

DATE: October 23, 2011

TITLE: "A GOOD STEWARD"

TEXT: LUKE 12:13-21

SERIES: "MADE FOR MORE" Number 5 (Planned Giving kick-off)

Transition from a consumer to a steward.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Prop – hot dog or string of hot dogs) Joey Chestnut had a dream. It is a dream I have never had but perhaps you have. At the age of 26, he longed to eat more than fifty hot dogs in one sitting, in less than twelve minutes, setting a world record.

In 2006, Joey competed in Nathan's Famous Hot Dog Eating Contest, which takes place every year on the Fourth of July on Coney Island, going on since 1916. He accomplished his goal of eating 52 hot dogs and kept them down. However, his competitor, known as "The Tsunami", who held the record of 50 hotdogs, surpassed his own record, eating 53 and 3 quarters. Joey did not win the competition that year. However, in 2007, Joey competed again, this time eating 66 hotdogs, winning the title and holding it each year since.

1. Joey Chestnut was a master consumer.
2. The whole goal of the contest was to see who could consume the most hotdogs.
3. Americans are consumers.
4. Consumerism drives us to get more and better stuff.
5. Consumerism speaks of a lack of contentment.
6. For the consumer, life becomes more about what we get than what we give.
7. A consumer is a taker not a giver.
8. Jesus calls us to make the transition from being a consumer to be a contributor.
9. We are made for more than to just be a consumer.
10. We are made for more than just to be spiritually fed.
11. We are made to be more than consumers.
12. We are made to contributors.
13. We are made to be stewards of what God has given us.
14. Are you a good steward of what God has given you?

I. (vs.13-15) A GOOD STEWARD GUARDS AGAINST GREED

1. Luke heard someone in the crowd make a request of Jesus.
2. We do not know his name, but this someone said, "**Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.**" (Luke 12:13)
3. Jesus responded that His purpose was not to be a judge or arbiter between him and his brother or to resolve a dispute about material things. "**Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'**" (Luke 12:15)
4. Have you ever had someone give you a warning of something but, by the time you heard and responded to it, it was too late?

5. Jesus gave a warning to the people that needed to be heard and responded to by each and every follower of Jesus.

6. The warning is against greed.

ILLUSTRATION: (*John draw cartoon – first copy, “It’s not polite to ask for the biggest piece.” Second copy, “Well then, how do I get it?” At a birthday party, it was finally time to serve the cake. A little boy named Brian blurted out, “I want the biggest piece!” His mother, who was also there, quickly scolded him, “Brian, it’s not polite to ask for the biggest piece.” The little guy looked at her in confusion, and asked, “Well, then, how do I get it?”

7. Greed takes place when desire gets off track.

ILLUSTRATION: **Someone said, “One of the weaknesses of our age is our apparent inability to distinguish our need from our greed.

(Unknown)

ILLUSTRATION: **The ancient historian, Plutarch said, “Greed never rests from the acquiring of more.”

8. We are to put up our guard against all kinds of greed.

9. Greed and the pursuit of possessions constitute one of the greatest obstacles to spiritual growth and the spiritual life.

10. Greed hinders us from being and doing all that God calls us to be and do.

11. The Apostle Paul, in dealing with practical issues for God’s people and the way they live, said, “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people.” (Ephesians 5:3)

12. Greed is a limiting factor in the life of every Christian.

13. We can so easily get caught up in the web of greed and materialism that destroys.

ILLUSTRATION: *Pictures of these: Some of you may have seen them or may have experienced them on a tree at your place. I understand they are called web worms. Sharon was concerned about webs she had seen in a pear tree in our back yard and another tree in the front yard. Worms that destroy.

14. Greed destroys.

15. The web of materialism seeks to embrace and destroy.

***ILLUSTRATION: Dr. Stan Toler, General Superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene, in the book, *Cycle of Victorious Giving*, is quoted as saying, “Materialism isn’t just about collecting the world’s stuff. It’s about thinking like the world. Materialism is an attitude-the near-obsession to possess material things.” (Stan Toler)**

16. We want things, but we don’t want to call ourselves materialistic.

17. The problem is that consumers are always looking for more.

18. Something bigger, something better, something newer, something nicer.

19. With this warning against all types of greed, Jesus gives a principle statement about life.

“...a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” (Luke 12:15)

20. We are made for more than to just possess things or be possessed by our possessions.

21. Things do not produce happiness.

22. Every person sooner or later comes to realize just how unimportant things are, though many realize it only after a misspent life.

ILLUSTRATION: In one version of the story, *Charlie and Chocolate Factory*, the world famous chocolate maker, Willy Wonka, invited 5 children to visit his fantastic chocolate factory for a day. He randomly places 5 golden tickets in 5 chocolate bars, causing a big clamor to get a lucky ticket. One father buys hundreds of thousands and has his worker in his factory look for one. He is committed to get one for his daughter to try to make her happy whatever it takes. Three days went by and he had no luck. Oh, it was terrible. "My Veruca got more and more upset each day." After three days, he finds one. When the man takes the ticket to his daughter, Veruca walks up to her father, who is proudly holding the ticket. She takes it, looks at it, smiles for a second, then says in a serious tone, "Daddy, I want another pony."

23. She wanted more.

24. Jesus makes it clear that life is not about what we get or have.

25. Consumerism is greed at work and is all about what we get and have.

ILLUSTRATION: Back in 1997, a very popular hour-long PBS documentary about consumerism and its harmful effects on the family, the community, and the environment, by the name of "Affluenza" was shown.

26. Though the years have passed since the film, the problem of consumerism continues.

27. The phrase, "He who has the most toys wins" is an example of the thinking of consumerism and the desire for possessions.

28. Credit card debt is the result of the need and desire to possess.

ILLUSTRATION: The average number of credit cards per U.S. household: 12.7. ("Harper's Index," Harper's Magazine (December 2005), p. 13)

29. Life is not about what we have or what we consume.

30. We do not have to have things to have life, but we do need life.

ILLUSTRATION: **John Henry Newman wrote, "Fear not that your life shall come to an end, but rather fear that it shall never have a beginning."

31. When we limit our lives to what we are able to consume, we miss out on the life that Jesus, who is the Life, can provide us.

Jesus said, **"...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10)**

32. True life begins with Jesus.

33. True life is found in Him and not in the abundance of possessions.

34. Stuff can be a major distraction to the spiritual life.

35. Stuff can get in the way of making the transition to the life God desires us to live.

36. Stuff can get in the way of making the transition from consumer to contributor.
37. It is easy to be diverted or distracted from our commitment to Jesus by greed and the desire to consume.
38. The culture of getting or having the latest technological gadget or convenience can confuse our priorities and passions.
39. Jesus says you will not find life through the abundance of possessions.
40. Luke wrote in Acts, "**Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'**" (Acts 20:35)
41. Jesus makes it clear that life is not found in what we get but in our relationship with Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.
42. Consumerism will never lead to contentment.
43. Jesus calls us to be good stewards of what He has given us.
44. Jesus calls His followers to be givers.

"Freely you have received, freely give." (Matthew 10:8)

***ILLUSTRATION: (Sing it) (Words on screen)** Carol Owens wrote, "Freely, freely you have received;

Freely, freely give.

**Go in my name and because you believe,
Others will know that I live."**

45. Jesus warns against all kinds of greed, for greed robs us of the transformed life.

ILLUSTRATION: Tim Forneris is a 22-year-old computer analyst who works part time as groundskeeper for the St. Louis Cardinals. He is the one who retrieved Mark McGwire's 62nd home-run ball, and he became famous for turning the ball over to McGwire instead of holding onto it and selling it for an estimated \$1 million. Although columnist Daniel Kadlec called this "an honorable gesture," he used Forneris as an example of some poor personal-financial habits. Among Kadlec's pointers were the need to sleep on decisions before you act on them, avoid herd thinking, and treat "found money" seriously. Not surprisingly, Forneris wrote back to the columnist. Here is his thoughtful explanation of his actions:

"First of all, despite what Mr. Kadlec wrote in his article, I did not get \$5,000 worth of McGwire stuff. I did not ask for any memorabilia and did not receive any. According to Mr. Kadlec, my first sin was the "impulse" decision to give the ball back to Mr. McGwire immediately. But my decision was by no means made on an impulse. I had thought over what I would do if I got a home-run ball, and discussed it with my family and friends.

Also, I can assure you that I was not influenced by herd thinking. What did influence my actions was my family and my background. I have always been taught to respect others and their accomplishments. I value all people's achievements, big and small. In my opinion, Mr. McGwire deserved not only the home-run record for his work but also

this ball. Life is about more than just money. It is about family, friends, and the experiences you have with them.

As for my third financial sin of "easy come, easy go," I believe some possessions are priceless. To put an economic value on Mr. McGwire's hard work and dedication is absurd. Being the person who received the ball was a great blessing to me. And being able to return it to Mr. McGwire was a real honor and thrill. I still would not trade that experience for a million dollars."

(Daniel Kadlec, "Personal Time: Your Money," Time (2-8-99); Time, (3-22-99); submitted by Scot Snyder)

46. He was guarding against greed.

47. Jesus warns against the greed that is at the heart of consumerism.

48. A warning to be on guard in our own hearts and lives against greed.

49. Are you a good steward?

II. (vs.16-20) A GOOD STEWARD LOOKS BEYOND HIMSELF

1. Jesus tells a story about a man who was a consumer and not a good steward.
 2. The story Jesus tells involves the fortune of one man and how he handles that fortune.
 3. In telling the story about this man that was a consumer, we do know he was a rich man who had a banner year and produced a good crop.
 4. This problem of so much produce caused him to ask himself what he should do with all that he had.
 5. He had no place to store his crops or, in other words, he did not have room to keep all of his stuff.
 6. The issue with stuff is always, what are you going to do with it?
 7. Invest it, keep it, use it, or give it away?
 8. He asked himself what he should do because he had no room to store all his possessions.
 9. Greed and selfishness were at the heart of his choices about the future.
 10. The word 'tomorrow' is a word of hope and opportunity.
 11. It is a word that can speak about what could become and moves us forward.
 12. A tomorrow can cause us to invest and prepare for the future.
 13. Tomorrow can move us to make right choices or it can move us to make wrong choices.
 14. It is also a word that can also produce procrastination and despair.
 15. Tomorrow was moving the man in this story to action.
 16. But it was an action that revealed greed and self-centeredness.
- ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture of baby with the t-shirt) The slogan on the t-shirt says, "Galileo was wrong. The universe does revolve around me." It could have easily been worn by the man in this story.**
17. The focus was on what he possessed.
 18. This man had the "I will keep it for myself" attitude.

19. He was getting in the way of looking at it from the perspective of a contributor.

ILLUSTRATION: *Comedian Jack Parr quipped, “Looking back, my life seems like one big obstacle race, with me being the chief obstacle.”

20. He had more than he could consume already but he wanted to consume more.

21. The man was greedy, self-centered, incapable of seeing beyond himself, and unmoved to share his good fortune with anyone else.

22. Isaiah gives this picture of the loneliness of selfishness.

“Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land.” (Isaiah 5:8)

23. He was more concerned about what he could consume than what he would contribute.

24. He was not being a good steward of what he had.

25. We are responsible to be good stewards of all God has given us, and that includes planning for the future.

26. He did not see himself as a steward of what God had given him but as a consumer.

27. The rich man could not see beyond himself.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Cartoon from book) In her book, “Becoming a Vessel God Can Use,” author Donna Partow uses a cartoon. The picture is of a dog sitting on the beach under the palm tree, in a lounge chair, wearing sun glasses, holding a cool drink, and reading a book. A man, evidently his master, is out in the water, thrashing and calling out, “Help! Rover, Get Help.” The next cartoon shows Rover lying comfortable in a chair in a psychologist’s office with the saying – “Rover gets help.” It was all about Rover.

28. He did not regard his possessions as things lent to him by God’s grace to be used by him in the service of the Lord.

29. He had a full monopoly of it to use for his life and possessions.

30. It was all about what he had and what he would do with it to take care of himself.

31. The six I’s and five My’s of this brief account of the farmer reveal a value of possessions centered around himself.

32. He does not see this abundance as an opportunity to help those needing food.

“I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.” (Matthew 25:43)

33. He could not see any responsibility of sharing with others.

34. His tomorrow was short-sighted, as he could not see beyond the tomorrow of this world.

35. It was about his life and taking it easy and having fun.

36. As a consumer, life was all about what it could do for him.

37. This man was foolish because he forgot God and the needs of others.

ILLUSTRATION: **“The basic human problem is that everyone believes that there is a God and I am it.” (Theologian, Daniel Hawk)

38. The story now takes a turn.

“But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’” (Luke 12:20)

39. His tomorrow had run out.

ILLUSTRATION: Steve Jobs resigned as Apple's chief executive in August of this year. While speaking at the Stanford University Commencement address in June of 2005, he had this to say.

“Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything—all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure—these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important.”

40. James warns when he says, **“Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” (James 4:14)**

41. A man's life is uncertain at best.

42. None of us knows what our tomorrows may hold.

43. I have had some tomorrows that I had no idea that I would ever be facing.

44. Each of you have had tomorrows that you did not know you would face.

45. His tomorrow included the day he would give account for what he did with his life.

46. He was going to reap what he had sown.

47. All he had to show was bigger barns crammed with stuff he had left behind.

48. He was foolish because he did not prepare for the day of accounting.

49. He was foolish because he was a consumer and not a contributor.

50. He was foolish, for he was not a good steward of what he had been given.

51. He was foolish because he failed to realize there is more to life than what we possess.

52. He was foolish because he did not prepare for the tomorrow that all of us will face.

53. We are foolish when we spend so much time focusing on what we leave behind.

54. His abundant account did not accompany him.

55. He was foolish because he had not stored up treasures in heaven.

56. Jesus said later in this chapter, **“Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.” (Luke 12:33)**

57. He was foolish because he did not prepare for the things that really matter.

ILLUSTRATION: **Jim Elliot said, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

58. We can be rich in this world's goods and be destitute in heavenly possessions.

ILLUSTRATION: This year, an army of termites munched through 10 million rupees (\$222,000) in currency notes stored in a steel chest at a bank in Barabanki, a town 20 miles southwest of Lucknow, the Uttar Pradesh state capital, said police in northern India.

It was an all-you-can-eat buffet at the bank. The bank manager discovered the damage when he opened the reinforced room in an old bank building.

Police officer, Navneet Rana, told The Associated Press, "It's a matter of investigation how termites attacked bundles of currency notes stacked in a steel chest." The money was put in the chest in January, 2011. In the past, termites had damaged bank furniture and documents. The police have registered a case of negligence against the bank officials.

(Associated Press, "Termites eat millions of Indian rupees in bank" (4-22-11); Submitted by Timothy Liu, Virginia Beach, Virginia)

59. What they had stored up in the box was all gone.

60. In this story, Jesus' point is that a consumer ends up with an empty soul and an empty life.

61. Jesus wants the lives of his disciples to be guided by interests other than worldly material ones.

62. Jesus wants us to look beyond ourselves to what we can store up.

63. Jesus wants us to be good stewards by looking beyond ourselves.

64. Are you a good steward?

III. (v.21) A GOOD STEWARD IS RICH TOWARDS GOD

1. He had used the resources for himself and not for God.

2. He did not leave a legacy for God.

3. His legacy was simply a dot on the page that was all about him.

4. His heart was exposed and God was not central in his heart.

5. Consumers can easily leave God out of the picture.

6. He had focused on being rich for himself and not for God.

7. He did not use what God had placed in his hands for God.

***ILLUSTRATION: John Wesley said, "The Possessor of heaven and earth placed you here, not as a proprietor, but as a steward."**

8. To make the transition from a consumer to contributor, we must be consumed by God.

"...God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:29)

9. As we have sold out to God, we are consumed by Him and become rich towards Him.

"What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ." (Philippians 3:8)

10. Paul is talking about being consumed by God.

ILLUSTRATION: We sing the song in worship, “From the Inside Out”
“My heart and my soul, I give you control
Consume me from the inside out, Lord
Let justice and praise, become my embrace
To love You from the inside out”

11. To be rich towards God, we must be consumed by God.

12. Take heed that we are spiritually rich through living in close communion with Him.

13. As a practical application, I want to focus on four ways to be rich towards God in this chapter.

A. (vs.22-28) SURRENDER WORRY FOR TRUST

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.” (Luke 12:22)

14. Instead of worrying about all these things, we are to trust in God.

15. As a consumer, he put his trust in worldly things instead of in God.

16. God calls us to trade worry for trust and to put our trust in Him.

17. Worry must be surrendered, for one cannot worry and trust.

18. Greed is the feeling, you can never get enough, and worry is fear you won't have enough.

19. Worry must be replaced by trust.

B. (vs.29-31) SEEK KINGDOM VALUES

“But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.” (Luke 12:31)

20. Unlike those in the world who consume themselves with the pursuit of food and clothing, disciples are to focus on seeking God's kingdom.

21. To a consumer, the things of the world are valuable.

22. The priorities of the disciples differ from those of the world.

23. Jesus taught us that we are to put God first and not ourselves.

24. This man in the story settled for less than being rich towards God, for his priorities were mixed up.

25. God says to seek Kingdom things, the things that have eternal value.

26. Make a contribution to the things that really matter.

C. (vs.32-34) STORE UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN

“Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Luke 12:33b-34)

27. Consumers store up treasure in their own banks where everything will be lost.

28. They live for themselves.

29. Stewards store up treasure in heaven's bank and leave a legacy.

30. They do something that has eternal consequences and reaches far beyond themselves.

31. The lesson to be learned here is “use it, or lose it.”

32. If a person does not use the resources God has given, then he or she is eventually going to lose them.
 33. This man received no benefits from his wealth.
 34. He could have received eternal benefits from it, but he did not invest it in eternal things.
 35. He chose to be a consumer instead of a contributor.
 36. He failed to leave the legacy he could have left.
 37. A legacy of a life rich towards God.
 38. Two kinds of treasure, that which grows old and that which lasts.
 39. People put their time, energies and resources into those things they value, those things dear to their heart.
- “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Luke 12:34)**
40. What is dear to your heart?
 41. My prayer for each of us is that the treasures we have and the legacy we leave reveal a heart rich toward God.
 42. The legacy ministry is about us providing resource to help you leave a legacy and be a good steward today and into the future of all that God has given you.

D. (v.35-48) SERVE THE LORD FAITHFULLY

“Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning.” (Luke 12:35)

43. Jesus comes back to the theme of watchfulness.
44. Be ready to serve by keeping your spiritual light burning.
45. This moment is all we really have to serve our Lord, and tomorrow is not guaranteed.
46. We must do what it takes to shine for the Lord.
47. This happens when we are consumed by God.
48. In the context of the return of Christ, there is an urgency.
49. Now is the time to serve the Lord faithfully.

“As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.” (John 9:4)

50. Now is the time to be a faithful contributor.
51. The call is to be a faithful servant.
52. Now is the time to be a faithful servant.
53. A plan to leave the legacy reveals a heart rich towards God.
54. Now is the time to contribute.
55. Others need your faithfulness.

ILLUSTRATION: Philip Yancey, in his book, *Rumors of Another World*, introduces the story of Langdon Gilkey, an American POW held in a Japanese prison camp during Japan’s occupation of China in World War II. Gilkey shares his experience of deprivation and greed. He recalls how food rations were limited to just 1200 calories a day—six slices of bread, a bowl of boiling water and a small portion of stew—simply not enough to sustain health in a work camp setting. He says they lusted for and dreamed of little else than food.

Surprisingly, the Japanese were not averse to the assistance of the American Red Cross in feeding the prisoners. Yancey recounts, "One day a shipment of two hundred parcels arrived ... one for each American prisoner. The Americans felt they had struck gold. Each fifty-pound parcel contained a pound of powdered milk, four tins of butter, three of Spam, one pound each of cheese, chocolate, and sugar, as well as cans of powdered coffee, jams, salmon, and a package of dried prunes or raisins."

Gilkey recalls, "After a diet made up largely of bread, low on meats and oils, and lacking in sweets of all sorts—in fact, without real taste—fifty pounds of this sort of rich, fat-laden, and tasteful food was manna from heaven."

Yancey continues, "Six months later, all the food was gone and conditions had deteriorated. Winter had set in, and morale in the camp hit an all-time low. A few days after Christmas, a donkey train suddenly appeared at the gates like a mirage, bearing more Red Cross parcels, this time too numerous for the prisoners to count. The Japanese commandant cataloged 1,550 parcels in all, and calculated that he could distribute one parcel to each of the 1,450 prisoners, and an extra half-parcel to the two hundred Americans. Joy and excitement gripped the camp." Said Gilkey, "It was as though everyone were living through every Christmas Eve of his lifetime all rolled into one."

"The next morning," continues Yancey, "to their dismay, the prisoners read a notice that no parcels would be distributed. A small group of Americans had protested the arrangement, insisting that only they were entitled to the gifts from the American Red Cross. In other words, they demanded seven-and-a-half parcels for each American, with none for the other prisoners. Disgusted, the commandant appealed to Tokyo for a decision., and for ten days Gilkey and the other Americans had to face the resentment and hostility of prisoners from [all the] other nations." "It was the same story all over," said Gilkey. "A community where everyone had long forgotten whether a man was American or British, white, Negro, Jew, Parsee, or Indian, had suddenly disintegrated into a brawling, bitterly divided collection of hostile national groups. Ironically, our wondrous Christmas gift had brought it its wake the exact opposite of peace on earth. The massive mounds of life-giving parcels lay inert in the center of the camp, while gusts of human conflict and ill will swirled turbulently around them. For the first time, I felt fundamentally humiliated at being an American." "From that experience and others, Gilkey learned a painful lesson of selfish humanity. He saw firsthand the enormous consequence of a simple sin like greed. He saw the tragedy of a consumer perspective.

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." (Luke 12:15)

56. If we are not careful, life can slip by and we can fail to leave a legacy that reveals a life rich towards God.

57. To be a contributor, we must be rich towards God.

CONCLUSION: Are you a good steward?

God has made you for more than just a consumer

God calls us to transition from a consumer to a steward.

What will your legacy be?

- I. (vs.13-15) A GOOD STEWARD GUARDS AGAINST GREED**
- II. (vs.16-20) A GOOD STEWARD LOOKS BEYOND HIMSELF**
- III (v.21) A GOOD STEWARD IS RICH TOWARDS GOD**
 - A. (vs.22-28) SURRENDER WORRY FOR TRUST**
 - B. (vs.29-31) SEEK KINGDOM VALUES**
 - C. (vs. 32-34) STORE UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN**
 - D. (vs.35-48) SERVE THE LORD FAITHFULLY**

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