary serve the eternal!

CONCLUSION

1. The man was a fool not because he was rich but because he did not know why he was rich, he was storing up for self rather than being rich towards God.

APPEAL

1. When I'm blessed with more than I need its not about me. What if we paused and thought, I have more than I need, I wonder why?

NOTES:

I am steward.

SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 2-4

I am Steward: TREASURE/FINANCES

Summary: Typical financial stewardship sermons present people as thieves or millionaires. While there are some who are able to give but choose not to, many families struggle financially and find it difficult to give. Financial stewardship is a redemptive process that should offer hope!

INTRODUCTION

Opening Illustration: Share a time when you may have accidentally stolen something or had something stolen from you. Did you feel guilty? Offended?

LINK: Often when we talk about financial stewardship we talk about robbing God (Malachi 3:8). We suggest that we are either robbing God or in some churches we can end up teaching a type of prosperity gospel - if only we give more we will become blessed. Is there some sort of middle ground? What about those that want to give but don't feel like they are in a financial position to? How do we deal with guilt around giving? Real biblical financial stewardship involves a few principles that may be different to what you think.

BODY

1. God Saves Us by His Grace

- a) We are saved by God's grace, not our own works (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- b) It is by God's grace we live a faithful life as His follower.
- c) We are not made right by acts of obedience; faithful stewardship is the work of Christ in us as we grow closer to Him.
- d) When we accept His invitation to follow, He will lead us and give us the strength to be disciples and faithful stewards.

LINK: Faithful financial stewardship should always be a love response, not an act of obedience driven by guilt.

2. Only God has the Ability to Change Hearts

- a) Do you struggle to give? To trust God with your finances? God has the ability to change our hearts (Ezekiel 36:26).
- b) God can change my selfishness and desire for worldly wealth and set me on a better path.
- c) God can change the hearts of my loved ones and bring healing to families torn apart by financial stress.
- d) *Illustration: Share about a time when you have had to put your trust in someone or something. It's about asking God to cultivate in us a trusting heart.*

LINK: God can turn a selfish heart into the heart of a faithful steward if we are willing to trust in Him.

3. God is Always Faithful

- a) God is always faithful. He makes the sun shine each day on the good and the bad (Matthew 5:45)
- b) God is faithful even when we are not! His blessings are constant.
- c) The evidence of His care are all around us, every day (Matthew 10:29-31)
- d) We do not earn God's favour by our acts of goodness.
- e) God gives to each person possessions according to God's will and purpose.
- f) When we put our desires ahead of God's provision we head down a road of dissatisfaction.

LINK: God cares for us deeply, the problem is that we often put our desires above God's provision and become discontent with what He provides. But the truth is God is always faithful, it may just be in a different way to what we think we need.

4. God Wants Us to Know the Joy of Giving

- a) *Illustration: Share about a time when you gave a really great gift and how much of a joy it was.*
- b) God loves to give! Gave His Son (John 3:16), gives the HS (Luke 11:13), supplies all our needs (Philippians 4:19)
- c) The whole earth operates on the principles of selfless giving: ie. cycle of life, trees give oxygen, we give carbon dioxide etc.
- d) We are made in God's image to serve and to give, we are motivated by gratitude towards God because of what He has given us.
- e) God wants us to have the joy of giving of ourselves, our time, resources, energy, talents.
- f) Tithing and love offerings are not an insurance policy against calamity but a partnership with God to bring joy to others.

LINK: God desires that we experience the blessing of generosity, because generosity is a part of God's character. Each time we give we experience what God is like!

CONCLUSION

1. Financial stewardship is not about guilt, struggle or the prosperity gospel but about recognising that God does a work in us that brings about generosity.
2. We serve a faithful and generous God who wants us to trust in Him and experience that true joy and peace that comes from relying on Him to provide for our every need.
3. God is faithful and generosity is part of His character, the more generous we are the more we are experiencing what God is like.

APPEAL

1. We are called to trust God, to have an attitude of reliance and not guilt when it comes to financial stewardship and experience the joy of generosity that God has for us!

NOTES:

Adapted from a presentation by Tim Aka, Associate Treasurer GC

I am steward.

SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 2-4

I am Steward: WORK

Summary: Before Jesus started His ministry He was an entrepreneur. He worked hard for a living and stewarded His business skill for ministry. Jesus is an example for us, to trust in God for provision and use our skills for ministry.

INTRODUCTION

Opening Illustration: Share about your work or an experience in the workplace where you have had an opportunity to share about Jesus because of the nature of your work or a task/project you were working on.

LINK: God asks for all of us, Paul encourages us in Romans 12 to commit all of our life to Him. In the busyness of life it's easy to let our Church life and ministry just happen on Sabbath. But God has giftedness with the ability to work and our jobs each work are a mission field. Jesus is an awesome example of we can steward our work for ministry.

BODY

1. Jesus as Carpenter & His Financial Status

- a) Roman construction was with wood and rock.
- b) Jesus and Joseph were potentially stone masons as well.
- c) Jesus used his skill in masonry and referred to 'rocks' a lot in His teaching.
- d) Jesus interactions with money:
 - Jesus' parents gave a poor offering (Luke 2:22-24)
 - Jesus did not own a house (Luke 9:58)

LINK: Jesus did not come into this world as a Greek Philosopher, or a Jew like the Sanhedrin or Roman General. He worked hard for a living and probably lived life hand to mouth.

2. Jesus Performing Business Miracles

- a) Jesus returns on the investment the little boy makes (Matthew 14:13-21)
- b) Transformation of water to wine (John 2:1-10)
- c) Stockbrokers advice on 2 miraculous catches of fish (Luke 5:1-14, John 21:1-6)

- d) Paid tax bill from an off shore account - fish with coin in its mouth (Matthew 17:24-27)

LINK: God's word shows us how Jesus lived on earth, His understanding of money, how he repaid what was given, yet not thrived to save anything for Himself. His business contributed to His ministry.

3. Financing the Work

- a) Women financed the work of Jesus

- Luke 8:1-3

CONCLUSION

1. Jesus is our best example when it comes to business, he never once tried to keep what did not belong to Him.
2. As His creation, how can we deny what belongs to our Creator God?

APPEAL

1. We show our trust and practice leaning on Him for provision by returning what belongs to Him.

NOTES:

I am steward.

SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 2-4

I am steward: GOD'S WORD

Summary: The Bible combined with the Holy Spirit are the only sure guides for experiencing an abundant life now and forever. We are called to be good stewards of the word of God in how we read and experience the Bible.

Main Passages: John 17:17, John 16:13.

Take Home Point: Read the Bible, respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit

INTRODUCTION

Opening Illustration: Describe vertigo (spatial disorientation), its history in relation to aviation, and countless lives loss due to pilots ignoring their instrument panel (recent example, JFK Jr.)

LINK: A pilot must know how to fly a plane before taking off (e.g. pilot's training, aviation manuals, etc), but that alone is insufficient in the midst of the storm. A pilot must also know how to read the instruments, and listen to them regardless of what their 'gut' tells them.

BODY

1. The Bible Changes Lives

- a) God has given us Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth (BIBLE) – Psalm 119:105
- b) Why can we trust the Bible?
 - Fulfilled prophecies (eg. Daniel 2)
 - Changed lives (share a story or testimony)
- c) Many sources of truth (e.g. media, friends, careers, etc) offer us happiness for the future, but none of them can predict the future – only God can and .By trusting the Bible's guidance, our future long-term happiness is assured.

LINK: The Bible helps us experience the abundant life by learning from the mistakes of others in the past, and a God who holds the present and knows the future.

2. The Holy Spirit Helps Us Interpret

- a) The Bible provides wisdom for many areas of life, but often not for the complexities and urgency of present challenges.
 - Jesus told the disciples that He had much to share but they could not bear it – John 16:12

- Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to fill in the gaps and be a coach, guide, walking companion (John 14 & 15) to guide us through life's joys and challenges and to help us apply Biblical principles to contemporary situations – John 16:13
- The Holy Spirit works in our lives by (John 16:8)
 - Convicting us of harmful actions (sin)
 - Convicting us of the right path to follow (righteousness)
 - Helping us understand the outcomes of either path (judgement)
- By responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, we become more attuned to His voice and grow in our relationship with Jesus
- *Illustration: Describe interaction with the Holy Spirit like radio waves – the closer you are to the transmitting source, the louder and clearer the signal – the further away you move from the tower, the fuzzier and more quiet the signal.*

LINK: While the Bible provides the basics, the Holy Spirit helps us to apply the Biblical principles to the opportunities and challenges we encounter each day.

3. Bible & Holy Spirit as Partners

- In the Christian world there are two extremes often adopted when it comes to Christian living
 - Those who uphold the Bible and ignore the Spirit.
 - Those who ignore the Bible in favour of the Spirit.
- Both extremes lead adherents to miss out on an abundant life.
- Those who ignore the Spirit live a dry, formal religious tradition without the opportunity to grow through dynamic daily experiences with Jesus
- Those who ignore the Bible end up following any spirit, as without the Word of God, they cannot differentiate between the Spirit of God, that of the enemy and their own thoughts
- Illustration: See story of William Ocker:*
<http://www.flightsafetyaustralia.com/2014/03/dont-believe-your-ears/>

LINK: An effective pilot must have know both how to fly a plane and read the instruments. Neither skill is sufficient on its own for a safe journey.

CONCLUSION

Final Points: How can we experience an abundant life? Know what it looks like (Bible) and how to have it daily (Holy Spirit) – share one of Ken Vogel's stories from his book on being a missionary pilot and the importance of following both his pilot training and navigation instruments in the middle of the storm.

APPEAL

1. Commit to spending time exploring Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth daily – even if it's for 3-5 minutes
2. Is the Holy Spirit convicting/prompting/guiding you in any direction that you have resisted? Why not commit to respond today?

NOTES:

I amsteward.

SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 2-4

I amsteward: WORK

Summary: We can use our everyday work as an opportunity to steward what God has given us. From creation our mandate as humans is to work. When work becomes an act of worship and service to mankind, any work can become a joy.

INTRODUCTION

Opening Illustration: Share about time when you really enjoyed your work, or a task you had to complete. Describe the sense of fulfilment and highlight. What was it about the work or particular task that made you feel so good.

LINK: We spend 40+ hours a week doing it, we battle countless others each morning and evening to travel to and from it, it often leaks into our family time and our personal time yet how many in this world can honestly say they get a sense of fulfillment from it? Work has become an increasingly negative term but what if our work could bring us great joy no matter what we do? When we steward our work as a gift from God our perspective can change and anything we do can become a joy.

BODY

1. Integration of our Faith and Work

- a) Changing the world around us (Matthew 5:13)
- b) Gospel gives a full picture of 'human work' (Colossians 3:23)

LINK: Where did this mandate to work come from?

2. Origin Belief v. Creator God

- a) Work is evil
- b) Work is demeaning
- c) Work is too demeaning for gods (ie. Babylonian philosophy) but not a Creator God.
 - God has His hands in the dirt (Genesis). God is a working God.
 - In the perfect garden of Eden God put Adam & Eve to work.
 - Sin damaged the earth, work becomes difficult and draining.
 - New earth, restored and perfect, He again will put us to 'work'. Work is part of the 'good life'.
- d) Jesus came as a blue collar carpenter

- Not as a Greek Philosopher
- Not as a Jewish teacher like in the Sanhedrin
- Not as a Roman General
- Jesus is a working God

LINK: Our mandate was always to work, even in the perfect garden of Eden. God was an example for us and in the Gospels we see Jesus' example also.

3. All Work including Menial Work has Dignity

a) Society creates class snobbery in jobs

- People aspire to jobs with status and money.
- God is caring for us and meeting our needs through people who work.
- We are called to honour God in everything we do.

b) How can my job honour God?

- Whatever you do, work as it with all your heart (Colossians 3:23)
- God saw His work was good (Genesis 1)
- The command to work, 6 days shall you labour (Exodus 20:9)
- Levites responsible for the work of caring for God's people (Numbers)
- They gave toward the work of the temple from the work of their hands (1 Chronicles 29)

CONCLUSION

1. The broken belief about ourselves is that the quality of my work is a measure of my worth.
2. Work has a healing power: God says I will bring you out of exile, give you rest (deep rest) for your restless soul and Jesus took on the full 'work' of salvation that we might have salvation rest.

APPEAL

1. When the work becomes your worship to God and all about the people you serve, any work becomes a joy.

NOTES:

I am steward.

SERMON OUTLINE WEEK 2-4

I am steward: HEALTH

Summary: Adventist Health Insurance: when we are good stewards of the bodies we are given we are better able to love, serve and share our lives.

INTRODUCTION

Opening Illustration: Share about a time when you really valued your health, it may have been an injury that prevented you doing something you love or some time in hospital that made you thankful for a full recovery.

LINK: Every day we walk around in the bodies that God so generously gifted us with, but what happens when they get a little run down, when they start to struggle? How can we best look after the physical gift of our bodies to serve God to the best of our ability?

BODY

1. Health 101

a) What is health?

- Optimal state of physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being.
- “the highest development of body, mind and soul...” (MH146)

b) What impacts our health?

- Genetics: what we get from our parents.
- Disease: what we get from our lifestyle.

c) How do we measure it?

- Morbidity and mortality data.
- Infant mortality rate.
- Just as cold is the absence of heat, darkness is the absence of light, and evil is the absence of good, some think that health is merely the absence of disease.
- *Illustration: Do a short survey by the raise of hands...*
 - Who thinks that health matters?*
 - Who wants good health?*
 - Who thinks they have very good health?*
 - Who thinks that God wants us to enjoy the very best health?*
 - Who is doing everything they can to maintain a healthy, balanced life? If we*

put our hands up to the second last question we should put our hand up for the last!

LINK: When was the last time you truly reflected on your health? When was the last time you assessed your health? Does it even matter? Who cares whether we are super healthy or not? God does!

2. How do we know God cares?

- a) The world was originally created perfect and will become perfect again: without sickness, disease or death.
 - Exodus 15:26 - "...none of these diseases..."
 - Revelation describes God's perfect future world.
 - Jesus calls us to live as redeemed, holy people: He came to give us a full and abundant life (John 10:10)
- b) God had various health initiatives between Genesis and Revelation:
 - Health message given through Moses.
 - Jesus came not just to save but to heal the sick and diseased and raise people from the dead.
 - Health message given through Ellen White: "Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power – these are the true remedies. Every person should have a knowledge of nature's remedial agencies and how to apply them." (MH127)

LINK: God clearly cares about how we treat our bodies and as Adventists we were given a clear message about our health, yet sometimes we aren't the best examples of good stewardship of the bodies we are given...

3. Adventist Health Insurance

- a) Adventists have a good reputation for good stewardship of our bodies:
 - Probably the longest lived population researched
 - Less than a third of young Adventist men die of coronary heart disease compared with non-Adventists
 - Adventist women aged less than 75 years have a 10-20% coronary heart disease advantage
 - Considerably less mortality from some common cancers than non-Adventists.

- b) The world is catching up with us: Centre for Disease Control says, "prevention or control of diseases can be achieved by eating nutritious foods, being physically active and avoiding tobacco..."
- c) Yet only 3% of Americans exercise regularly, maintain a healthy weight, eat five or more fruit and vegetables daily and don't smoke: Australia & New Zealand is probably very similar.

LINK: So what does the Bible say? Romans 12:1-2 "...offer your bodies as living sacrifices..." Philippians 4:8 "...whatever is true, noble, right and pure..." and 1 Corinthians 10:31 "...whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God..."

CONCLUSION

- 1. God has given us the blessing of physical bodies with a limited number of years on this earth, we are called to show our thankfulness for this blessing by taking care of the bodies we are given. Spiritually, physically, socially and mentally!
- 2. Our loving God has graciously given us a chance both enjoy good health and pass healthy lifestyle practices on to our children.

APPEAL

- 1. Let's make the most of God's free health insurance!

NOTES:

I am steward

KIDS

CHILDREN'S STORY WEEK 1

Theme: A Generous Life

Summary: Introducing the idea that stewardship is all about trusting God. This children's story will remind kids that they can trust God in every situation and the Bible is full of promises that help us trust in Him.

Materials Needed:

- candle (taper works best)
- candle holder
- matches

STORY

Opening Illustration: Share about time when you have had to put your trust in someone else, it may have been a parent, a friend or someone in the community like a police or fireman.

Say, Today I brought with me a candle and a match, we use candles for all sorts of things around the house. Does anyone know what I have to do to light the candle? (Let children give ideas about how to light the candle)

First I light the match, then I can light the candle. I have to hold the flame of the match to the wick of the candle in order to light it. The fire had to touch the wick in order to light. (Allow the candle a little time to burn, the longer it burns the easier it is to relight)

Next I'm going to blow out the candle. Do you think I can light the candle again without touching the match to the candle wick? (let children respond) You can trust me to tell the truth! I will light this candle without touching the match to the candlewick. Watch!

Blow out the candle (the more smoke the better). Light the second match and immediately place the flame within the smoke about 5cms above the candlewick. The flame will jump through the smoke and relight the wick.

Say, Now do you trust me? I did what I said I was going to do, even though it sounded unbelievable! God always does what He says He will do. The Bible is full of promises that God makes just for us! He promises that He will provide for our needs, He promises that He loves us and He promises some things that even seem unbelievable, that He is going to come again and take us to Heaven! We can trust God and His promises because we have a Bible full of examples where God has kept His promises. Next time you pray to God tell Him about everything you need. God listens when we pray and He keeps His promises.

I am steward

KIDS

CHILDREN'S STORY WEEK 2-4

Theme: Time

Summary: Children will learn the value of time and that how we choose to use our time can have an impact for eternity.

<http://www.kidssundayschool.com/317/gradeschool/precious-gift-of-time.php>

Materials Needed:

- 75 coins
- clear plastic sandwich bag

STORY

(Show the bag of coins to the children) Say, Guess how many coins are in this bag. (If no one guesses the correct number, tell the students that the bag contains 75 coins.)

Say, These coins have some monetary value, but today we are going to use the coins to illustrate the passage of time.

An average person, in moderately good health, can normally live to be at least 75 years old. Many people can live quite a bit longer than this, but we will use 75 years as an average life span.

For each year we live, we will take one coin out of the bag. There are a limited number of coins in this bag, just as we will have a limited amount of time here on earth. None of us know exactly how long we will remain in our earthly bodies. During our time here on Earth we can choose to use the time we have to follow God and lead lives that are pleasing to God or we can choose to lead lives that sadden God.

Our earthly life will last a short time, whereas our spiritual life will last for eternity. Eternity is forever and without end. We could fill this room from top to bottom with bags containing 75 coins and this would not represent even a dot on the timeline of eternity. We could fill this entire building with bags containing 75 coins and this would still not represent even a dot on the timeline of eternity.

(Read 1 Peter 1:23-25) Yes, our earthly lives are like blades of grass here today and gone tomorrow.

We can be wise and use the years that we have here on earth to live a life that is pleasing to God and store for ourselves treasure in Heaven that will last forever. (Read Matthew 6:19-20)

You have many many years ahead of you, let's be careful to spend them wisely, to ask God to lead us and to use our time to follow God and lead lives that make Him pleased!

I am steward

KIDS

CHILDREN'S STORY WEEK 2-4

Theme: TALENTS

Summary: Introducing the idea that we are called to use our talents to serve others. This children's story will remind kids that we can make a huge impact when we use what God has given us for just small acts of kindness.

Materials Needed:

- full fat dairy milk (low fat won't work)
- liquid dish soap
- q-tips
- food colouring
- round plate or pie tin with recessed edges.
- q-tips

STORY

Say, Doesn't the world seem awfully big sometimes? Whether you live in a big city or in a place so far away that there are more cows than people, it's sometimes easy to glance around and feel like the tiniest dot on the landscape. And how much influence for good can a tiny dot really have?

Plenty!

(pour milk into the plate) I want you to imagine that this milk represents the world around you. It includes your home, your school, our church, the place where you do your shopping or play sport and your town or community.

And these are all the different people that you meet and come into contact with every day!

(Squeeze a few drops of each colour of food colouring into the milk toward the edge of the plate. Be sure to keep the colours separate.)

Share a little about how acts of kindness and service can enrich our lives, they help others and can make our community better.

(Hold up your q-tip) Imagine that these q-tips represent a single person, it could be you or me or your parents or anyone in your family, just one single person.

Swirl the end of your cotton swab through the dishwashing liquid. Explain that the dishwashing liquid represents acts of service and kindness that we can do for others. Place the heavily soaped end of the cotton swab straight down into the milk and hold it steady (no stirring)

Due to some awesome science at work, the cotton swab causes movement in the milk that seems to defy physics. It's nothing at all like dropping a pebble in a pond. It's more like dropping a water pump into the pond that pushes water outward in all directions. Soon the food colouring will move around, mixing with and influencing the other colours.

This represents how your kindness not only helps other people but also helps them to help others as well.

Pull the cotton swab out of the milk and place it straight down in it again, this time in a different part of the plate. The same result will occur but with an added twist—the outward motion should still be happening from the first place you placed the swab! The influence lasts.

Point out that this is what happens as we provide service. When we brighten somebody's day, we change the world a little.

Say, God wants us to be like this q-tip in our community! We can do awesome acts of service for Him that may seem small but have a huge impact in our world! This is what it means to be a good steward of the talents, skills and gifts that God has given us.

I am steward

KIDS

CHILDREN'S STORY WEEK 2-4

Theme: Treasure

Summary: God can use whatever we are willing to give to do big things for His kingdom all that matters is that we faithfully give what we can to help others hear about Jesus.

adapted from: <http://www.relevantchildrensministry.com/2016/06/10-object-lessons-to-teach-kids-about.html>

Materials Needed:

- picture of General Sherman (the tallest tree in the world)
- picture of a sequoia seed
- picture of the Kings Canyon National Park

STORY

Show a picture of General Sherman - the largest living tree in the world.

Say, *Does anyone know what this is a picture of? (let children give ideas about what might be in the picture)*

This is the largest living tree in the world. It is over 83 metres high, that's taller than the Sydney Opera House but not quite as tall as the Harbour Bridge.

The base of the tree is over 30 metres around (use something on the Church grounds to illustrate how big this is), and it's believed to be one of the oldest trees in the world!

BUT it hasn't always been this big! In fact, to grow any type of tree you first have to start with a seed. The seed for this tree looks a little like this... (show a picture of a sequoia seed)

See how tiny the seed is? They are not much bigger than an oat that you might have in your porridge for breakfast! Yet, they grow to be such big trees! What starts as a simple seed that was planted in the ground years ago becomes a huge tree that everyone can enjoy. This particular tree is part of a huge forest of trees that all started as tiny little seeds. This is what it's like when we give our offering to God!

Share the story of the Widow's Mite (Mark 12:41-44)

Even if we only have a little God can use it to grow into big things and have a big impact in people's lives. Did you know that there are many different projects around the Conference and in our local Church that we can help make grow? (Encourage the children to use the tins to contribute to the different Conference projects as well as give faithfully to local offerings)

(ADRA and the Health Ministry team have projects suitable for children to participate in. Please see your local convenor.)

I am steward KIDS

Theme: Health

*Summary: Children will learn that eating healthy is a way to take care of God's temple, our bodies.
adapted from: http://abrahamicafaith.org/curric/KQ/preschool/unit6/KingdomQuest_Preschool_Unit6_LessonD.pdf*

Bible Verse:

"Don't you know your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?" 1 Corinthians 6:13

STORY

Say, Have you ever heard someone call something "junk food"? What is junk food? (lollies, food that's not good for you, chips) What do our bodies need to grow big and strong? (healthy food, vegetables, fruit, water, bread) Is it important to take good care of our bodies? Why? Did you know God calls our bodies His temple or His house? We want to take good care of God's house, don't we?

Our Bibles tell us in 1 Corinthians chapter six that the people in a town called Corinth were not taking care of their bodies. They were using them to sin instead of to honour God. There are lots of ways even children can sin with their bodies. Can you think of any? (Hitting, kicking, spitting on someone, pushing) We know what is good and what is bad to do with our bodies, don't we?

A man named Paul wrote a letter to the people in Corinth to tell them to quit sinning with their bodies. He said, "Don't you know your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?" What do you think he meant by that? (Let children respond). The Holy Spirit is God's presence and power in our lives. He meant that God lives in our hearts and we need to keep our hearts clean for Him by doing good things with our bodies and taking good care of ourselves. Paul told the people to "Honour God with your bodies." How can we do that? (By eating healthy food, exercising, being kind, and doing good things.)

Have you ever made a beautiful picture or art project and then someone came along and messed it up? How did you feel? That's how God feels when we don't take good care of ourselves. God made us and He loves us very much. He wants us to be healthy and strong. When you eat only junk food or never exercise, you are messing up God's great masterpiece—YOU! So remember to take good care of your body and honour God so He can be proud of you, just like you're proud of your beautiful art projects.

What would be something healthy we could make to eat today? How about a salad? Salads are a good choice of food to keep our bodies healthy for God.

Let's thank God for living in us and loving us. Help us to remember to eat healthy so we can keep your temple clean and strong. Thank You for our salad. Amen.

CHILDREN'S STORY WEEK 2-4

Theme: Time

Summary: Children will learn that pray is the way that we talk to God, that God loves it when we talk to Him and we are good Stewards of our time when we use it in prayer.

adapted from: www.kidssundayschool.com/370/lesson/i-can-talk-to-god.php

Bible Verse:

"Hear me as I pray, O Lord. Be merciful and answer me!" Psalm 27:7 NLT

STORY

Explain to the children that God wants us to come and talk to Him. God wants us to tell Him what is on our hearts and minds. God is a great listener and wants the very best for us. We can talk to God at anytime and in any place.

Say, Today, we will be learning that God loves it when we talk to Him. Another name for talking to God is called prayer. Isn't it great that God wants us to talk to Him? How should we talk or pray to God? The Bible tells us in Jeremiah 29:13 that when we pray, God wants us to pray with all of our heart and really talk to Him.

Read, *Jeremiah 29:11-13 (NKJV)*

11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is another name for talking to God? (Prayer)
2. How should we pray to God? (With our whole heart)
3. Does God listen when we talk to Him in prayer? (Yes)
4. What kind of future does God want us to have? (God wants us to have a happy future and wants us to prosper)
5. Does God like it when we pray to Him? (Yes, it pleases God when we talk to Him)
6. What are some things we can talk about with God when we pray? (Allow for answers)

We can pray when we are standing, walking, kneeling, bowing, or singing. We can pray quietly when we are lying down in bed. We can pray with our hands together or with outstretched arms. We can pray in the morning, before meals, and even at night.

I am steward

KIDS

CHILDREN'S STORY WEEK 2-4

Theme: Talents

Summary: The parable of the talents teaches us that we all have gifts that we can use for God.

adapted from: <http://www.dltk-bible.com/cv/pparable-talents.asp>

STORY

This story is called the Parable of the Talents. A parable is a type of story Jesus would tell so we would learn something from it.

Jesus' stories had more than one meaning. For example, this story is about talents which was a super large amount of money in Bible times. Today a talent might be worth a million dollars!

A talent in this story can also mean our gifts or abilities. Something special and amazing God gives just to you, almost like a super power.

The parable starts like this: A man decided to go on a long trip, so he called his servants and asked them to take care of his house, his stuff and his money.

Keep in mind that the man in this story is like God and the man's servants are God's people (you and me). The man in this story trusted his servants and believed that they would take care of his special and valuable things.

The man decided to give one servant five talents of money (let's say that it's about five million dollars), to another he gave two talents (two million dollars) and to the last servant he gave one talent (one million dollars). He gave each servant a large amount he thought they could handle or according to their ability.

Our abilities are our special gifts that God gave to each of us. He made some of us smarter about some things than others. Some of us are good at memorizing, some of us are better at certain sports, and some of us are better at knowing how to help others. Some can solve problems better and some are more generous. Our ability is something special we have that's different than anyone else.

Back to the story, the man left on his trip and the servants each did something with the money that they received.

The man with the five talents went right away and used his money and got five more! The man with the two talents also used his money wisely and gained two more talents. But the man with one talent took his talent and buried it in the ground to keep the money safe. He didn't even try to do something with it.

He reminds me a bit like a dog that buries a bone. He had lots of time to do something with his money. He could've bought some seeds and planted a garden and made some money but he didn't do anything!

After a nice long trip the master came back and wanted to know what his servants did with his money.

I am steward.

The first man with the five talents said, "You trusted me with five talents and I made five more!" His master smiled and replied, "Great job, good and faithful servant!" You are trustworthy with a few things so I will put you in charge of lots of things. Come celebrate with me!

I think it's interesting that the master says he trusted him with a FEW things. He gave him five million dollars! That's ALOT of things. But to this master it was small compared to what he would give and trust him with now.

Then the man with the two talents came and said, "You trusted me with two talents and I made two more!" His master smiled and replied, "Great job, good and faithful servant!" You are trustworthy with a few things so I will put you in charge of lots of things. Come celebrate with me!"

Then the man who received the one talent came and told his master, "I know you work hard for your money, so I was afraid to lose any of it. I decided to bury it and keep it safe. Here is your one talent back." The master was not impressed and said, "You lazy servant! At the very least you could've taken the money to the bank and you would've at least collected some interest from it."

He immediately took the talent away from the man and gave it to the first man who used his money to make more.

The point Jesus was trying to make is that if you use your special gifts and abilities God will give you more to keep doing these things you are good at. He will trust you with so much more.

If you have a chance to do something for God that He gave you special abilities for and you don't do it you will lose your special gift.

God considers you very valuable and trusts you to do something for Him using your gifts and abilities. If you have a chance to do something and don't because you want to watch TV, play video games or because you just don't want to do anything God will take that valuable gift and give it someone who is doing something with their gifts.

Maybe you're not sure what your special abilities are yet. Ask your parents or teachers what they think your gifts are.

Listen and watch when others compliment you or notice something good about what you're doing. To you it might be something small but to God it's a special and very valuable gift that only you can give. If you keep using it God will continue to make it bigger and better.

Also try to encourage and compliment others if you notice something special in them. Your friends, teachers and parents might forget that God put something special in them and you might see it. Tell them that they're good at it and remind them that it's a special ability given to them by God.

CREATIVE ELEMENT

Contributed by Ken Long

Theme: A Generous Life

Summary: Rebecca, the main character, has seen people in Jericho succumbing to The Virus. She goes to the doctor and wants The Vaccine so that she can avoid catching The Virus. The drama is an extension of the story Zacchaeus.

Cast & Props:

- a woman (Rebecca)
- a Doctor
- an old looking book

SCRIPT

Rebecca enters the doctor's surgery

Doctor - Come in, Rebecca. It's great to see you. What are you here for today?

Rebecca - Can we speak confidentially?

Doctor - Of course.

Rebecca - (*speaking softly*) It's about The Virus. (*pause*) Have you got a vaccine for The Virus?

Doctor - Look before we get into medical things, how's the family?

Rebecca - My children, Isaac and Rachel, are really well. Mordecai is unhappy at the moment because it's tax time and that scumbag Zacchaeus...oops can I say that?

Doctor - Scumbag is an appropriate medical term when it comes to describing that cheating traitor, Zacchaeus.

Rebecca - Well Zacchaeus came around about two weeks ago and was working out how much tax we had to pay. He asked Mordecai what the earnings were in our grocery emporium. So Mordecai told him we earned 100 shekels in the last year. Zacchaeus says, "Well the basic rate of tax is 40% - so that'll be 50 shekels".

Doctor - *Clearly Maths wasn't his strong point!*

Rebecca - Mordecai looked bewildered and suspicious and started trying to work it out on his fingers. But Zacchaeus kept talking "Then there's your Employment Tax, Water Tax, Air Tax, Tin Tax, Lets-get-down-to-brass-tax and Sunny-Side-of-the-Street Tax. Then there's Import Duty, Export Duty, Night Duty and Only-doing-my-duty - that's all another 30%".

(*pause*)

Then he paused and pointed at me. "Is that your wife over there?" Zacchaeus said. Mordecai nodded.

Zacchaeus then says, "Well there's another 10% for the Ugly Wife Tax. Altogether a total of 90 shekels tax due so you have a whole 10 shekels for yourself to play with. Don't spend it all at once will you? (laughs) I'll come around next week to collect the 90 shekels."

Doctor - How disgusting? He's such a rogue and rip off merchant. And he works for the Romans. How could a Jew work for those oppressors?

Rebecca - I just don't know. Anyway, I don't want to talk about that thief Zacchaeus. I came to talk to you about The Virus.

Doctor - The Virus? It's not something that I've seen in my patients lately. Is it something like One Direction Infection?

Rebecca - No, I don't have excess drooling, fainting and a major love for One Direction. I have a refined taste in music.

Doctor - Well, what are your symptoms?

Rebecca - That's the point. I don't have it. I don't have the Virus.

Doctor - Well why did you come to see me if you're not sick?

Rebecca - Everyone seems to be catching The Virus.

Even my best friend, Sapphira Jones.

We have this friendly rivalry. They get a new chariot, we get a new chariot. We renovate our house, they renovate their house, and spend more than we do. Just last week my husband purchased a gold embroidered skull cap, so Ananias Jones goes and buys the same one.

It's going to be hard keeping up with the Jones', especially now that we have to pay all the tax to Zacchaeus.

Doctor - I still don't understand. What's the problem?

Rebecca - I just can't understand her behavior. Sapphira has changed. All of a sudden.

Before I knew exactly what she would do. Spend, spend, spend. Now...I just can't explain it.

Doctor - When did you notice her behaviour change?

Rebecca - About a week ago I think.

Doctor - Let's think...what happened around that time.

Rebecca - Can't think of anything significant. *(pause)*

There was an article in the Jericho Morning Herald...

Doctor - ...and Zacchaeus was on the front page; something about him going mad.

Rebecca - No, that wasn't it.

Doctor - I only glanced at the article but it quoted him saying he was giving half his income to the poor and paying back four times the amount if he'd caught cheating.

Rebecca - Doesn't sound like Zacchaeus to me. Maybe the journalist made the story up.

But come to think of it, it was around the time that the article was published that Sapphira's behavior started to change. And it wasn't just her. Her husband started to behave differently, then their children. And another of our close friends. But it's not just their family and friends. Its people all over Jericho. They are all acting the same way.

Doctor - What was so unusual about their behavior?

Rebecca - Well, you remember the new hybrid Impreza chariot I told you that Ananias and Sapphira bought. They sold it. Sure they had four other state of the art chariots but this was their pride and joy. And then you'll never believe what they did.

Doctor - What did they do?

Rebecca - They set up the Ananias and Sapphira Foundation for the Poor and Destitute Widows of Jericho. It's so unlike them. Many of their friends have been influenced by their actions and are giving money as well. This benevolence stuff is like a virus. It's so contagious and its like a tidal wave.

But I don't want to catch The Virus. I don't want to be giving my money out to the undeserving poor. We need to build our nest egg in case there's another Global Financial Crisis.

Doctor - Alright, lets see if the symptoms you describe are in the Hypochondriacs Guide to Symptoms and Illness (*pulls out old book*).

Rebecca - Radical change in behavior, irrational and inexplicable giving, contented and happy disposition.

Doctor - I found something which seems to fit.

Rebecca - What's the virus called?

Doctor - Contagio Generoso. Contagio Generoso. (Con-tay-gio Gen-er-o-so).

It's a virus that affects the person by having generosity as the centre of their life; a life in which the person shares all he has as a demonstration of God's love and a response to God's grace. Put simply, its someone who has a God-inspired generous lifestyle.

Rebecca - (*gets agitated*) But, but is there a vaccine for Contagio Generoso? I need the Vaccine.

Doctor - No definitive antiviral remedies have as yet been discovered. The only thing that reduces the risk of infection is a regular dose of consumerism, followed by a reinforcing dose of materialism.

Rebecca - I'm doomed. (*phone rings*). What, Mordecai? Zacchaeus is at our emporium and he want to give us back four times the amount of tax that he overcharged us! I just don't understand.

I am steward.

CREATIVE ELEMENT

Adapted from: <http://www.dramatix.org.nz/scripts/christian-belief-mainmenu-39/371-body-parts>

Theme: TALENTS/Every Part Contributing to the Body

Summary: Just as each body part has a role to play, so each member can use their unique gifts to build up the church.

Cast & Props:

- Narrator
- 7 Parts of the Body with signs or pictures that indicate their body part

SCRIPT

Narrator:

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it with Christ. The body does not consist of one member, but of many.

Foot:

Hello, everyone! As you might have guessed, I am the foot. I am one of the most important parts of the body. You don't see me a lot of the time. Actually, most people just take me and my partner for granted. We feel a bit like Rodney Dangerfield. We never get no respect. We are always getting stepped on. Nobody notices us unless we start to hurt. I don't think the other body parts feel that way. It would be interesting to hear from them. They all think they are so important.

Leg:

I have one leg up on my friend down there. Ha ha. That's the kind of joke we body parts always tell. Yes, folks, I'm the leg. Actually, I have a lot of respect for the foot. Without it, I couldn't get anywhere. Neither could my partner on the other side. We've learned to work together. We know how much the top part needs all us bottom parts. And the nice part is that we get all this great exercise. I feel sorry for the ears and the nose. Except for a little wiggle here and there, they never get a good workout.

Heart:

Hi, friends. Heart here. Not quite the top, but certainly not near the bottom. Most of you have never seen me before. Maybe in pictures somewhere. Or (shudder) in an operating room. But even though you can't see me, I just know how important it is for the rest of the body that I keep healthy. Not that I would ever wish it, but you could make do without some of the parts of the body. Without me, you couldn't live a minute. Now don't think that I am bragging. I just have this great sense of responsibility. Privilege. It really is an honour to have this position. Have you ever heard someone say, "So-and-so has a big heart". That is just about the biggest compliment you can give someone.

Hand:

Hello, everyone. You can guess who I am. It's very handy having me around. Another one of those body part jokes. Just don't go asking me for a hand-out. Hee hee. Actually, you would enjoy being a hand. We

have a wonderful time. You get to greet people you never met before. You get to feed the rest of the body, and help it get dressed. If you like to help, you should really consider being a hand.

Eye:

"Eye see you" out there. Yes, it's me, the eye. I may not be the biggest part of the body, but without me, you would have a hard time getting around. I also help the body to understand the world out there.

Nerves:

Hi! I represent the nerves of the body. I think you know what I do. I am responsible for making sure that all the parts communicate with each other. And you know, what I do is just like what the Spirit does in the church. Maybe you could think about that with me for a minute. Think of yourselves as being different parts of God's body. All of you have something that you can do. All of you are also different but so important. Each part has a role to play. When we use our talents to serve in our local Church we are playing the important role that only we can play. When we don't use our talents the rest of the body suffers for it... we aren't as efficient or effective as a Church body! Just like it wouldn't make sense for all of you to be a nose, because you wouldn't be connected to anyone else, we all need to play our part for the body to work! You are who God made you. And all of you are important. Even if you think you don't have much to offer. You do. And that's where the Spirit comes in. The Spirit wants all the parts to work together. And wants all the parts to respect each other. And to care for each other.

That's why they asked me to speak last. I know all about how the parts are supposed to work together. And I know what happens if they don't.

So think about the body of Christ. Right now you have an opportunity to find out in a new way how this church - this body of God - will work, pray and celebrate together. I hope you have some fun doing that.

I am steward.

CREATIVE ELEMENT

Adapted from: <http://www.dramatix.org.nz/scripts/christian-belief-mainmenu-39/371-body-parts>

Theme: TALENTS/God uses ordinary people!

Summary: Illustrates the ridiculous idea that you have to be extraordinary at something in order to contribute.

Cast:

- Stage Manager
- Contestants
- C 1 - Strong Man
- C 2 - Speedy (Male or Female)
- C 3 - Force-Field Girl
- C 4 - Ordinary Man

Props:

- Weights (cut these out of cardboard. Should look like cartoon weights with a bar in the middle and round ball like weights on each end)
- Pen (ordinary ink pen)
- Clipboard
- Mobile phone (or other object Force-Field Girl will hold)

SCRIPT

(Scene: Can be as simple as two chairs facing each other - interview style. SM is in one chair with clipboard in hand and calls in the "next" contestant.)

SM: Next!

C1: (enters carrying in weights - one in each hand)

SM: So - what extraordinary thing can you do?

C1: I can lift these weights above my head - there's a total of 2000 pounds here.

SM: Well, let's see it!

C1: (Pretends to strain a little but raises each set of weights simultaneously out to the side then above the head. When the weights are above the head he should pretend to struggle a little, but then slowly lower them back to the side again.)

SM: Well, my boy - you certainly are strong! And, you're hired! That, man, was EXTRAORDINARY!
(writes information down on the clipboard)

C1: (Smiling really big, he picks up weights and makes his way back out the door.)

SM: Next!

C2: (Comes in and sits down)

SM: So - what extraordinary thing can you do?

C2: I'm lightning fast - they call me Speedy. Would you like a demonstration?

SM: Of course!

C2: Do you see that pen over there on the floor?

SM: The one 'way over there? (points in direction away from where they are)

C2: Yes - watch closely. (Appears to move slightly forward then back; on the backward motion put hands arced in front of body with one hand slightly in front of the other. The pen should be inside the shirt sleeve. The hand opposite where the pen is should be closest to the body so that the pen can be removed easily without being seen.)

C2: (Shows the pen to SM and to audience then shouts) Tada!

SM: (looks at the pen then where it was supposed to have been then back at the pen again) Wow - that was fast! You're hired! That, my friend, was EXTRAORDINARY! (writes information down on the clipboard)

C2: Thank you - I'll see you again REAL soon! (exits)

SM: Next!

C3: (Comes in and sits down.)

SM: So - what extraordinary thing can you do?

C3: I can create a force-field that cannot be penetrated.

SM: Well, let's see it.

C3: (makes some circular motions in the air) Now, try and take this phone from my hand.

SM: (Tries to take it but is "stopped" by the force field. Pretends to push on the force field but just not be able to get anywhere.) Wow - that's amazing - you're hired! That, young lady, was EXTRAORDINARY! (writes information down on the clipboard)

C3: Thank you! (exits)

SM: Next!

C4: (Enters, looking confused.)

SM: Come in - come in. Have a seat.

C4: Oh, okay (sort of unsure)

SM: So - what extraordinary thing can you do?

C4: Extraordinary?

SM: Yes - this audition is for people who can do extraordinary things. So what can you do?

C4: Well, I can't do anything extraordinary - not that I know of anyway.

SM: Then why are you here?

C4: I was in line to purchase tickets to a show - or at least I thought I was.

SM: I'm trying to put together an act of amazing feats - EXTRAORDINARY feats - and if you aren't extraordinary, I can't use you. You're useless - get out!

C4: But, I'm not useless.

SM: Of course you are - you're ordinary. What could possibly be done with ordinary people!?!?!?

I am steward.

CREATIVE ELEMENT

Adapted from: <http://www.dramatix.org.nz/scripts/christian-walk/438-god-tank>

Theme: The Generosity of God/Lordship

Summary: Done in the style of the TV show Shark Tank. Two people come before the 'sharks' seeking investment in their ideas.

Cast & Props:

- Narrator
- Father
- Jesus
- Holy Spirit
- 2 people presenting investment ideas to the God Tank.

SCRIPT

Narrator: Welcome to the God Tank, where entrepreneurial inventors seek backing for their endeavors. These sharks are willing to invest their own skills, and considerable time and wealth, if they like what they see. Now let's meet our sharks. First up is God the Father – He is the creative genius behind the entire universe. He was able to take absolutely nothing and turn it into absolutely everything. He owns the sun, the stars, the mountains, and vast resources that haven't even been counted yet.

Next is God the Spirit. He is the inspiration behind millions of best selling books, movies, songs. He's changed business, medicine, and politics around the world. His inspirational efforts have changed billions of lives. Let's meet him.

Our third shark is God the Son. Known as the Saviour of the World, God the Son changes everything He touches. He has specialized over the years at taking broken-down ventures and breathing new life into them so that they become productive positive life changers. He is responsible for starting two major holidays celebrated around the world and leads an international corporation with offices in almost every city on every continent. Here He is...Jesus.

First into the God Tank is Tank Terfel who is looking for an investment in his sports career.

Tank: Hello sharks, my name is Tank Terfel and I am offering a 10 % stake in my amazing sports potential – I was the captain of my _____ (sport) team. The number one scorer, I've multiple college or pro teams contact me. I just need some help getting to the next level and ensuring that I will become a superstar. You know, pro athletes earn six and seven figure incomes, so I think I can be very valuable. So... who wants to team up with a super star?

SHARK TANK –Silence - Look at each other mumble –

Father: I might be willing to make a deal with you.... Tell me, how dead set are you on becoming a pro-athlete?

Tank: Completely, that's been my life and my family's life dream for years. I practice everyday, and spend every weekend at game.

Father: How involved are you and your family in church?

Tank: Church? Uhh, with my sports schedule, I don't have time for church.

SHARK TANK: mumble – ooh, what a waste, how sad.

Spirit: So, you and your family think that your ultimate purpose in life is to be a super sports star, earning a million dollars a year?

Tank: Yeah, pretty much.

Spirit: And what will you do with your fame and money once you have it?

Tank: What will I do with it? I'll be famous, and rich... I'll buy a cool car, cool clothes, a cool house, I'll try to get into the hall of fame, make commercials to make even more money and everyone will know my name!

Father: Have you considered the fact that less than 1% of High School athletes ever make it to pro, and that there are over 2 million sports injuries a year which can leave you unable to play. What would you do if you were injured?

Tank: That can't happen, I just refuse to think of that.

Father: And what if you don't get chosen to go pro? What will become of you?

Tank: That's why I need you guys to invest me, to ensure I make it.

Jesus: I'll make you a deal, Tank. I believe in your potential, but I'll need more than 10%. I want 100% of you, and I want you to make Church, studying the Bible and prayer as much a priority as your sports are. Do you think you can do it?

Spirit: I'd like to go in on that deal.

Father: Me too, count Me in... so... Tank, we are offering all of our wisdom, guidance, power and influence to help you fulfill your dreams, but we want 100% and the change in priorities, what do you say?

Tank: Wait, you want 100% of me. But that means I have to give up complete control....

Jesus: TRUE...but you will gain the collective strength, wisdom and guidance of all of Us.

Tank: But You all could change my dreams, my focus, my ambitions...?

Spirit: That's true, we certainly could, but think about all that We have accomplished over the centuries. You have to ask yourself, do you trust Us.

Father: You will have to believe that We want the very best for you and will lead you appropriately.

Jesus: I am here to give life! Life in all of its abundance!

Tank: Ummmmm....

Spirit: You've got to decide!

Tank: NO, I can't, I want to be in charge.... (WALKS AWAY)

God: Sooo sad, He had so much potential, we could have done a great deal through him... F: he is a great kid, very sad.

Jesus: he could have been a wonderful witness as a sports star...oh well.

NARRATOR: Next into the Tank is Bob, who needs the sharks to put feet on his floundering business venture.

Bob: Hello Sharks, my name is Bob and I am offering a 50% stake in my company for an investment of \$100,000. I invented this awesome, stainless steel key organiser that conveniently keeps all your keys in

one easy-to-find place! (*holds up a key chain*) It can be imprinted to advertise and it's cool... so who wants to invest?

Jesus: Excuse me ___ but this just looks like a regular key chain What makes yours different?

Bob: Uhh... well... nothing really... I took an already successful idea and have brought it to you for an investment.

Holy Spirit: Bob, did you invent this product? You said you invented it...

Bob: Ummm, well, actually, I lied. I found it in the street.

Jesus: And you're trying to sell it as a business?

Bob: I try to sell everything I find in the street. See, I don't have a job, I got kicked out of my house, I have addiction problems, and I just don't know where to turn, all I've got left is this key chain. The God Tank is my last chance.

Father: Let me see if I understand you. You want us to invest \$100,000 in something you picked up on the street, have no proprietary rights to, and can not reproduce. You have no success in business, or in life for that matter.

Holy Spirit: (not unkindly) Has anyone ever called you a loser, Bob?

Bob: Yes, everyone, my parents, my kids, my wife, my old boss, I just can't succeed, I don't know what to do.

Holy Spirit: Stop the madness.. Bob. You don't have a business we can invest in.

Bob: ...I know... I just, I don't know—I shouldn't have come, I'm sorry. (*starts to leave*)

Jesus: Bob wait... I can't invest in your company, because it isn't a company, but...I will invest in you.

Bob: What? You're going to give me money?

Jesus: No, I won't give you any money, but I specialise in new beginnings...delivering people from their pasts and showing them a new future. I believe the Holy Spirit might be willing to go in with Me on this deal too. He specialises in offering wisdom and inspiration.

Father: I want in too. Bob, We will offer you all of Our wisdom, guidance, inspiration, forgiveness and love, for a 100% stake in your life.

Bob: You'll invest in me?

ALL: We believe in you, if you're with Us.

Bob: What does it mean to be with you?

Father: It means we are partners, but We have the controlling interest in your life. We want you to listen to Our wisdom, follow Our guidance, turn to Us when you have questions and concerns...

Holy Spirit: And We will guide you by Word and Spirit.

Jesus: It will be a 100% change in your life, Bob. Are you willing to make a 100% change?

Bob: I don't know... I have a lot of questions, I'm afraid to give up control...but...

ALL: ...but?

Bob: But I sure haven't accomplished anything good with my life doing it my way. You guys have changed billions of lives for the better.

Holy Spirit: Do we have a deal?

Bob: If you'll take me, you have a deal.

All: Amen! Good decision.

Jesus: Oh, what good we could do if people would just give us 100% control...

I am steward.

CREATIVE ELEMENT

Contributed by Malcolm Rae, GSC Health Director

Challenge: The Stewardship Health Challenge

Summary: This can be used the week that stewardship of health is preached as a way of challenging our congregations to healthier habits.

Materials Needed:

- following print-out of the Health Week Challenge
- some large copies of the challenge to post around the Church

There are great resources from the GSC Health Department that can be used as an application point for a sermon on health.

Health Week Challenge

Are you up to the challenge?

Try this H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. stewardship commitment. Each day add another health intervention and see how you feel. Live life to the full (John 10:10)

DAY ONE **H**YDRATE - Drink 2 big glasses of water on rising; 2 mid-morning; 2 mid-afternoon and 1 late afternoon.

DAY TWO **E**XERCISE - Take 10 deep breaths of fresh air then stretch every known muscle of your body (8 minutes) then go outside for a brisk 30-minute walk.

DAY THREE **A**LONE time with GOD - Spend at least an hour alone with God today. Think about what you think He has been saying to you lately. Trust Him and commit to taking up the challenge of what He has been asking you to do ... even if it seems overwhelming. If He has called you to this He will provide the resources needed to accomplish the task ahead.

DAY FOUR **L**IMIT FOOD - Approach meals deliberately today and eat temperately. Eat nothing between meals = ZERO. Make simple fruit, veg, nuts and grains at least 80% of your food today rather than processed foods high in salt, fat and sugar. Assemble all the food you intend to eat on your plate at the one time. Eat with friends or family and make your meals a time of praise to your Creator who has provided for your needs

DAY FIVE **T**RUST your CREATOR - to use you for His Glory today. Ask Him to bring someone to you for support/blessing then wait and see what He does with your willing heart.

DAY SIX **H**ARBOUR NO GRUDGE - Linger longer before you get up, or let no one know you are awake and review your most difficult relationships. Identify someone that you have not really forgiven. Pray that God will bless them abundantly during the day and, tonight, before you go to sleep, hand the resentment, pain, anger, injustice back to your creator God. Then thank Him for taking this burden from you and sleep peacefully.

DAY SEVEN **Y**IELD and ENJOY NATURE - Leave your mobile phone at home, find a secluded spot, ideally in a garden or bush land setting and just listen ... and yield to the world that God has given you!