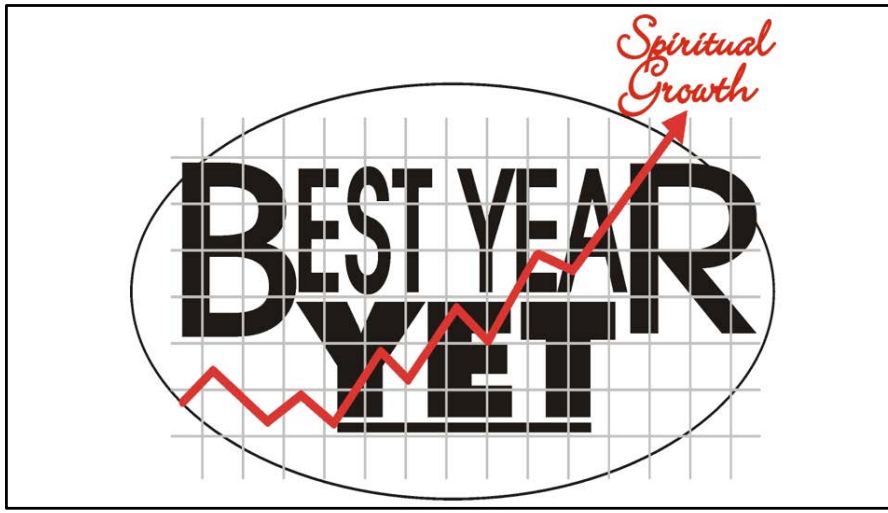




(Series Theme Slide)



In a time when the stock market is a ride that might be banned from Michigan's Great Adventure because of the neck injuries it is causing . . .

-- we still want to have our best year yet.

-- For many of us there will be moments this coming year that will feel as wild and crazy and maybe even scary . . .

-- but we still want our best year yet, don't we?

TR: Essential to reaching that goal, is our embracing the truth that we are a people who have been entrusted with treasure.

What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

ESV

READ SLIDE

- One of the key things a follower of Jesus understands is that everything good that we have is a gift from God.
- We can boast in Him, the giver. He is the One Who gives us all the treasure we have.
- But we cannot boast like it is MINE! Like we earned it, and we can keep it, and it is ours to do with as we please.

TR: Jesus reminds us that . . .

Luke 12:48b

Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they **entrusted** much, they will demand the more.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- In many of our minds, there would be a contrast between something merely given to us versus something **ENTRUSTED** to us.

-- **EX: Entrusted with an heirloom (repeat from last week)**

TR: Last week we pondered these two related questions . . .

What is the greatest implication
of having a treasure
ENTRUSTED to us?

ACCOUNTABILITY

READ SLIDE

TR: The second question is critical to answer correctly if we are to have our best year yet in 2019.

What is the greatest treasure
with which we have been
ENTRUSTED?

THE GOSPEL

READ SLIDE

TR: When we speak of the Gospel, it is not just the data points of what we share when we help someone understand God's Story of redemption . . . ultimately it is about . . .

What is the greatest treasure
with which we have been
ENTRUSTED?

THE GOSPEL

*The Person and Work of
God the Son, Jesus Christ*

READ SLIDE

TR: It is the factual data of the Messiah but also . . .

What is the greatest treasure
with which we have been
ENTRUSTED?

THE GOSPEL

*New Life, Salvation, the gift of
the Holy Spirit's indwelling, the
hope of future glory forever, etc.*

**. . . our experience of the application of that work to our lives by
the Son, through the Holy Spirit.**

-- The Gospel includes . . . READ SLIDE

**-- To have our best year yet, we will need to cherish and even
guard the greatest treasure with which we have been entrusted,
namely the Gospel.**

TR: But we will also need to go a bit further . . .

What are the other treasures
with which we have been
ENTRUSTED?

... and ask ourselves and the Scriptures ... **READ SLIDE**

TR: The basic premise of this brief two-part series is that ...



. . . the Greatest Treasure is the Gospel . . .
-- and the Other Treasures with which we have been entrusted
are merely the sack, the bag, the satchel to transport the Gospel.

TR: These other treasures include . . .

What are the other treasures
with which we have been
ENTRUSTED?

Our bodies

. . . our bodies.

-- Life itself has been given to all humans and we will all give an account for our lives.

-- But, Christians understand that and live it out. We realize that we not only have our lives, but that our very bodies are now temples of the Holy Spirit.

-- Remember, I said that the giving of the Holy Spirit is part of the Greatest Treasure, the Gospel, itself.

TR: Our bodies are His temple or so says the Bible . . .

1 Corinthians 6:15, 19-20

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!

¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? **You are not your own, ²⁰for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.**

ESV

In a passage that is calling for sexual purity, reflecting the consistent teaching of the Bible that God gave us sex to be enjoyed only by one man and one woman in the context of marriage.

-- READ SLIDE

-- Our stewardship of our bodies is important as those who are ambassadors of reconciliation and ministers of the Gospel.

-- We take care of our bodies so that we can be effective and faithful stewards of the Greatest Treasure that has been entrusted to us.

-- EX: A couple of years ago I was motivated to start working out. The prime motivator was how exhausted I felt after giving my all in worship and preaching for several services.

TR: Another “other treasure” is . . .

What are the other treasures
with which we have been
ENTRUSTED?

Our bodies
Our relationships

READ SLIDE

TR: The Apostle Paul prays that the Ephesians' eyes of the hearts would be open so that they could see the treasure lavished upon them by Jesus.

Ephesians 1:17-18b

that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of glory, may give you the
Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in
the knowledge of him, ¹⁸having the
eyes of your hearts enlightened, that
you may know what is the hope to
which he has called you,

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- [the hope of our calling]

TR: Verse 18 continues . . .

Ephesians 1:18c-19

what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- [power]

-- my key focus for today is [his glorious inheritance in the saints]

-- it does not say FOR the saints, but IN the saints. It seems that the saints are part of the inheritance with which we have been entrusted.

-- Why should we seek to steward our relationships, in our families, in our church?

TR: Perhaps a snippet from our son and daughter-in-law's recent vows would help us understand.

I make these covenant vows
before God and these witnesses.
I will keep them **so that honor will come
Jesus and that the world may know that
He was sent from the Father.**

My continual aspiration will be that my
covenant-faithful love for you would
reflect the love of God,
and that my only greater love would be
for God Himself.

Ben and Lyndsay said before God and to each other, among other things, . . . READ SLIDE

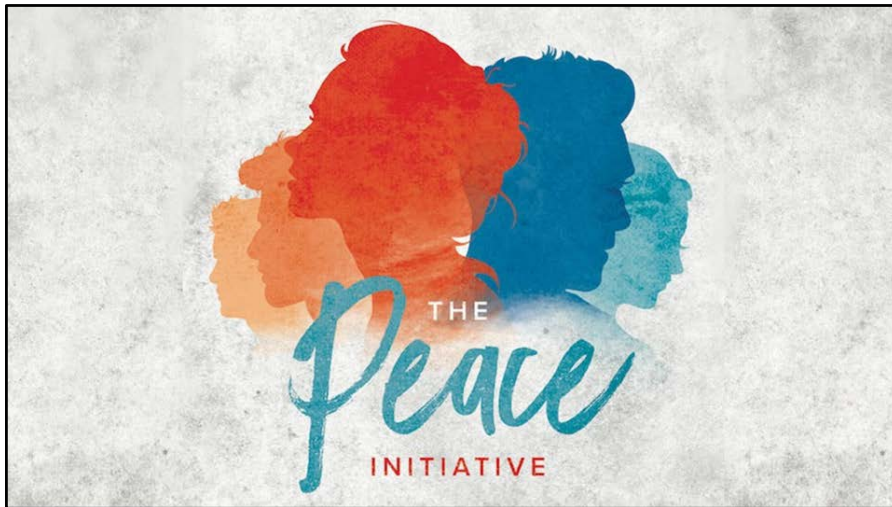
-- Keeping our vows is not just so that we can be happy. Not just so the kids will feel secure. Not just so that our finances won't face the trauma of divorce.

-- Christians whose eyes have been opened to the treasures they with which they have been entrusted . . . realize that the sack is theirs to carry the gold.

-- And the gold includes the honor due to the Person of God's Son, Jesus, and the work He did on the cross for our benefit.

TR: This is so important to us that beginning January 20th we will .

. .



. . . begin The Peace Initiative.

-- Focused on asking God to teach and strengthen us to be better stewards of our relationships . . . for His honor and glory!
-- Remember last week's challenge to consider spending some time in fasting and prayer for this comprehensive initiative.
-- I apologize if I hurt you by suggesting that merely skipping one meal isn't fasting . . . that was not my intent. Rather, my hope was that we would take this Holy Spirit led self-examination serious . . . more that just having a cup of coffee for breakfast and calling it fasting.

TR: The other treasures include our bodies, our relationships, and . . .

What are the other treasures
with which we have been
ENTRUSTED?

Our bodies
Our relationships
Our time

. . . READ SLIDE

-- This is another fiber or strand of material that is part of the sack, the bag that holds the greatest treasure.

TR: The passage that came to my mind was from Philippians 1

Philippians 1:21-24

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means **fruitful labor for me**. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. ²⁴But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- The true Christ-follower realizes that **ALL** of life is to be about Jesus.
- **ALL** of our time is to be about fruitful labor for the benefit of others.
- That doesn't make us workaholics, but it should make us mission-driven.
- Good stewardship of our time means realizing that whether at work, play, vacation, retirement, school, or whenever . . . our mission is always to win and grow disciples who show allegiance to Jesus.

TR: One young man learned this some six years after coming to

faith in Christ.

"I got down on my knees and I did say 'thank you' to God. And right then and there joy and peace came into my soul. I knew then what it was to be 'born again,' and the Bible which had been so dry to me before, became everything."

Famous Cricketer, British Missionary, lived from 1860 to 1931, came to Christ during a Moody Campaign in England.

-- When pressed because of his weak response to whether he had trusted Christ, Charles later wrote . . . READ SLIDE

-- When his brother took seriously ill six years later, he was confronted by the question, "What is all the fame and flattery worth . . . when a man comes to face eternity?"

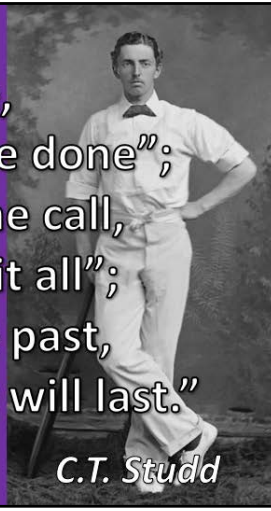
-- He would write, "I know that cricket would not last, and honour would not last, and nothing in this world would last, but it was worthwhile living for the world to come."

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Studd)

TR: It was Studd who wrote a poem, one stanza of which reads . .

.

“Only one life, yes only one,
Now let me say, “Thy will be done”;
And when at last I’ll hear the call,
I know I’ll say “’twas worth it all”;
Only one life, ’twill soon be past,
Only what’s done for Christ will last.”



C.T. Studd

READ SLIDE

TR: “only what’s done for Christ will last” . . . but we are told . . .

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- SO, we should be doing everything for Christ.
- Our basketball, our classwork, our recess time, our hobbies, our community service, our jobs, our chores, our parenting, our caring for our parents . . . whatever we do.
- When we keep in mind that **OUR TIME** is only part of the fibers of the sack that hold the Greatest Treasure, then we will be good stewards of our time.

TR: In a similar way, as those who have been baptized by the Holy Spirit when we trusted Christ, Christ-followers have been entrusted with . . .

What are the other treasures
with which we have been
ENTRUSTED?

Our bodies
Our relationships
Our time
Our spiritual gifts

. . . at least one spiritual gift.

TR: 1 Corinthians 12 makes clear . . .

1 Corinthians 12:7, 11, 24a, 25

⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

¹¹All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

²⁴But God has so composed the body . . .
²⁵that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- EACH ONE . . . APPORTIONED BY THE SPIRIT . . . ALL MAY HAVE CARE . . . AND NO DIVISION.

TR: There is no definitive list of spiritual gifts . . .

Wisdom, Apostle, Organization,
 Leadership, Discernment, Deliverance,
 Healing, Miracles, Evangelism,
 Suffering, Poverty, Missionary,
 Singleness, Counseling, Shepherding,
 Knowledge, Teaching, Craftsmanship,
 Music, Artistic Creativity, Prayer, Faith,
 Giving, Helps, Service, Mercy,
 Hospitality, Prophecy, Tongues,
 Interpretation of Tongues

. . . but many include the following, through perhaps worded with a variety of terms.

-- We must learn the three lessons from the Lists of Gifts (Rom. 12:3-8, 1 Cor. 12, Eph. 4:11ff, 1 Pe. 4:10-11) –

*** No list is exhaustive - so they are probably examples, not a complete listing.**

*** The order varies considerably - so the order of the gifts in the list is probably not a matter of their relative importance.**

*** There is an impressive mixture of “spectacular” and “more ordinary” - so we need to be open to the spectacular but not make an idol of it, labeling some as more “spiritual.”**

TR: Today is not about settling every question, just about asking the question, “Are we living like we will have to give an account for the spiritual gifts entrusted to us?”

What are the other treasures
with which we have been
ENTRUSTED?

Our bodies
Our relationships
Our time
Our spiritual gifts
Our money

A fifth “other treasure” is our money.

TR: I so appreciate how David captured that even our wealth is a treasure entrusted in 1 Chronicles 29, as this King dedicated the resources for his son to build the temple.

1 Chronicles 29:9

Then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for **with a whole heart** they had offered freely to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Our financial resources, whether little or great, **ALL** belong to God.
- I believe we owe God the first 10th of our income, and to give Him less is to rob Him (as the book of Malachi tells us).
- **BUT, ALL** we own is His . . . in reality it has been entrusted to us.

TR: Down a few verses in this same chapter . . .

1 Chronicles 29:12-13

“Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. ¹³And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.”

*ESV***READ SLIDE****TR: Verse 14**

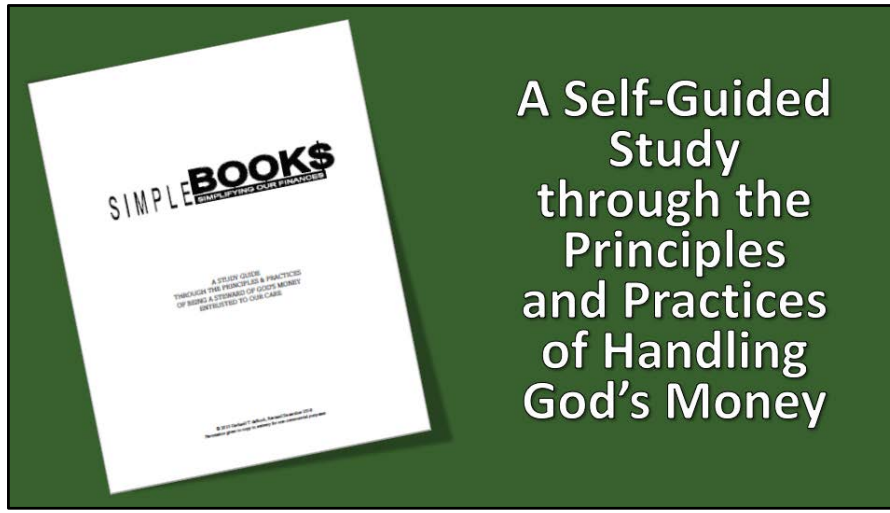
“But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? **For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.**”

ESV

READ SLIDE

- If we understand that the Greatest Treasure is the Gospel, then our money becomes a tool . . .
- . . . rather than the source of our security or significance.

TR: If you've never done so, it would be a great step toward your best year yet to . . .



A Self-Guided
Study
through the
Principles
and Practices
of Handling
God's Money

. . . call the church office and request the almost 50 page study guide that hits almost all of the passages that address finances.

TR: In summary . . .

What are the other treasures
with which we have been
ENTRUSTED?

Our bodies
Our relationships
Our time
Our spiritual gifts
Our money

... READ SLIDE

TR: And the key premise for these two weeks is quite simple ...



... the Greatest Treasure is the Gospel ... and the Other Treasures with which we have been entrusted are merely the sack.

TR: This simple premise is vitally critical to our spiritual health and having our best year yet. For ...

When we do not
rightly value the
“Greatest Treasure”
of the Gospel,
we end up making
idols of the
“Other Treasures.”



. . . READ SLIDE

-- The slide shows a beautiful coin purse vase. It is a glorious piece of porcelain.

-- The only problem is, it makes much of the sack and has virtually no capacity to carry the treasure.

TR: When we do not rightly value the “Greatest Treasure” then we make the other treasures . . .

What are the other treasures
with which we have been
ENTRUSTED?

Our bodies
Our relationships
Our time
Our spiritual gifts
Our money

IDOLS?

. . . into idols.

- The comfort and care of our bodies comes first.
- Relationships, even within the covenant community of the local church, become disposable.
- Our time is our own . . . “I need some ME TIME.”
- We serve only if it is fulfilling . . . and convenient.
- We give when we have extra . . . or we give in order to somehow earn God’s favor . . . which makes a mockery of the Greatest Treasure, the Gospel.

TR: All of these other treasures become idols when we get a bit DAFFY and say . . .

**READ SLIDE**

-- Look up on YouTube Daffy Duck and Mine, Mine, Mine.

TR: For the best year yet we need to realize with Paul that . . .

But we have **this treasure** (the Gospel) in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

ESV

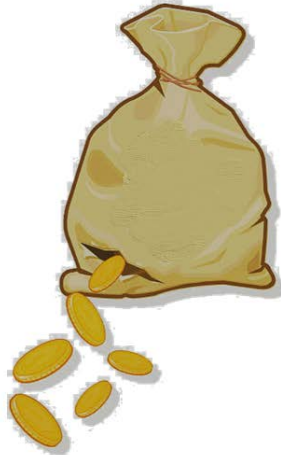
READ SLIDE

- Beyond wanting to encourage us to take care of our bodies, especially avoiding sexual sins;
- beyond reminding us that our relationship either give evidence for or against the Son having been sent by the Father;
- beyond recalling that we have one life to live and it will soon be past, and only what's done for Christ will last;
- beyond kindling in us a desire to use the gifts of the Spirit entrusted to us for our mutual benefit;
- even beyond reminding us that we own nothing, everything including all our money, has been given to us by the Giver of all good gifts.

-- . . . my hope has been to help us marvel in, delight in, be amazed by, and to truly treasure the **GREATEST TREASURE** of all, the Gospel.

TR: For then we will want to be good stewards of all else, because we will remember . . .

When we are poor stewards of the "other treasures," we often end up being careless with the "Greatest Treasure" of the Gospel.



READ SLIDE

- This is a cycle . . . treasure the Greatest Treasure, helps us to steward our Other Treasures.
- Then stewarding those treasures . . . helps us be good stewards of the Greatest Treasure with which we have been entrusted.

TR: To put it another way . . .



READ SLIDE

-- He who sows sparingly, reaps sparingly. And the one who sows bountifully, will also reap bountifully. (paraphrased from 2 Cor. 9:6)

TR: Isn't this really what is behind our three year vision . . .



READ SLIDE

TR: We have been given the Greatest Treasure . . . and many other treasures . . . so let's make the most of every opportunity God gives us this year . . .



**. . . and have the best year yet as those blessed beyond blessing.
-- As those who will be accountable for what has been entrusted
to us.**

**-- Picture looking into Christ's eyes as He entrusts the treasure to
you . . . and says, "I haven't entrusted this to you so you can fail.
Don't bury it and someday you will enter into My joy. Into the joy
of your Master and Savior.**